

The background of the entire page is a detailed architectural line drawing of a Gothic building facade, likely a church or cathedral. The drawing is rendered in a light purple or lavender color against a white background. It shows a complex structure with multiple levels of windows, including large pointed arches and smaller, more decorative windows. The drawing is oriented vertically, with the top of the building at the top of the page and the bottom at the bottom. The drawing is partially obscured by a dark purple horizontal band that contains the title text.

Restoration and Renewal Programme

Public Engagement Strategy



HOUSES OF PARLIAMENT
RESTORATION & RENEWAL

December 2020

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Foreword



Liz Peace CBE
Sponsor Body Chair



Mike Brown CBE, MVO
Delivery Authority Chair

People all around the world recognise the Palace of Westminster instantly. As part of a UNESCO World Heritage Site, the home of our democracy, and a cornerstone of our country's history, it is unique and irreplaceable. Yet the building is in peril, falling apart faster than it can be fixed. Although the most urgent safety critical issues are being addressed, the costs of maintenance are soaring and there remains a significant risk of failure.

When we listen to people around the country, we find that this comes as a shock to many. Beneath the impressive exterior and beautiful decoration, the Palace of Westminster is in poor condition, at risk of catastrophic fire, flood and falling masonry. Throughout the Palace the many different levels, dating from a time before the need for accessibility was widely acknowledged, mean there is inadequate access for disabled people. And there is significant scope for improvement both to the working conditions for the thousands of people working there and to the experience of around a million visitors each year.

The heating, electrical and plumbing systems are at, and in many cases beyond, the end of their lives. That's why legislation has been passed to make sure we can act urgently to save and protect this magnificent place for future generations.

Buildings are so much more than bricks and mortar – they embody our culture and history, our collective talents, hopes and ambitions. The Restoration and Renewal (R&R) Programme will involve engineers, architects and craftspeople from around the UK, creating jobs and apprenticeships in communities, towns and cities across the whole country. It will be a project delivered by and for all of us.

Right:
St Stephen's Hall with benches set out for visitors to the Public Galleries.

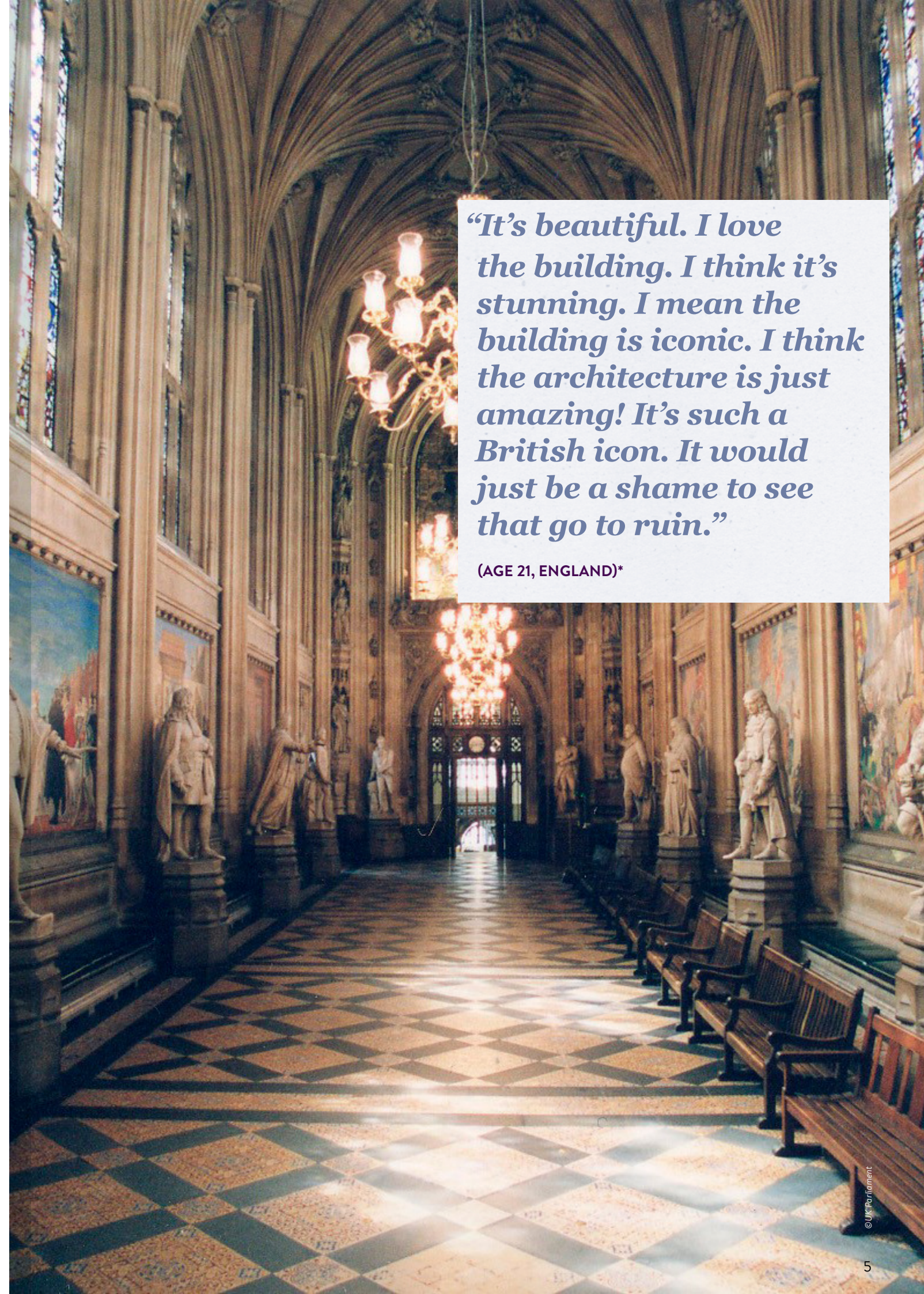
As the organisations charged with designing and delivering this Programme, we are committed to engaging, informing and listening to the public. This Public Engagement Strategy sets out how we will make that commitment a reality, by making sure people across the UK are meaningfully informed about and engaged in the restoration and renewal of the Palace of Westminster.

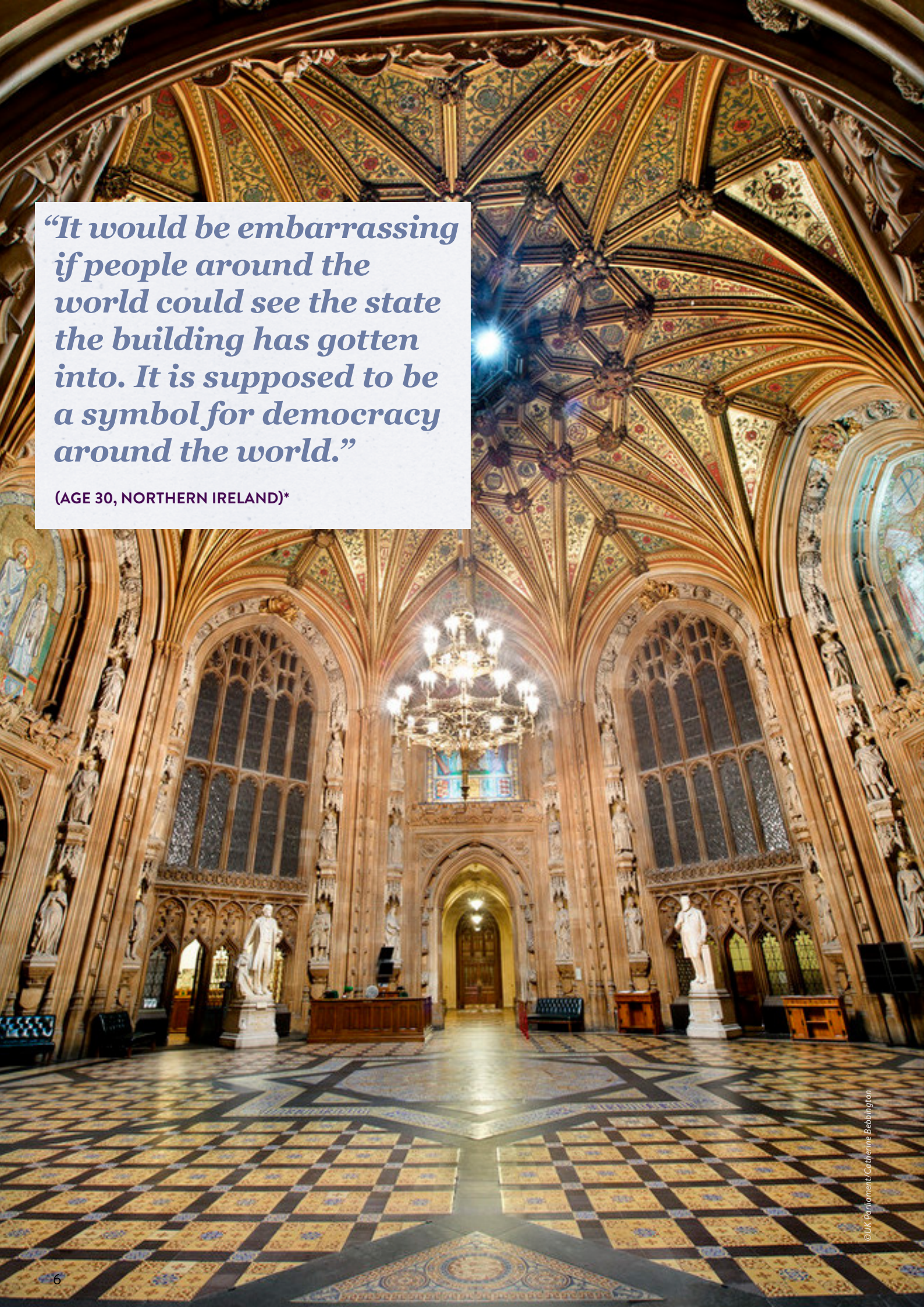
Getting this right is essential if the Palace of Westminster is to be safeguarded for future generations, fit for the future as the working home for our parliamentary democracy, and welcoming to all.

We hope you will join us as we place the people of the United Kingdom at the heart of our historic task.

“It’s beautiful. I love the building. I think it’s stunning. I mean the building is iconic. I think the architecture is just amazing! It’s such a British icon. It would just be a shame to see that go to ruin.”

(AGE 21, ENGLAND)*





“It would be embarrassing if people around the world could see the state the building has gotten into. It is supposed to be a symbol for democracy around the world.”

(AGE 30, NORTHERN IRELAND)*

Introduction

This document describes the rationale, objectives and principles guiding our approach to public engagement, as well as some key themes and how we will target our activity. Over time our engagement will need to evolve to reflect the different phases of the Programme – the ‘activities’ section of this document focuses on the period running up to the start of construction, during which we will be building public understanding and seeking views to shape our plans. This document also considers how we will collaborate with others and how we will measure, report on and use the results of our engagement activity.

What we learn from listening to the public will sit alongside a range of other inputs – including feedback from Members of both Houses, people working in the building, external stakeholders and technical experts – to inform our plans for Restoration and Renewal, and particularly the Outline Business Case.

Left:
View into Central Lobby.

Why engage with the public?

The Palace of Westminster is the home of the UK's democracy, it is therefore vital that the Programme engages with the people of the UK throughout the process of restoration and renewal.

The R&R Programme is being undertaken, ultimately, **on behalf of the people** of the United Kingdom, including for future generations. We are committed to making sure that our Programme takes into account the needs and expectations of the public.

Engaging with people throughout the UK will provide us with more information and a broader range of perspectives, which will help to **inform our thinking and decision making** about what the restored and renewed Palace of Westminster should be like, and how we should go about delivering the works.

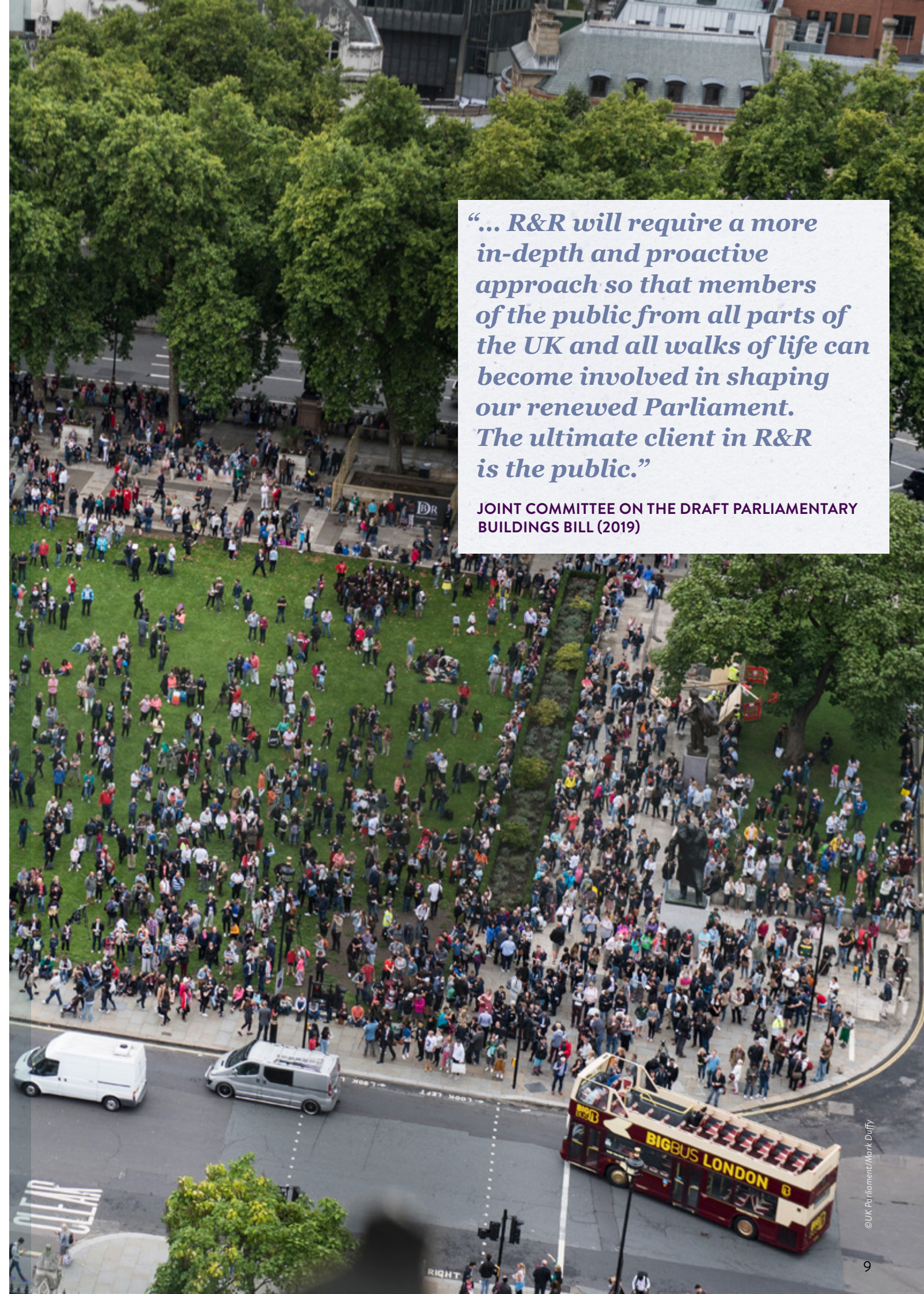
Across both Houses and all political parties, **Members have stressed the importance of public engagement** to make sure the people they represent are informed, involved and able to have their say. So, as we develop the Programme's Outline Business Case for Members to consider, we will be transparent about how we are listening to the public and how we are using and acting on what we hear.

The restoration and renewal of the Palace of Westminster is a topic that has attracted much interest and debate, particularly in the 'Westminster bubble'. Our programme of public engagement will enable us to hear **what the public think and feel more broadly**.

Finally, our Public Engagement Strategy will ensure we meet the **specific legal obligations**¹ imposed on the Sponsor Body by the Parliamentary Buildings Restoration and Renewal Act 2019: promoting public understanding of the purposes of the Restoration and Renewal Programme and seeking public views on strategic objectives and decisions.

Right:
View from Elizabeth tower of the crowds gathered in Parliament Square.

¹ <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2019/27/enacted>



“... R&R will require a more in-depth and proactive approach so that members of the public from all parts of the UK and all walks of life can become involved in shaping our renewed Parliament. The ultimate client in R&R is the public.”

JOINT COMMITTEE ON THE DRAFT PARLIAMENTARY BUILDINGS BILL (2019)

Our objectives for engagement

We have set two over-arching objectives for our public engagement programme.

To build and sustain public understanding of the Restoration and Renewal Programme, and keep people updated on its progress – measured through regular qualitative and quantitative research into awareness of the Programme among people across the country.

To seek and take into account the views of the public, as we develop our plans for Restoration and Renewal. We will show how we have done this alongside the Outline Business Case, when it is complete.

The principles behind our Public Engagement Strategy

To achieve these objectives our public engagement will be built around a number of core principles, which we will also use to assess whether we have been successful in our task. It will be:

UK-wide – we will connect with people in all parts of the United Kingdom, offering people from every community the chance to have their say, whilst respecting the role of the devolved legislatures in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales.

Varied – we will use a range of tools to capture the varied views of different people, and we will make the most of the full range of communication channels available, so members of the public can engage with us in a way that is accessible to them.

Sustained – we will sustain our engagement over the life of the Programme, improving it based on feedback and insights, and tailoring it for the various stages – including design development, construction, and celebrating the eventual completion and reopening of the building.

Collaborative – we will work closely with Members of both Houses and Parliament's own Participation and Communications teams, and build partnerships with a range of other organisations that can help us reach particular groups.

Inclusive – we will ensure that everybody who wants to has the chance to be involved, while proactively targeting those who may be less likely to participate, to make sure we are understanding the public's views overall.

Meaningful – we will ensure that information we learn about the views of the public is meaningfully used to inform decisions we take about the Programme, and that we demonstrate how this has been done.

What we've heard from people around the United Kingdom

“Catastrophic fire’ is really worrying to me... I’d hate to think that we could lose the building in a matter of minutes. Something has to be done, and quickly.”

(AGE 65, SCOTLAND)*

“A lot of people have lost their work and can't pay taxes and are on benefits, and this might go on for some time or even get worse! So this should be done with a cost-efficient plan.”

(AGE 30, NORTHERN IRELAND)*

“It’s a historical building and one of the flagships of our nation. It brings tourists in from all over the world.”

(AGE 50, NORTHERN IRELAND)*

“When I think of the word ‘restoration’, I think of a project that will be respectful to the building... it will restore it to its former glory...”

(AGE 37, WALES)*



“Loads of people are going to be unemployed from the pandemic, so let's get them all working on the Houses of Parliament. It's a huge project, thousands of new jobs, it brings the United Kingdom together.”

(AGE 28, SCOTLAND)*

“Obviously, cost is a big factor, but when you're doing a job you're better doing it well the first time, rather than having to go back and spend more money and have more disruption. So I'd say do it properly now.”

(AGE 53, SCOTLAND)*

“For the kind of money being spent I'd want something done to keep the building in a fit state of repair for a long, long time. Also to make sure we get some value back as well, like to maybe create more jobs.”

(AGE 42, ENGLAND)*

*All quotes from members of the public in this document were sourced from qualitative research carried out July–November 2020

Our themes for engagement

To ensure we are effectively engaging the public and demonstrating the clear relevance of the R&R Programme, we have developed a series of themes that will run through our engagement activity.



Heritage and design

Celebrating and sharing the extraordinary and inspirational architecture and design of the building and its collections, which are of international significance, and the building's role in over 900 years of history.

Left:
The magnificent hammerbeam oak roof of Westminster Hall, the largest in Northern Europe.



Construction and engineering challenges

Explaining the current condition of the building and providing insights into the complex challenge of restoring it to its former glory.

Above:
Scaffolding surrounding recent outer stonework conservation work on the Palace of Westminster Cloister.



“A key benefit of this, is it will create good jobs and employment for people. I think it will probably take years to do the whole job, so that’s good for all of Britain and for all people.”

(AGE 46, WALES)*

Jobs and skills across the UK

Highlighting the contribution of communities across the country in providing materials and skills for the refurbishment effort and encouraging people to take advantage of the benefits that will flow – including employment and apprenticeship opportunities on the Programme. Many of the people who will work on restoring the Palace are currently in primary and secondary school and we want to inspire them to pursue careers within the construction and heritage industries.

Sustainability

Exploring the sustainable approaches the Programme is taking to the restoration project and the improved environmental outcomes this will deliver for the Palace.

Left:
A specialist painting conservator working on a large oil painting in the collection.



Participation in the work of Parliament

Engaging with the public to explore the opportunities brought by R&R to create a more welcoming and accessible building, including for disabled people, that facilitates public participation in the work of Parliament.

Above:
An event in Parliament bringing together young people from diverse communities across the UK with MPs and Peers.

Targeting our activity

We will seek to connect with as many people as possible through the different stages of the Restoration and Renewal Programme, ensuring that everyone across the UK who wants to has the chance to be informed and involved.

There are already many people who take strong active interest in Parliament as a building and an institution, and we will ensure that we are providing routes for those groups to find the information they need and let us know their views. And we will also seek to harness the interest and enthusiasm of millions of people across the country with an interest in history, architecture and heritage.

To make sure that we are getting a full and accurate picture of what the public thinks, we will also make sure that we find ways to hear the views of people who are less likely to participate in typical channels of engagement. A recent report by the House of Commons Library² identified groups that are less likely to be engaged in politics and the work of Parliament as including young people, people from Black and minority ethnic backgrounds, people in long term unemployment, women and disabled people.

We will also talk directly with participants in the work of Parliament, including visitors to the estate (approximately one million people visit Parliament each year) to understand how the R&R Programme can help to make the Palace of Westminster more welcoming and accessible for all those who visit it – particularly for disabled people – and how the Programme can facilitate participation by the public in the work of Parliament.

We will provide materials in a range of accessible formats to ensure that everybody who wants to can access information and get involved.

“The building is important because it’s about history, isn’t it? It’s significant because the building is iconic and fundamental to the way Britain sees itself and how the rest of the world sees us.”

(AGE 30, ENGLAND)*

Below:
School outreach session in Central Lobby, the Palace of Westminster.



² <https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/cbp-7501/>

Top:
Young People's Question Time 2014.

Below:
Pearly Princess looking up at the clockface of the Elizabeth Tower.



Stages of engagement

During the lifetime of the Programme, engagement activity will be broken down into three broad stages.

STAGES

- 1

Planning:
Building understanding and gathering views to inform our plans as they are developed – including the Outline Business Case and subsequent detailed designs.
- 2

Delivery:
Once construction starts, involving people in the works as they are delivered, and maintaining active interest.
- 3

Completion:
Celebrating the restored and renewed Palace of Westminster.

The focus of this section of this document is on Stage 1. Stages 2 and 3 will continue with the activities established in Stage 1, adapting our approach as necessary to reflect the progress of the Programme. The construction phase will provide exciting opportunities for people to find out more about the complexities of delivering the UK's biggest ever heritage restoration project.

What we've done so far

Since the Sponsor Body and Delivery Authority were formally set up in April we have:

- Activated the **R&R Programme website**³ with a wealth of information about the Palace of Westminster and the Programme including the current problems that the building suffers and how we are set up to fix them.
- Launched our accounts across three key **social media** channels – LinkedIn⁴, Twitter⁵ and Instagram⁶ – with regularly updated content and growing numbers of followers.
- Secured our first **press, online and broadcast media coverage** for the Programme.
- Issued an **invitation for submissions** to the Strategic Review⁷, providing a route for feedback into the Programme.
- Established a **deliberative panel** of members of the public, broadly regionally and demographically representative, to discuss and provide feedback on key issues being considered by the Strategic Review.

³ <https://restorationandrenewal.uk/>

⁴ <https://www.linkedin.com/company/houses-of-parliament-restoration-and-renewal-programme/>

⁵ https://twitter.com/Parliament_RR

⁶ <https://www.instagram.com/restorationandrenewal/>

⁷ Following the formal establishment of the Sponsor Body and Delivery Authority, the Strategic Review has been reviewing existing and new evidence to check that the approach to delivering Restoration & Renewal represents the best and most cost-effective option. Its recommendations will be published once they have been discussed with both Houses. <https://restorationandrenewal.uk/the-plan/strategic-review>



Above: Social media content posted by the Programme on its newly launched channels.

Promoting public understanding

During Stage 1 key activities will include:

- Continuously developing our website to feature more compelling and interactive content, making it a hub for digital engagement activity and the natural place for people to go for information about the Programme. In particular, the website could host localised information explaining the connection between R&R and particular regions, such as the location of and stories behind our suppliers and contractors, once available.
- Maximising our engagement with the media across broadcast, print and online, including regional newspapers and programmes and those focused on particular communities. This will help us reach the largest possible number of people, with stories aimed at building understanding of and interest in support for the Programme. We will collaborate on documentaries and podcasts, and target channels and publications aimed at children and young people.
- Continuing to build our social media presence by establishing a strong online voice for the Programme and working with other influential online organisations and individuals to seek maximum exposure for our content and build followers. We will also use our social media accounts to have direct conversations with the public about the Programme.
- Developing resources and activities for schools and young people, including age appropriate materials to spark imagination, questions and ideas. These will enable students to learn about the restoration and renewal of their Parliament building while inspiring them about the possibilities that the Programme holds for the future.
- Building creative partnerships with organisations and individuals who can help us reach our target groups. This will include those working in the fields of heritage conservation and political engagement, as well as voices that will resonate and connect beyond those who have a pre-existing interest in these topics.

Seeking and using the views of the public

During Stage 1 we will listen to what people are saying and undertake other research to develop a comprehensive understanding of the views of the public. Alongside a range of other inputs, including from Parliamentary stakeholders and experts, this insight will feed into the Programme’s design and business case processes.

The activities we develop to listen to the public will be promoted through a range of channels, including those targeting our priority groups. We will ensure that people can provide feedback in ways that suit them.

Research will include further meetings of our deliberative panel, broader polling and surveys, and potentially specialist studies.

The main phases of listening activity will be:

Gathering information and testing ideas – through focused activity we will ask people to tell us what they want from their future Parliament building and test emerging ideas. This will include looking at particular topics such as visitor facilities, accessibility for disabled people, and the approaches to heritage and sustainability.

Refining our plans – once we have developed the scheme in more detail, we will seek people’s feedback to refine the design and gain input on how it can best meet their needs and expectations – both as users of the building (including visitors) and as the wider public. This stage will also include the pre-planning application consultation and, once the application is submitted, a further statutory consultation led by the local planning authority.

Decant accommodation

Subject to the outcomes of the current Strategic Review we may also hold consultations on the designs for decant accommodation that could be used by the Houses during the construction phase of the Programme, which would also be followed by further consultations by the local planning authority.

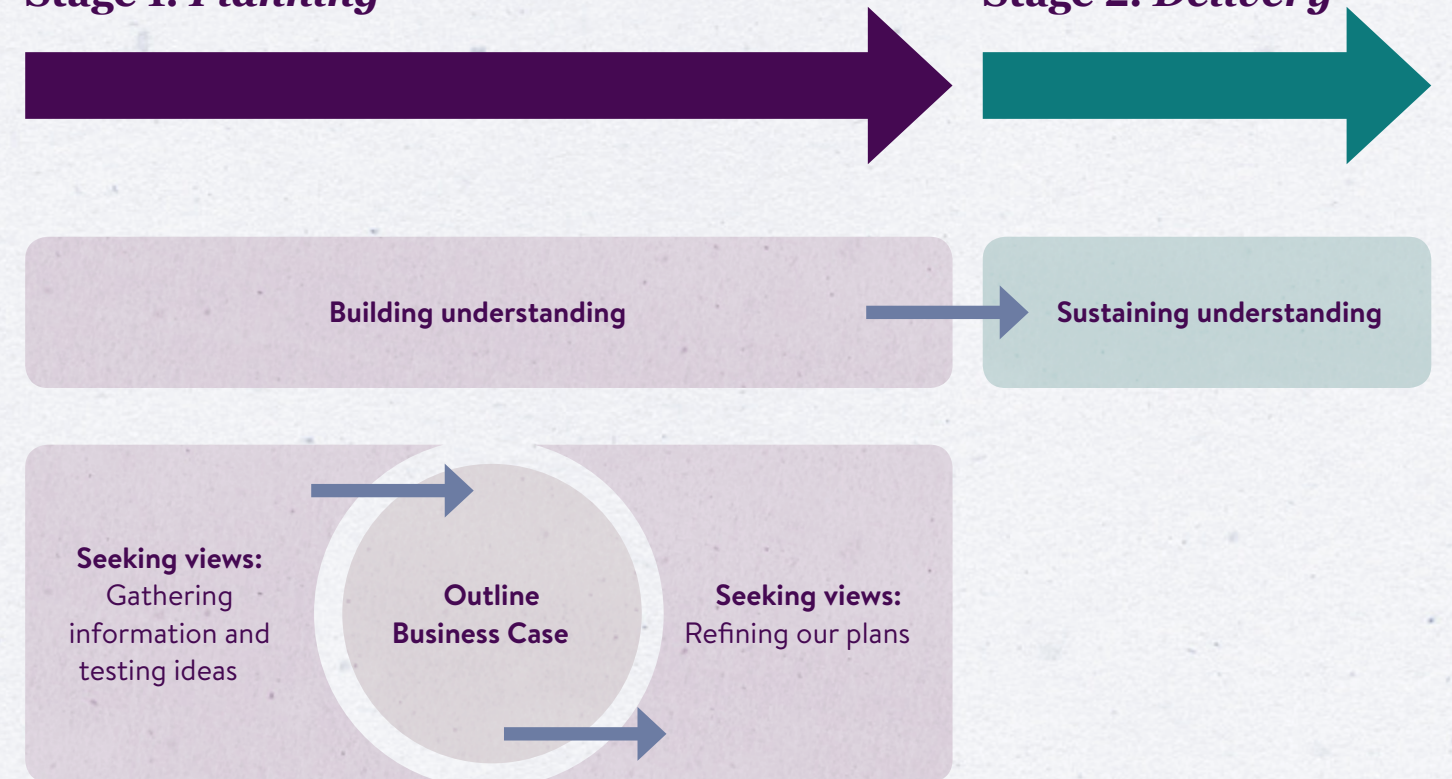
“It sounds like it’s making it more accessible for normal people to see what’s going on possibly, and be welcoming rather than it just being a place that the politicians go.”

(AGE 27, ENGLAND)*

Expected sequence of engagement activity during Stage 1

Stage 1: Planning

Stage 2: Delivery



Working with others

Parliament's Participation and Communications teams

Parliament has well-established teams whose remit is to communicate about, and engage the public in, the work of Parliament. We will work with them to identify opportunities to complement and reinforce our respective engagement activities. This could include featuring information about R&R in schools visits, tours of the building, and exhibitions; working together to seek visitor feedback about facilities; participating in the annual UK Parliament Week programme; and establishing improved links between Parliament's and R&R's websites and social media accounts.

Members

Members of both Houses provide a direct connection between the institution of Parliament, the building it inhabits, and communities across the UK. We will create dedicated materials for MPs to use to discuss R&R with their own constituents and for both MPs and Peers to use with other interested stakeholders. We will also look for opportunities to involve Members directly in public engagement activity, particularly where it relates to their own local areas (for example around jobs, apprenticeships and skills) or topics of interest.

Other organisations

We will actively seek out partnerships with other organisations, particularly those who are able to support us in reaching people who are typically less engaged in politics and the work of Parliament. We will also engage closely with organisations that have specialist interest or expertise in issues that the R&R Programme is addressing, or from whose experience we can learn to ensure our engagement activity is as creative, outward looking and effective as possible.

Below:
MPs take questions from the world's press on Parliament Square.



Measuring, using and reporting our engagement outcomes

Our engagement programme as a whole will be evaluated by considering the extent to which it has delivered on our core principles (as set out on page 11) including looking at the number and range of people participating, how well we targeted our priority groups, and how the feedback we received was used.

We will also use quantitative and qualitative research to understand public attitudes to the restoration and renewal of the Palace of Westminster, including measuring overall levels of awareness and understanding of the project. We will also monitor views on the issues the Programme is addressing and the expected benefits.

Individual engagement activities will be evaluated to ensure continuous improvement, including seeking feedback from participants.

Insight gained about the views of the public will be fed into the process to develop the Outline Business Case and the detailed design, and used to inform decisions that we take. When we provide the Outline Business Case to Parliament, we will set out an account of the public engagement activity that we have undertaken up to that stage in the Programme, what we learned, and how we used that information.

Similarly, as we refine the design (including undertaking the pre-planning application consultation) we will set out how we have sought and listened to feedback on our plans, and what changes we have made.

“Not spending money within the near future would just be kicking the can down the road by the sounds of it. We’d just be looking at greater costs the longer we don’t address the issues that we’ve got right now.”

(AGE 49, ENGLAND)*

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