

COMMITTEE TO INVESTIGATE THE LOBBYING OF GOVERNMENT MOTION

FINANCIAL CONSEQUENCES

Memorandum by the Accounting Officer

1. A motion has been tabled by the Leader of the Opposition to establish a Select Committee to investigate the lobbying of Government, whose mandate would expire on 31 December 2021. The full text of the motion will be published in the Order Paper for 14 April 2021.
2. 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. This memorandum therefore seeks to set out the expected financial consequences were the House to agree this motion.
3. Because the Committee would be established at very short notice and would probably be required to begin its work rapidly to meet the timetable reflected in the motion, the staff team for the Committee would largely be formed by re-assigning staff currently supporting other Select Committees, with additional staff then recruited to fill those vacancies. This will necessarily mean that staffing levels for some other Committees would be reduced, pending recruitment of staff to fill vacant positions on the new Committee or on existing Committees. This means that during the first two months or so of operations the staffing of the new Committee would not involve additional expenditure, but a diminution in the resources available to existing Committees. The below costs are therefore based on a six-month period. It is also possible that some specialist staff would be seconded from outside the House of Commons Service, but this is unlikely markedly to affect the overall costs.
4. It has been assumed that the staffing levels for the Committee would need to be broadly comparable to those of a departmental select committee. This would suggest an estimated £225,000 in staff costs for a six-month period. Support from the media team to promote the work of the Committee would cost an additional £10,000 for a six-month period. On average select committees spend approximately £8,000 on non-staff costs such as specialist advisers and publications in a six-month period. This estimate does not include travel costs.
5. Based on these broad assumptions the total anticipated cost of establishing the committee, with effect until 31st December 2021, is £243,000.

Dr John Benger
Accounting Officer
13 April 2021