



10 DOWNING STREET  
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THE PRIME MINISTER

15 July 2020

*Ben David & Sarah,*

We all have a responsibility to protect the Palace of Westminster as a functioning building and as the iconic UNESCO World Heritage site that is the home and symbol of our democracy. The current situation is unsustainable given the serious risk of a major fire and the need to upgrade the services throughout the building. The risk of fire is one we take extremely seriously and we will be writing separately to the House Authorities on this matter.

As you know, we welcome the strategic review of the Parliamentary Restoration and Renewal programme proposed by the Sponsor Board and Delivery Authority. That review should explore the full range of options from the minimum viable product to secure the future of the Palace of Westminster, for example just focussed on fire safety, through to the fundamental refurbishment of the building. In taking forward this review, costs should be kept to a minimum (i.e. no “gold plating”). We should also move as quickly as possible, both because of the risks associated with the current state of the building and the need to provide certainty on the way forward and thereby minimise disruption to our business.

The review should advise on the best model for delivery. As part of this, it should consider the case for both Houses remaining in situ for the duration of the works, a full decant of both Houses or a partial decant of either or both Houses. There are a number of possible locations within London, which could be considered, including Richmond House, the QEII Centre and City Hall. However, the review should also consider a possible location outside London. The Government is considering establishing a Government hub in York and it would therefore make sense to consider this as a potential location. The Government does not pre-empt any particular outcome. The review should determine how the various options should be assessed. Costs are obviously a major driver, but the review should also consider other factors including disruption to Parliament’s work, the timelines for delivery, heritage benefits and fire safety.

The location of Parliament is a constitutional issue. The views of Parliamentarians will need to be considered carefully, as well as any legislative impact.

It will be important that the review engage effectively with Parliamentarians from both Houses and I shall arrange for a copy of this letter to be placed in the libraries of the House.



The image shows two handwritten signatures in blue ink. The top signature is written in a cursive style and appears to read 'Borwick'. The bottom signature is also in cursive and appears to read 'Borwick'.

Mr David Goldstone CBE and Ms Sarah Johnson