

**HOUSE OF LORDS COMMISSION****Minutes****Monday 17 January 2022, 4.00pm****Attendance**

- Lord Speaker (Chair)
- Lord Gardiner of Kimble (Deputy Chair)
- Mathew Duncan (external member)
- Baroness Evans of Bowes Park
- Lord German
- Lord Hill of Oareford
- Lord Judge
- Lord Newby
- Nora Senior (external member)
- Baroness Smith of Basildon
- Lord Touhig
- Lord Vaux of Harrowden

Simon Burton, Clerk of the Parliaments, and Andy Helliwell, Chief Operating Officer, were in attendance. The meeting was held via Microsoft Teams.

**1. Minutes of Previous Meetings**

The Commission agreed the records of discussion of the meetings on 14 December 2021 and 3 January 2022.

**2. Restoration and Renewal: User Requirements for the Palace of Westminster**

Sarah Johnson (Chief Executive, R&R Sponsor Body) and Andy Helliwell (Chief Operating Officer)  
C/21-22/62; RESTRICTED

**Also relevant:**

Supplementary briefing on the significant user requirements from Lords R&R team, 13 January 2022

Sarah Johnson presented the paper and welcomed its development as a collaborative effort by officials from Parliament and the Programme. She emphasised it was an iterative process with the Programme returning to the Commission with design proposals based on its initial steers, including the cost implications and assessments of potential trade-offs.

Andy Helliwell also endorsed the joint work by Parliament and the Programme. He said the Statement was not intended to set the requirements in stone but guidance from the Commission on the direction of travel, including steers on some specific matters, would be helpful for the Programme at this stage.

*[Restricted Access – More Information].*

The Commission discussed the Strategic User Requirements Statement and noted the Statement will provide the Programme with an initial steer to inform the development and assessment of design schemes. This will mark the continuation of an iterative process, which will include further and more intensive discussions with Parliamentary stakeholders as the designs develop. The Commission expressed concern about the anticipated loss of space resulting from new building services equipment and accessibility improvements in the Palace of Westminster and asked the Programme to keep this under review during the design stage. The Commission agreed that the House's core business should be prioritised within the restored Palace accordingly, with the remaining requirements being subject to optionality assessments.

### 3. **Restoration and Renewal: Essential Scheme – Initial Assessment of Cost and Schedule, including Continued Presence Impact**

Sarah Johnson (Chief Executive, R&R Sponsor Body) and David Goldstone (Chief Executive, R&R Delivery Authority)  
C/21-22/63; HIGHLY RESTRICTED

#### **Also relevant:**

Letter from Liz Peace to Mr Speaker and the Lord Speaker, 13 January 2022

Sarah Johnson said the paper provided an update on the direction of travel, including updated and preliminary cost and schedule estimates. These were different to the 2014 Independent Options Appraisal (IOA) estimates, which were produced before the Programme was established and had been based on specific assumptions. She emphasised that the preliminary estimates were not yet final but considered it helpful to discuss these at this stage, in advance of the Programme business case being produced in 2023. She explained that the Sponsor Board had held a robust discussion about the preliminary estimates, including about what recommendation should be made about continuous presence, if any, to the Commissions. The Board agreed to invite the Commissions' feedback at this stage, which would be reflected in subsequent work, before drawing any firm conclusions.

David Goldstone added that the paper reflected the objectives agreed by the Commissions in 2021, including fire safety and asbestos removal. Apart from preliminary cost and schedule estimates, it also included potential sequencing. He said the Programme was now ready to assess and realise any further efficiencies in these estimates.

*[Restricted Access – More Information].*

The Commission noted the Programme's initial assessment of the cost and schedule of the works. The Commission expressed concern about the potential overall length of the decant period and asked the Programme to explore options for reducing this period to the absolute minimum. The Commission noted the significant impact on the overall cost and schedule of the options for the House of Commons to maintain a continued presence in the Palace of Westminster during the works, as well as the significant on-site health and safety, fire and security risks, and disruption to parliamentary business, that would result. Accordingly, the Commission agreed not to

endorse any further work on the continued presence options and agreed to intimate its position to the House of Commons Commission. [*Restricted Access – More Information*].

#### 4. **Restoration and Renewal: Business Case Assessment Approach (Summary)**

Amanda Colledge (Business Case Director, R&R Sponsor Body)  
C/21-22/64; RESTRICTED

The Commission noted the assessment approach described that will be used to select the option that will be recommended in the Programme Business Case. The Commission endorsed the Benefits Principles that will be used to guide the development of the Programme Benefits Strategy.

#### 5. **Any Other Business and Next Meeting**

The Commission considered a letter from Lord Balfe about members' eligibility to use the late-night taxi service. Simon Burton explained the logistical and financial implications if the existing contract were to be extended, noting its bicameral status and that the financial support scheme already included provision for incidental travel. The Commission noted that the Lord Speaker would respond to Lord Balfe.

Lord Vaux provided an oral update on the work of the Finance Committee, including its forthcoming consideration of R&R funding, on which it will provide advice to the Commission.

The Commission noted it would be invited to consider a paper on the continued application of the Covid-19 measures, as agreed on 3 January, by correspondence or at an additional meeting.

The Commission noted that the Lord Speaker would meet with the members of the Commission Group shortly to consider its future work, including detailed consideration of matters that the Commission would subsequently be invited to consider and agree.

The next meeting was scheduled for 21 February 2022.

Also circulated for information:

- **Clerk of the Parliaments' Monthly Update**

Simon Burton (Clerk of the Parliaments)  
C/21-22/65; RESTRICTED

Simon Burton confirmed that there had been no delays in processing member claims thanks to the hard work of the Finance Department.

Simon Burton agreed to provide more detail about the approval of the cast iron roofs outline business case to the Commission, including next steps.

**Michael Torrance**  
Interim Secretary to the Commission