



Office of the Leader  
of the House of Commons



LEADER OF THE HOUSE OF LORDS

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*Dear Colleague*

### **INTRODUCTION OF THE PARLIAMENTARY BUILDINGS (RESTORATION AND RENEWAL) BILL**

We are writing to inform you that the Government has today published the Parliamentary Buildings (Restoration and Renewal) Bill.

The tragic fire at Notre Dame has served as a reminder of the risks to this historic and iconic building. The recent incidents in the Palace of Westminster, including falling masonry, have further highlighted the urgency of the works to restore and renew the Palace of Westminster.

Earlier in 2018, both Houses agreed to secure our Palace of Westminster for future generations through a full and timely decant of the Palace for restoration and repair. Both Houses will return to the Palace of Westminster as soon as is reasonably practicable.

Following the motions of both Houses we worked closely with the House Authorities to develop a draft Bill that will establish the essential governance arrangements to oversee and deliver Restoration and Renewal. On 18 October 2018 we published the Bill in draft for the completion of pre-legislative scrutiny by a Joint Committee. The Joint Committee on the draft Parliamentary Buildings Bill published their report on 21 March 2019. We are grateful for the diligent work of the Committee in undertaking pre-legislative scrutiny. We have carefully considered the recommendations of the Joint Committee and published the Government's response on 7 May 2019.

Having considered the recommendations of the Joint Committee, we have modified the Bill in a number of areas to reflect their recommendations. However, the main purpose of the Bill has not changed and this was supported by the Joint Committee.

The Bill itself seeks to establish the statutory bodies that will be responsible for the restoration and renewal works within the Parliamentary estate, giving effect to the resolutions passed by Parliament.

The Bill will establish the governance structure within which the bodies will operate. The bodies will have the capacity and capability to make strategic decisions on the restoration and renewal programme, so that the Palace of Westminster can be secured as the UK Parliament for future generations.

The Bill establishes a Parliamentary Works Sponsor Body. The Sponsor Body will have overall responsibility for the Restoration and Renewal Programme and will also be empowered to form a Delivery Authority as a company limited by guarantee. The Delivery Authority will formulate proposals in relation to the restoration works, and ensure their operational delivery. This two-tier approach, as used in the successful London Olympics project, is the best structure to deliver a value for money programme, which commands the confidence of taxpayers and Parliamentarians.

The Bill also establishes a Parliamentary Works Estimates Commission. The Estimates Commission will lay the Sponsor Body's estimates before Parliament, and will play a role in reviewing the Sponsor Body's expenditure.

In establishing these bodies, the Bill has three aims. First, the Government's role is to ensure we deliver the best possible value for taxpayers' money, and the measures in the Bill reflect our determination to ensure Parliament keeps the total bill down, and the restoration runs to time and on budget. The Bill provides that the Sponsor Body and the Delivery Authority must have regard to value for money when exercising their functions throughout the Programme. The Treasury will also be able to review and comment on the annual estimates for the funding of the Programme, and the National Audit Office will be able to undertake audits and value-for-money reviews. Furthermore, the Estimates Commission will have the power to review, comment on, and in certain circumstances reject those annual estimates.

Second, the Bill will ensure that the relevant bodies are independent and are able to operate effectively in the commercial sphere, bringing the expertise and capability needed for a project of this scale. The creation of a separate, statutory Sponsor Body will provide a single client for the Programme on behalf of both Houses and all Members. These arrangements will provide for completely separate funding and accounting mechanisms for the Programme from the House Authorities, strengthening the independence of the bodies. The Delivery Authority will be focussed solely on the efficient and effective delivery of the Programme.

Third, it is important that the views of Parliamentarians on the Programme are taken into account. The Bill stipulates that the Sponsor Body will have a majority of Parliamentarians on its Board, alongside external expertise. Parliamentarians will be fully consulted on the strategic direction of the Programme. Furthermore, Parliament will be given an opportunity to vote on the proposed design, cost and timing of the substantive building works relating to the Palace of Westminster. The Sponsor Body would be required to return to Parliament for approval to make any significant changes to the approved proposals in respect of the Palace. Parliament will also be given an opportunity to vote on the annual expenditure of the Sponsor Body and the Delivery Authority, through the estimates process. As the Bill progresses, we will be holding drop-in sessions for members so that they can understand the Programme in further detail, and to ask questions. The house authorities will also be facilitating tours of the basement for members, further details will be made available in due course.

We are really pleased to now be introducing the Bill. This step recognises the importance of restoration and renewal and moves us a step closer to securing the Palace of Westminster as the home of the UK Parliament for future generations.

*Best*  
*Andrea*

**RT HON ANDREA LEADSOM MP  
LEADER OF THE HOUSE OF  
COMMONS**

*Yours*  
*Natalie*

**THE RT HON BARONESS EVANS OF  
BOWES PARK  
LEADER OF THE HOUSE OF LORDS**