



16 July 2020

The Rt Hon. The Lord Fowler
Lord Speaker, House of Lords

Prime Minister's letter regarding the Strategic Review of the Restoration and Renewal Programme

Dear Lord Speaker,

I am writing in response to the Prime Minister's recent letter to the CEOs of the Sponsor Body and Delivery Authority regarding the strategic review of the Restoration and Renewal Programme, which I trust you have reviewed. In his letter the Prime Minister suggests that a range of matters should be considered as part of the review.

While some of the Prime Minister's suggestions already form part of the Programme's scope, including considering a range of interventions for the restoration of the Palace, considering alternative locations for Parliament outside of Westminster does not form part of the Programme's current mandate.

As you are aware, we commissioned the strategic review on the basis that many of the assumptions on which the current strategy is based were made a number of years ago; that the political and economic environment in which we all find ourselves today presents both challenges and potential opportunities; and that the Joint Committee on the Palace of Westminster always anticipated that such a review would take place once the Sponsor Body and Delivery Authority were established.

To that end, and subject to your views, we would be able to include in our review analysis of a potential location for Parliament outside London during any decant period. We would focus such analysis on those aspects on which we are well-placed to provide assessments, for example, cost, deliverability and impact on the timescales for the essential works to the Palace, and could include our understanding of any implications for the practical working of Parliament and Government. Any assessment of the constitutional implications would be clearly outside our scope.

Whilst I fully recognise that the issue of the location of Parliament, even in a potential decant period, is a subject on which there are very strong views, and our carrying out any analysis in this regard would not be welcome to all, broadening the scope of the review in this way may provide an evidence base which would allow all parties to come to an early decision on the best way ahead so that we could then proceed with the delivery of the Programme.

The Prime Minister's letter correctly emphasises the importance of engaging members of both Houses on the review. As you will be aware, the Sponsor Body's spokespeople in each House have already invited all Parliamentarians to make submissions to the review by 7 August, and we will look forward to considering the submissions received in due course. Engagement with members is also taking place through party group discussions and on the floor of each House through questions and debates. If you were prepared to accept that we should include a location outside London in our work, we will make it clear to all members that views on this issue will also be welcome in their submissions.

I would be grateful if you would communicate the contents of this letter to the members of your Commission. I have written in similar terms to Mr Speaker.

I am copying this letter to the Leaders and Clerks of both Houses and the CEOs of the Sponsor Body and Delivery Authority.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Liz Peace', written in a cursive style.

Liz Peace CBE
Chair
Houses of Parliament
Restoration and Renewal
Sponsor Body