

HYBRID SCRUTINY PROCEEDINGS MOTION

FINANCIAL CONSEQUENCES

Memorandum by the Accounting Officer

1. Under Standing Order No 22C, a motion which if agreed would have a direct consequence of additional expenditure under the House of Commons: Administration Estimate, estimated to be £50,000 or more shall not be considered by the House unless a memorandum setting out its expected financial consequences has been made available to the House by the Accounting Officer.
2. This memorandum therefore seeks to set out the expected financial consequences were the House to agree the motion, in the name of the Leader of the House, on hybrid scrutiny proceedings. Further information on this proposal can be found in the Explanatory Note for the Hybrid Scrutiny Proceedings Motion.
3. The motion asks the House to approve the “hybrid” format whereby Members would be enabled to participate in certain proceedings either virtually or physically in the Chamber. It is proposed to implement these measures with effect from the first sitting day after the motion is agreed to. This model is based on an assumption of up to two hours of scrutiny proceedings with hybrid participation each sitting day and the costs reflect that assumption.
4. If approved, the financial consequences for the Administration Estimate arise from the development and operating running costs of the virtual participation model. Some of this expenditure had been planned for inclusion in future estimates, but this timeframe has been accelerated to meet the demands of implementing the hybrid model. The initial cost of development has already been endorsed by the House of Commons Commission costing £148,793. The running costs for maintaining this system are estimated at £369,267 per month. The actual expenditure by the House of Commons will depend on the length of time the model is required, and any additional changes which may be made to it. This makes the estimation of the total financial consequences difficult to calculate at this point.
5. In the current financial year the costs will be met from contingency, if no other source of funding can be found, and could potentially contribute to the need for a Supplementary Estimate. Where necessary the cost will be factored into future financial plans.

Dr John Benger
Accounting Officer
20 April 2020