

VIRTUAL PARTICIPATION IN DEBATE 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 virtual participation in debate.
3. The motion asks the House to approve the participation of Members who are certified by a medical practitioner as clinically extremely vulnerable (or equivalent) according to relevant official public health guidance issued in England, Wales, Scotland or Northern Ireland, to participate virtually in debates which are designated for virtual participation by the Speaker.
4. If approved, the financial consequences for the Administration Estimate arise from the additional staff costs required to run the virtual participation in debate model. These additional costs are estimated at £11,000 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
24 November 2020