

By our Political correspondent **Nat Hunter**



UK Ministers have today revealed their plans for the refurbishment of the Palace of Westminster. Work will begin in 2015 and is expected to take 5 years and cost over £3 billion. The proposals will also require the peers and MPs to move out while the renovation is underway.

The scheme was announced by the House of Commons commission, which is chaired by Speaker John Bercow MP. Mr Bercow claimed that, if repairs were carried out while the parliament was in residence, the cost of refurbishment would rise to over £10 billion and would take up to 20 years to complete.

He said “as a consequence we will need to find a new home for both MPs and Peers for the whole of the next parliamentary term”.

The solution proposed by the commission involves the temporary relocation of the House of Lords, House of Commons and the Cabinet office to sites in Scotland and Wales, a move which has been widely condemned by MPs as no more than a sop to reduce Nationalist unrest and

agitation in both those countries.



The House of Lords will take over the Senedd building in Cardiff bay, which currently houses the Welsh Assembly. The Assembly will move back into the neighbouring Ty Hywel building which they occupied before the Senedd was built.

While there are over 800 peers, and the Senedd has space for just 60 assembly members, this is still seen as a practical solution since so few peers currently turn up for debates in Westminster, and far fewer are expected to make the trip to Wales.

The House of Commons will relocate to the Scottish Parliament in Holyrood and the Scottish Executive will be moved to the nearby Dynamic Earth, which will be closed to the public while MSPs are in session.

The debating chamber of the Scottish Parliament is unable to accommodate all 650 current MPS, even if most take seats in the visitor's galleries.



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