



Video transcript

Sustainability

Hello, I'm Omar Rouchdy and I'm Head of Sustainability for the Restoration and Renewal Programme, of the Palace of Westminster – home to the Houses of Parliament.

Today, behind the impressive exterior, despite incredible work by Parliamentary teams, the building is in poor condition, at risk of fire, flooding or stone fall. Although it's currently safe for people to use, it is in need of comprehensive restoration.

That is also an opportunity to make the Palace of Westminster a more environmentally sustainable building, for example by making it more resilient to the effects of climate change and by reducing its carbon footprint.

The building is a Grade 1 listed UNESCO World Heritage Site, so as with all historic buildings, there are challenges involved in making changes which will contribute to a sustainable future for all of us.

In line with the Paris Climate Agreement, the UK Government has set a target of achieving Net Zero Carbon by 2050 and a 78% reduction of emissions by 2035. Like everybody, we have a role to play in this. After all, the Palace of Westminster is where politicians make laws on environmental sustainability and discuss climate change.

In its current state the building is energy hungry. Outdated systems and poor insulation make heating and cooling the building inefficient. And with limited sources of renewable energy the building relies heavily upon non-renewables like gas. So, we're exploring ways to make it more energy efficient, and use more sustainable sources of energy.

We also want to minimise the carbon footprint of our own programme of works and will work with companies in our supply chain to reduce emissions and encourage reuse and recycling of materials where possible.



Due to the historic nature of the building, we will need to include an element of carbon offsetting to meet our ambition of making the building zero carbon. We will consider how we approach offsetting – for example through green energy or new forestry, which could also provide additional benefits for people’s health and wellbeing.

Besides looking at carbon emissions, there are other ways we can make the building sustainable. It’s home to a nesting pair of Peregrine Falcons! However, green space in and around the Palace is limited. There may be opportunities to improve biodiversity in this crowded urban environment.

Finally, our programme is about the future, so we’re focussed on ensuring the Palace of Westminster can adapt to emerging environmental challenges – such as a changing climate – and the needs of future generations.

So, we want to hear your views and ideas.

How can we ensure that the Palace of Westminster reduces carbon emissions and plays its part in protecting the environment?

How can we make best use of money in the choices we make for the Palace’s sustainability?

And how can we here on the programme limit our environmental impact as we carry out these essential works?

Please join the conversation below.

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