

# My intervention during the debate on the Restoration and Renewal for the Palace of Westminster

**Rt Hon Sir John Redwood MP (Wokingham) (Con):** Do we not also need some common sense and realism? Surely the priority is to do those works that are essential to the safety of the building and its occupants. We have to understand the mood of the times and say to the experts that to allow this enormous escalation in the project's cost, scope and timing is simply not acceptable.

**Mark Spencer MP, Leader of the House of Commons:** I honestly think we can do both. I think we can get to an understanding and a place where, with expert advice, we can get value for taxpayers' money, where we can progress this as rapidly as possible and where we can take a more common-sense approach.

The Commissions have taken all these points on board, carefully assessed the options and sought independent advice on the best way forward. The Commissions, with cross-party representation and independent and external members, have taken a unanimous decision that it is necessary to revise the approach to the governance and mandate of the R&R programme.

We need a governance structure that is responsive to the requirements of the parliamentary context, is accountable to Parliament and is better placed to build the necessary consensus. The Commissions have judged that this can be best achieved through an in-house structure. The Parliamentary Buildings (Restoration and Renewal) Act will remain in place and will continue to provide the statutory underpinning.

The current Sponsor Body will be abolished, and its functions under the Act will be transferred to two corporate officers who will become the statutory duty holders. [The Act](#) provides for this flexibility by allowing for the Sponsor Body to be abolished and for its functions to be transferred. The proposed in-house governance structure will consist of two tiers: a client board on which the two Commissions have strategic oversight; and a programme board with external expertise that will be central to resolving critical choices and priorities.