



Holyrood Progress Group
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April 2001

1. Following the Holyrood Progress Group meeting on Wednesday 21 March, I am instructed to write to you in the following terms.

2. The Group discussed your letter to me of 16 March. Members were anxious that I should convey to you their keen awareness of auditing issues and the depth of concern which informs the decision-making process in which they participate. While cost and programme considerations form the basis of the Group's remit, there is an awareness of the need to balance these with issues which extend beyond simple cost drivers. These wider considerations include government and public policy objectives relating to quality of design; sustainability; design life; planning requirements and good practice in relation to archaeology. As you will appreciate, the Group is aware that the cheapest option does not necessarily deliver the best value for money; rather members try to take responsible decisions within a complex environment. In this context, the recommendations made following the meeting on 16 March were not taken lightly and the purpose of this letter is to set out the reasoning behind them.

Queensberry House archaeology

3. Members appreciate the fact that there is currently no provision within the budget for additional archaeological work. However, they are mindful of Government guidelines which put the onus on developers to allow necessary archaeology to be undertaken in advance of intrusive construction work. The Group would not wish to recommend that the Parliament put itself in a position where it could be criticised for circumventing stated policy. Given that