

APPOINTMENT OF A JOINT COMMITTEE ON THE PALACE OF WESTMINSTER: FINANCIAL CONSEQUENCES

Memorandum by the Accounting Officer

1. The Government has tabled a motion to agree with the Lords Message of 9 July, to establish a Joint Committee on the Restoration and Renewal of the Palace of Westminster.
2. The motion reads as follows:

That this House concurs with the Lords Message of 9 July, that it is expedient that a Joint Committee of Lords and Commons be appointed to consider the restoration and renewal of the Palace of Westminster.

That a Select Committee of six Members be appointed to join with the Committee appointed by the Lords to consider the restoration and renewal of the Palace of Westminster.

That the Committee shall have power—

- (a) to send for persons, papers and records,
- (b) to sit notwithstanding any adjournment of the House,
- (c) to report from time to time,
- (d) to appoint specialist advisers, and
- (e) to adjourn from place to place.

That the quorum of the Committee shall be three.

That Ms Angela Eagle, Neil Gray, Chris Grayling, Ian Paisley, Jacob Rees-Mogg and Mark Tami be members of the Committee.

3. Standing Order No. 22C requires me, as Accounting Officer, to produce a memorandum on the financial consequences of any motion to be considered by the House if the motion would have a direct consequence of additional expenditure under the House of Commons: Administration Estimate estimated to be £50,000 or more.
4. On the assumption that the Joint Committee will be as active as a typical select committee related to a Government department, it would require a staff of about five, costing around £305,000 a year. As it will be a Joint Committee, at least one member of staff will be provided by the House of Lords. Initially it is envisaged that staff would be provided by transferring staff from existing select committees and other offices in the House, with the aim of replacing them by external recruitment if possible. It is possible that specialist staff would be seconded from outside the Parliamentary Service, although this is unlikely significantly to affect the overall costs. I have not included the costs of media support, on the assumption that these costs will be met from existing media teams within either House.
5. On the same assumption, other costs such as specialist advisers and publication. would amount to about £50,000 a year.
6. The total extra annual cost of establishing the Committee would therefore be of the order of £355,000 a year. Any net additional costs in 2015-16 will be met from contingency. Ongoing

costs thereafter will have to be factored in to baseline budgets from 2016-17 onwards if the Joint Committee's work continues beyond the end of the current financial year.

David Natzler

Clerk of the House and Accounting Officer

15 July 2015