Enabling the restoration and renewal of the Palace of Westminster:
The Essential First Step
A plan for Parliament’s Northern Estate
Consultation Document, May 2019
Foreword

In 2018, both Houses of Parliament took the momentous decision to temporarily move out of the Palace of Westminster while essential work to restore and renew the building takes place.

This approach is the quickest and most cost-effective way of tackling the significant work that needs to be done to protect the heritage of the Palace of Westminster, part of a UNESCO World Heritage Site, and ensure it can continue to serve as home to the UK Parliament in the 21st century and beyond.

A series of studies were undertaken and scrutinised by Parliament to ascertain the optimal approach to deliver the Restoration and Renewal Programme. It was agreed that during the works the House of Commons, including the Chamber, should be relocated to the Northern Estate – the Parliamentary buildings including and north of Portcullis House. The Queen Elizabeth II Conference Centre (QEII) is currently the preferred relocation option for the House of Lords subject to more detailed feasibility work being undertaken.

This document presents for consultation our plans for the Northern Estate – a group of 18th, 19th, 20th and 21st century buildings, most of which are listed and of considerable heritage value – located next door to the Palace of Westminster and which are already in use by MPs, their staff and the staff of the House of Commons.

These buildings are themselves in need of significant investment and refurbishment to bring them up to today’s environmental standards, vastly improve access for people with disabilities and create much more efficient spaces for modern office use.

The Northern Estate Programme must also create significant additional space within the site, to cater for all 650 MPs and their staff, many of whom are currently located within the Palace of Westminster, as well as the essential functions associated with the temporary House of Commons Chamber.

A thorough design approach has been developed which will enhance public access to democracy and enable the continued functioning of Parliament during the refurbishment of the Palace of Westminster. The plans will create a lasting future legacy to support the work of Parliament and engage people with it.

The intention is to submit a series of planning applications to Westminster City Council later this year so that work on the site can begin in 2020, which would in turn ensure that the restoration and renewal of the Palace of Westminster can take place as soon as possible.

I do hope you find this information helpful in explaining the proposals and we look forward to receiving your feedback as part of the consultation process.

Tom Brake MP
House of Commons Commission
May 2019
The need for the restoration and renewal of the Palace of Westminster

The Restoration and Renewal Programme has been established to tackle the essential work that needs to be done to protect the heritage of the Palace of Westminster (the Houses of Parliament) and ensure it can continue to serve as home to the UK Parliament in the 21st century and beyond.

There has been significant under-investment in the Palace since the 1940s, when parts of it were renovated following bomb damage during the Second World War. Despite being one of the most iconic buildings in the world, since its construction in the mid-1800s, many parts have never undergone major renovation.

The heating, ventilation, water, drainage and electrical systems are now antiquated with asbestos needing to be removed and improvements to fire safety required. There is extensive decay to the stonework, roofs are leaking and gutters and downpipes are corroded. The plumbing regularly fails, causing visible and sometimes irreversible damage to the Palace’s carved stonework ceilings and Pugin-designed historic interiors.

The building is deteriorating faster than it can be repaired. The longer this essential work is left, the greater the risk that it will suffer a sudden failure that makes it uninhabitable and brings a sudden stop to the work of Parliament.

Because of the size and layout of the Palace, it is thought to be the biggest and most complex renovation programme of any single building this country has known.

Some essential work is already being undertaken, including at Westminster Hall and to the Elizabeth Tower (popularly known as ‘Big Ben’).
The plan agreed by Parliament

The decision making process

2012
- The Restoration and Renewal Programme is established to examine options to undertake the major renovation works needed to the Palace of Westminster.

December 2013 – June 2015
- A consortium is appointed to produce an Independent Options Appraisal with illustrative costs and timescales for a major refurbishment of the Palace of Westminster. Published in June 2015, this compares three options – a rolling programme of works whilst the building remains in use; the refurbishment of half the building at a time with each House vacating in turn; and the full move-out of the Palace of Westminster enabling all works to be delivered together. The report concludes the fully vacated option is the lowest cost, fastest option and “provides the best opportunity to mitigate disruption and nuisance over the long-term.”

July 2015
- A Joint Select Committee, made up of Members of both Houses, is set up to consider the findings of the Independent Options Appraisal report and make recommendations. At this time, the Restoration and Renewal Programme began assessing a range of temporary accommodation sites for the Palace of Westminster.

Spring 2016
- A review of potential relocation options is conducted by the Restoration and Renewal Programme team alongside the Joint Committee deliberations. Given the well-established need to be in close proximity to Government departments in and around Westminster, this included Horse Guards Parade, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, HM Treasury, QEI Conference Centre and Richmond House on Whitehall.

September 2016
- Following its year-long inquiry, the Committee concludes that the lowest risk, most cost-effective and quickest option to undertake the essential works would be for all Members and staff to move out of the Palace temporarily in one single phase while works take place. It also concludes that “the best decant solution for the House of Commons appears to be a solution based around Richmond House and the Northern Estate.”
- The preferred option for the House of Lords is to be temporarily relocated to the QEI1 Conference Centre, subject to further feasibility work.

September 2017
- The Murphy Perimeter Security Review, which followed the Westminster attacks, strengthens the case for MPs’ accommodation to be located within a continuous single secure site. Of all the potential options considered, only the Northern Estate could provide such space within a secure perimeter.

January – February 2018
- The Government tables two motions on restoration and renewal of the Palace of Westminster, with a debate in the House of Commons in late January and in the Lords in early February. Both Houses back the decision for a full move as the “best and most cost effective way” of carrying out the works.

This document sets out the proposals to temporarily relocate the House of Commons to Parliament’s Northern Estate.

List of key House of Commons functions to move from the Palace of Westminster into Parliament’s Northern Estate:
- Chamber and division lobbies
- Continued public access
- Committee Rooms
- Procedural and library services
- Offices for 200 MPs and their staff
- Ministerial and Whips’ accommodation
- Press Gallery
- Catering facilities
- Welfare (cycle spaces, shower, locker and changing spaces)
- Visitor and Education Centre

Indicative development timeline

2018
- Essential refurbishment works commenced for Elizabeth Tower (Big Ben).
- Refurbishment begins on 1 Derby Gate and Commissioner’s Yard Gate.
- Parliament takes possession of Richmond House from the Government.
- Fire safety work carried out.

2019
- Consultation on the Northern Estate proposals through the Spring and Summer.
- Legislation to formally establish a Delivery Authority and Sponsor Board, similar to those used for the London Olympics, to be introduced to Parliament (subject to the Parliamentary timetable).
- Northern Estate Programme to submit a suite of planning applications to Westminster City Council.

2020
- Construction work to begin on Northern Estate Programme (subject to planning approvals).
- Planning applications submitted to provide temporary accommodation for the House of Lords at the QEI1 Conference Centre.

2021
- Refurbishment works of the Elizabeth Tower (Big Ben) to be completed.

Early 2020s
- Planning applications submitted for restoration and renewal of the Palace of Westminster.

Mid 2020s
- Work expected to be completed to enable the temporary relocation of Parliament.
- Work to begin on the restoration and renewal of the Palace of Westminster.

Early 2030s
- Restoration and Renewal Programme of the Palace of Westminster is completed, enabling the functions of the House of Commons and House of Lords to move back.
- Consolidating the buildings within the Parliamentary Estate.
The Northern Estate site

The Northern Estate is a group of 18th, 19th, 20th and 21st century buildings, most of which are listed and of considerable heritage value, located next door to the Palace of Westminster. They are already in use by MPs, their staff and the staff of the House of Commons.

These buildings are themselves in need of significant investment and refurbishment to bring them up to modern environmental standards, enable access for people with disabilities and create much more efficient spaces for modern use.

The Northern Estate site is situated by a number of significant neighbouring buildings, including New Scotland Yard to the east of Richmond House, the Ministry of Defence to the north and other Government departments across Parliament Street such as HM Treasury, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, Cabinet Office and Downing Street. To the south of the site are the Palace of Westminster and Parliament Square.

The work to the Northern Estate is the essential first step which enables the restoration and renewal of the Palace of Westminster. That is why we are consulting on the plans now, before submitting planning applications to Westminster Council later in 2019.

Richmond House
This Grade II* listed building includes Richmond Terrace, built originally as Georgian town houses in 1824. This was subsequently incorporated into a new structure by Whitley Associates in 1984 called “Richmond House” which also includes Grade II listed 85 Whitehall and 54 Parliament Street. Richmond House was occupied by the Department of Health until they moved out in 2017 and was acquired by the Parliamentary Estate in early 2018. The building suffers from low floor-to-ceiling heights and irregular floorplates and levels which provide poor access for people with disabilities and inefficient spaces. The width of the stair towers are too narrow to meet today’s requirements for safe access.

Laundry Road
Formerly a yard behind Norman Shaw North this road has been used for servicing and access and bin storage since Richmond House was built.

Norman Shaw North
Originally built as the first headquarters for the Metropolitan Police in 1890, this Grade I listed building is currently used as office space. The building has not been refurbished for 40 years, its façade and roof are in urgent need of repair and essential services need replacing.

53 Parliament Street
This Grade II listed building was built in 1896 and is currently used as offices.

Norman Shaw South
This Grade II* listed building, completed in 1906, originally provided additional offices for the Metropolitan Police and is now used as offices. Last refurbished in the 1990s, essential services now need updating. Many areas of the building, including the main entrance, have no wheelchair access.

1 Derby Gate
1 Derby Gate is a Grade II* listed building and was originally the Whitehall Club, a Victorian Gentlemen’s Club, built in the manner of a Venetian palace. Renovation work is currently underway.

Commissioner’s Yard
Commissioner’s Yard is located between the Norman Shaw North and South buildings, and named in recognition of the site’s former use as the headquarters for the Metropolitan Police.

1 Canon Row
Built in 1906, originally as a police station, this Grade II* listed building is currently being refurbished.

Canon Row
A key street existing since medieval times running from Bridge Street to Derby Gate, now within the secure perimeter of the Parliamentary Estate but which currently provides a poor pedestrian environment.

2 and 3 Parliament Street
These Grade II* listed buildings form part of an 18th century development. These buildings need modernising and currently have limited accessibility.

Portcullis House
Officially opened in 2001 providing offices for MPs and their staff with meeting and catering spaces, supplementing the limited space in the Palace of Westminster and surrounding buildings.

1 Parliament Street
This Grade II listed building was built in 1888 as offices for London and North Western Railway Estate Office, the largest company in the world on the stock market at the time. It was redeveloped in the 1980s and is currently used for offices and catering facilities, but the building is inefficient and suffers from poor access to Canon Row and the rest of the Northern Estate.
A summary of the proposals for the Northern Estate

The proposals for the Northern Estate will create a temporary House of Commons Chamber and associated facilities, together with workspace for MPs and staff and public access and educational provision. It is the essential first step to enable the restoration and renewal of the Palace of Westminster and will deliver a transformed Parliamentary Estate for future generations.

A temporary House of Commons Chamber within a substantially redeveloped Richmond House, alongside essential facilities required around the Chamber for the continued functioning of Parliament, in addition to new workspace. The proposals retain Richmond Terrace, the Whitehall façade and 85 Whitehall and 54 Parliament Street. The existing Cathedral Room, which currently provides a space overlooking the Cenotaph during ceremonial events, will be replaced with a larger space and terrace overlooking Whitehall.

Modernised servicing and access arrangements across the entire Northern Estate, with new basement levels under Richmond House providing efficient arrangements for deliveries, waste management, recycling, utilities, common kitchens and other shared facilities including a new Energy Centre to transform sustainability and energy efficiency.

Enhance security and improvements to the external environment, including a temporary visitor access pavilion in front of Richmond House, which would be removed once the House of Commons returns to the Palace of Westminster. This is in addition to widening the pavement on a section of Whitehall and Parliament Street to incorporate space for visitors to queue within a secure perimeter.

Image: Aerial view of the Northern Estate proposals with the key interventions highlighted.

Enhancements to the Grade I listed Norman Shaw North Building, with a new lightweight glass atrium created in the courtyard, re-activating this historic space, along with conservation repairs to this highly significant building and internal improvements to meet modern standards.

A new building within the existing courtyard of the Grade II* Norman Shaw South that will become office space for MPs and staff while providing enhanced courtyard space.

Significant conservation improvements to other historic buildings, including to the rear elevations of the buildings fronting Canon Row and at 2 and 3 Parliament Street to improve internal layouts and modernise plant and equipment.

A link to connect Portcullis House with the wider Northern Estate, with expanded catering facilities to the rear of the building opening out onto Canon Row for informal meetings. No other changes are being proposed for this building.

These proposals will:

• Create an inclusive and welcoming environment designed to maintain public access to democracy for the time the temporary Chamber is in use. This includes new public and press galleries, public spaces for visitors and education and participation spaces.

• Create office space for MPs, their staff and the other staff who will need to relocate from the Palace of Westminster, allowing all 650 MPs to be based on the Northern Estate and within a secure area including Ministers, Senior Opposition Members and Whips offices.

• Modernise all of the buildings within the Northern Estate, which are in critical need of investment to bring them up to standard, upgrade heating, electrical and fire safety systems, maximise the usable space, create high quality working conditions for staff and improve the environmental performance of the buildings to reduce operating costs for the future.

• Transform access for people with disabilities across the Northern Estate, which is currently a real issue and prevents access for wheelchair users or people with other disabilities to much of the estate.

• Enhance security to provide a safe environment for the temporary House of Commons chamber and for those who work in or visit the Northern Estate.
A new temporary House of Commons Chamber

The proposals will deliver a temporary House of Commons Chamber within a substantially redeveloped Richmond House.

The temporary Chamber has been carefully designed to replicate the familiar character and layout of the existing House of Commons Chamber but will provide a greater level of accessibility for MPs and visitors, including an accessible public gallery.

Essential facilities for the functioning of Parliament will be provided around the Chamber, including division (voting) lobbies, Committee Rooms, catering facilities, and offices for the Speaker, Clerk of the House, Serjeant at Arms and other core functions.

These areas have all been assessed and compromises have been made to ensure best value for money for the taxpayer, for example with fewer committee rooms provided, more limited dining options and other space requirements optimised.

A new press gallery and education and participation spaces will be provided and new public areas will enhance public access to democracy while the temporary Chamber is in use.

We are interested in your feedback about what publicly accessible facilities you would like to see included around the temporary Chamber.

Indicative image of the proposed temporary House of Commons Chamber as viewed from the public gallery.

Indicative image of the proposed temporary House of Commons Chamber.
Flexibility of use for a long-term legacy

While the new building will provide space for the temporary House of Commons Chamber and its supporting functions, it is being carefully designed to be adaptable for a range of legacy uses.

The space occupied by the temporary Chamber could remain in place as a back-up Chamber, for example in the event of an incident or emergency affecting part or all of the Parliamentary Estate.

Alternatively, the space could be easily converted for a range of other possible uses, for example as:

- A public debating Chamber for schools and other audiences.
- A conference facility, including for international delegations.
- A venue for debates and interactive/educational events.
- An exhibition space for parliamentary art and archives.
- Additional workspace for staff.

The precise future legacy use will be determined through the design process for the Palace of Westminster Restoration and Renewal Programme, which will explore the best permanent locations for the full range of parliamentary and public functions. It may be that this enables space to be made available within the Palace of Westminster to allow greater public access to democracy.

Similarly the office space for MPs and their staff has also been designed with flexibility in mind. When used by MPs the requirement is primarily for smaller modular offices and these spaces can be quickly converted into a more open plan working environment should that be desired.
A new purpose built building at Richmond House fit for a 21st century Parliament

The design approach retains the three elements of Richmond House visible from Whitehall (the Georgian Richmond Terrace, the Whitehall façade designed by Sir William Whitfield in the 1980s and the building at 85 Whitehall and 54 Parliament Street) whilst substantially redeveloping the remaining elements of the building to house the Chamber and provide space for MPs and staff.

The Northern Estate Programme recognises that the building which replaces Richmond House needs to provide exceptional architecture and long-lasting public legacy.

The architectural approach to the Richmond House design

The Whitehall façade of Richmond House is retained and enhanced to form a key component of the new building. The full three-storeys of the façade are then revealed as the backdrop to the new Central Lobby. A new Cathedral Room will be created, larger in space than in the existing Richmond House, with a terrace providing views over Whitehall and the Cenotaph.

Internally the Whitehall façade opens out on to a triple-height Central Lobby, with key views back out to Whitehall and the Cenotaph.

A new flexible six storey building will provide a long-term legacy as additional workspace for MPs and House staff.

A new full height atrium, known as the Street, continues Canon Row into the heart of the building. Referencing St Stephen’s Hall in the Palace of Westminster, the street provides one of the primary Members’ entrance routes to the House of Commons Chamber from the wider Northern Estate.

The Grade II* listed Richmond Terrace and Grade II listed 85 Whitehall and 54 Parliament Street are both retained and will be refurbished externally and internally.

A three-storey basement is also being provided to include the majority of plant and machinery for both the new Richmond House and the wider Northern Estate. This ensures that visible machinery is kept to a minimum, allowing the roofs and spaces between the new and refurbished buildings to be as high quality as possible.
Design principles for the new Richmond House

A stone plinth references the surrounding context of Whitehall and ties the new elements to the existing Richmond Terrace.

New stair towers reference Sir William Whitfield’s approach to the design of the existing Richmond House.

The proposed building form references the architecture of the adjacent Norman Shaw North and is designed to create a considered streetscape between the buildings.
Design principles for the new Richmond House

A façade detail of masonry and stone banding echoes the elevations of Norman Shaw North, Norman Shaw South and the existing Richmond House.

Three-sided bays reflect the arrangement of offices within and draw inspiration from the Palace of Westminster.
Conserving the Northern Estate

The Northern Estate Programme will deliver the sensitive repair and restoration of 1-3 Parliament Street, 2-4 Canon Row, Norman Shaw North, Norman Shaw South and Richmond Terrace.

The buildings were originally designed to face outwards and so the internal spaces do not function as a cohesive campus.

Restoring these buildings – some of which have not been refurbished for more than 30 years – maximises their use and secures their conservation and repair into the long term.

1 Derby Gate and 1 Canon Row will not be part of planning applications for the Northern Estate Programme as they are already currently being refurbished.

The external setting of all of the buildings within the estate will be greatly improved by removing service vehicle movements from the internal spaces, removing portacabins and bins, centralising cycle storage.

New surfacing, lighting and de-cluttering the area will help to create a new Parliamentary campus.

Within the buildings, original features such as fireplaces, doors, joinery and staircases will be restored, together with the rationalisation of mechanical, electrical and plumbing services to remove unsightly service runs and plant areas and replace them with better designed modern alternatives.

With the temporary House of Commons occupying the site for several years, many thousands of visitors over this time will be able to see this rich heritage for the first time.

Norman Shaw North

The courtyard in Norman Shaw North will completely change function, from a delivery and service yard to a restaurant and meeting space covered with a glass roof. Together with the reinstatement of the oculus and stone floor finish within its courtyard space, this will greatly improve the experience of this space and allow people to appreciate the quality of this Grade I listed building. The exterior of the building will also be restored and the internal spaces modernised.

Existing Norman Shaw North courtyard.

Indicative image of the proposed Norman Shaw North atrium and a new glazed courtyard roof.
Norman Shaw South

Norman Shaw South will also see improvements and repair to all elevations and the roof. A new building will be created in the courtyard, providing valuable additional office and meeting space. The internal spaces will be refurbished with new services and a new raised courtyard area created as well as a new level entrance to Commissioner’s Yard providing a better connection to Richmond House.
A link between Portcullis House and Norman Shaw South
A covered link will be created between Portcullis House and Norman Shaw South with expanded catering facilities to cope with the increased number of people who will be working within the Northern Estate. This will open out onto Canon Row and improve the connections and accessibility between Portcullis House and the other buildings.

Parliament Street buildings
2 and 3 Parliament Street will be retained and refurbished to bring them up to modern standards. The 1980s rear of 1 Parliament Street will be re-modelled to provide more accessible office space, while the current Parliament Street elevation will be retained.
Creating a better connected and accessible space

The proposals will transform access for all people working in or visiting the Northern Estate, with all buildings and open spaces accessible to wheelchair users.

Improved landscaping and connections within the estate

This will be achieved through creating new entrances to the 1980s buildings along Canon Row and utilising the existing step-free courtyard access into Norman Shaw North and South to provide a better interaction between the street and the buildings, with the re-instatement of this historic route. The creation of a pedestrian friendly external environment including new areas of communal space will enable more people to appreciate the historic landscape.
Streetscape and perimeter security

Special arrangements for security need to be in place during the period the temporary House of Commons Chamber is in operation. These have been designed to be removed once the Restoration and Renewal Programme is complete.

A temporary new pavilion building in front of Richmond House will contain airport style security to enable visitors and the public safe access into the building.

Along parts of Whitehall and Parliament Street, demountable railings will be introduced, sections of which are being designed to be removable for ceremonial occasions, for example on Remembrance Day.

The pavement in this section of the street is being widened to allow more space for pedestrians and visitors.

There will be few changes to the Victoria Embankment elevations, which will see the existing railings increase in height to three metres, while the Bridge Street elevation will be unchanged.

We are also looking to introduce new public wayfinding including exploring digital solutions.

Minimising transport impacts

The proposals would remove one southbound lane of Parliament Street on a short section of the road to accommodate a wider pavement width at the proposed visitor entrance to Richmond House. The junction between Parliament Street and Bridge Street would remain unchanged, minimising impact on vehicle movements onto Westminster Bridge and towards Millbank.

Exploring options for railings

We are exploring a range of design options to the temporary railings that would be installed as part of the proposals. Some possible examples are detailed below but we would welcome any thoughts on possible designs and motifs.
Exploring options for the Northern Estate

Of all the options considered within London, only the Northern Estate can deliver the spatial requirements for the House of Commons to operate within a single safe and secure site.

The delivery of a temporary House of Commons Chamber, associated facilities and workspace for MPs and their staff to move from the Palace of Westminster to the Northern Estate is a significant challenge to fit within a constrained and already occupied site, full of listed buildings.

Considerable thought has gone into balancing critical, functional requirements, heritage and value for money.

The original option of locating the temporary Chamber within the courtyard of Richmond House, when properly tested, was found to create a number of issues. Critically, accommodating both the Chamber and the adjacent division (voting) lobbies requires partial redevelopment of Richmond House.

Further masterplan options were also developed to consider how space across the Northern Estate can deliver the required additional spaces required.

From an initial long list, three principal alternatives to move from the Palace of Westminster to the Northern Estate on land not owned by Parliament, creating additional cost and risk for the project.

In this section we explain why the alternative options offer a far worse outcome with much less benefit than the preferred approach of focusing the intervention on Richmond House.

Alternative approach: spreading the impact across the Northern Estate

This option incorporated the temporary Chamber within the courtyard of Richmond House, but still required:

• The partial redevelopment of Richmond House in order to accommodate the Chamber and Division Lobbies.
• Significant interventions to almost all other buildings within the Northern Estate in order to accommodate the additional spaces required.

A basement and infill development in the courtyard of Norman Shaw North, which was likely to cause an unacceptable level of harm to a Grade I listed building.

Substantial redevelopment of the buildings along Parliament Street, with only their frontages retained. Such an approach was unlikely to be supportable given the level of harm created to a range of listed buildings across the Estate.

Alternative approach: the use of temporary buildings

The use of temporary buildings, to be removed later, rather than permanent new structures, was assessed but demonstrated to be unsuitable for the following reasons:

• There is not enough space within the existing Northern Estate for temporary structures to meet all of the decant requirements.
• There would therefore be a requirement for an additional temporary building outside the current boundary of the Northern Estate on land not owned by Parliament, creating additional cost and risk for the project.
• This building would have a detrimental impact to the special character of Whitehall and the setting of Richmond Terrace and other nearby listed buildings.

Even with an additional building, further temporary structures would be needed across the Estate in order to create the spaces required, harming the setting of listed buildings and impacting the quality of their working environment. The temporary structures themselves would create a poor quality working environment during their use.

The construction requirements are similar to that for permanent buildings, but would need dismantling and so would be wasteful.

The Public Accounts Committee when reviewing this option agreed that such an approach should be dismissed and would not represent value for money for the taxpayer.

Locating the Chamber within Portcullis House

The option of locating the new House of Commons Chamber within the atrium of Portcullis House has been explored and found to be unworkable for the following reasons:

• The atrium space is too small to accommodate the Chamber itself and the division lobbies and the public and press galleries.
• Current facilities within Portcullis House would need to be relocated elsewhere.
• Additional space is still needed for MPs to relocate from the Palace of Westminster and be accommodated within the Northern Estate.
• Enhancements to the building services (power, broadcasting, heating, ventilation and air conditioning) would be required, both to improve resilience and to deal with increased occupancy.
• The location of the temporary Chamber within the atrium space would bring additional security considerations and would require new load bearing structures to distribute the weight of the new elements.
• The scale of these works would require the building to be emptied during the work, removing Committee Rooms and MPs’ offices which would need to be re-provided elsewhere and introducing a further decant phase into the Restoration and Renewal programme.
The approach being proposed allows the creation of an exceptional and flexible new building at Richmond House to meet the accommodation requirements of the House of Commons, whilst conserving multiple listed buildings across the Northern Estate and providing a lasting legacy.
The Northern Estate Programme is one of the most important development projects ever undertaken by Parliament and it will create a lasting long-term legacy across the entire site.

The plans have therefore been designed from the outset to deliver the maximum possible public benefit, not just while the temporary House of Commons Chamber is in operation but long into the future. Once the restoration and renewal of the Palace of Westminster is complete, the new facilities provided within the Northern Estate will also enable Parliament to consolidate its use of existing buildings and reduce running costs.

### Summary of benefits

- **Enabling the restoration and renewal of the Palace of Westminster**
  - The proposals for the Northern Estate are the essential first step to enable the restoration and renewal of the Palace of Westminster, arguably the single most important listed building in the country. It will be protected and modernised for future generations.

- **Ensuring the continued functioning of British democracy**
  - The temporary House of Commons Chamber together with its associated facilities will ensure the continued running of Government and Parliament for what is expected to be a period of several years while the works to the Palace of Westminster take place.

- **The fastest route to delivery and the best value for money for the taxpayer**
  - The works to the Palace of Westminster need to take place urgently given the current state of the building and both Houses of Parliament have endorsed the plan to fully vacate the Palace. These proposals represent the fastest, best value option to deliver the required spaces and create a lasting legacy for Parliament.

- **A safe and secure environment for MPs, staff and visitors**
  - The plans enable all MPs and their staff to work from a safe and secure site. It is also essential to remain in close proximity to the House of Lords and other Parliamentary and Government buildings around Whitehall to allow the formal and informal interactions that take place between the two Houses and Government departments to continue.

- **Improving public access to the House of Commons**
  - Approximately one million people pass through Parliament’s doors every year, including school children, constituents, business, charities and tourists. Public engagement is a vital element of our Parliamentary democracy and the new spaces provided within Richmond House will maintain public access to the Chamber and Committee Rooms, alongside the provision of new education and participation spaces.

- **Sustainable and efficient buildings**
  - The plans allow for the effective and efficient running of Parliament during the period the temporary House of Commons Chamber is in use, with reduced running costs and more sustainable buildings. From an energy and carbon perspective, the works will deliver significant improvement in efficiency and include a new site-wide energy centre.

- **Transforming access for people with disabilities**
  - A priority of the Restoration and Renewal Programme will be to bring the Palace up to the modern accessibility standards that are expected of a public building and this is an essential component of the works to the Northern Estate as well. Accessibility over the whole Northern Estate site will be vastly improved, including to the temporary House of Commons Chamber.

- **Modern facilities for Parliament**
  - The proposals will create a fit for purpose modern estate for generations to come. The new Richmond House delivers much needed new flexible workspace whilst major investment into the existing buildings has been a fundamental requirement of the Parliamentary Estate for years.

- **A wider legacy for Parliament**
  - The flexibility for future use built into the new Richmond House brings with it the potential to free up spaces within the Palace of Westminster itself. For example some facilities could remain permanently based within the Northern Estate, allowing space within the Palace to be prioritised for improved public access and an expanded education programme.

- **Significant heritage benefits**
  - With major investment and sensitive improvements to listed buildings across the Northern Estate, their condition is greatly enhanced and their long term use secured whilst minimising changes to the historic character of Whitehall and Parliament Street.

- **A major economic boost**
  - The works to the Northern Estate and the Restoration and Renewal Programme represent one of the UK’s most important construction projects, creating thousands of skilled jobs including a number of work placements and apprenticeships, and benefiting the economy.
Consultation and next steps

We are currently consulting on the proposals set out in this booklet before submitting a suite of planning applications to Westminster City Council later in 2019. The Council will then also undertake its own consultation on the plans.

We are engaging closely with MPs and Peers, their staff, House staff, statutory bodies and interested parties including Westminster City Council, the Greater London Authority, Transport for London, Historic England and other heritage bodies.

We are also consulting the local communities around the site, including via a staffed public exhibition so that local residents and members of the public can understand and feedback on the proposals. All consultation materials are also available online.

In some areas our proposals are determined by the specific requirements for the temporary House of Commons Chamber and the need for the House of Commons to operate in a safe and secure environment while the works to the Palace of Westminster take place. However we are interested to receive comments on the proposals, all of which will be shared with the Northern Estate Programme staff and the design team.

We would like your feedback on these proposals and, in addition to general comments, are particularly interested in the following:

1. **Our design approach**
   Do you have any views about the proposed changes to the Northern Estate?

2. **Improving public access to the House of Commons**
   What publicly accessible facilities would you like to see included, especially around the temporary Chamber and Committee Rooms?

3. **Enabling a flexible legacy for the Northern Estate buildings for the long-term**
   Is there anything else we should consider in order to ensure that the new Richmond House and the other buildings can provide the best long term legacy?

We would like all comments by 28 June 2019 and you can send us your views via the following channels:

**Complete our comments form online:**
northeasternest.parliament.uk

**Email us:**
northeasternest@parliament.uk

**Call us:**
0800 307 7964

**Freepost:**
Northern Estate Programme, 7 Millbank, Westminster, SW1P 3JA

You can view these proposals at:
northeasternest.parliament.uk

To find out more about the governance arrangements visit:
www.restorationandrenewal.parliament.uk

Indicative image of the proposals for Richmond House as viewed from Laundry Road.
Contact us

You can view these proposals at: northernestate.parliament.uk

To find out more about the governance arrangements visit: www.restorationandrenewal.parliament.uk

To respond to this consultation you can do so via the following channels:

- **Complete our comments form online:**
  northernestate.parliament.uk

- **Email us:**
  northernestate@parliament.uk

- **Call us:**
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