

Dame Meg Hillier
Chair of the Public Accounts Committee

27 February 2023

Dear Dame Meg,

Further information following the oral evidence session: Restoration and Renewal Recall, held on Thursday 2 February 2023.

In our letter dated 9 February 2023, we undertook to provide an overall assessment of the Fielden House asbestos incident, once the investigation had concluded.

The matter has now been concluded and the key findings of the independent investigation undertaken by the Parliamentary Safety Team are detailed below:

- i. The parliamentary project lead who was initially suspended once the incident came to light, was reinstated shortly after as a result of the investigation finding he followed due process once he became aware of the risk;
- ii. As a result of the unplanned intrusive works, there was most likely no exposure and no resulting risk, although some low-level exposure cannot be discounted. Given the asbestos containing material was not disturbed by the works, this would not be greater than 0.1 fibre/ml and in accordance with Health and Safety Executive (HSE) guidance poses little likelihood of any long-term ill health effects to any person working on or visiting the site;
- iii. As such, the matter did not meet the criteria for reporting to the HSE as a Dangerous Occurrence under the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR) 2015 by the Principal Contractor; and
- iv. Whilst the asbestos survey provided to the Principal Contractor by the House contained a number of inconsistencies, the Principal Contractor failed to scrutinise the survey and seek additional information relating to the lobby void prior to the intrusive works, as per their duties under the CAR¹ Regulations. This was a shortcoming and significant contributory factor related to the near miss incident.

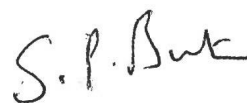
Whilst no ill health is foreseeable as a result of the incident, the matter was taken very seriously and used as an opportunity to learn from mistakes and continuously improve the management of asbestos on the parliamentary estate. Additional training has been delivered to Strategic Estates' project staff and asbestos related procedures are being reviewed.

¹ Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'John Benger', with a long horizontal flourish extending from the end.

Sir John Benger, Clerk of the House of Commons

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S. P. Burton', with a stylized, cursive script.

Simon Burton, Clerk of the Parliaments