

Nick Timothy MP
Member for West Suffolk
House of Commons
(via email)

20 January 2025

Dear Mr Timothy,

Thank you for your letter regarding statements made by the Home Secretary on 22 July about a change to the Illegal Migration Act (which would enable the Government to legally begin processing some asylum cases in the UK, rather than being obliged to remove those applicants from the UK first).

Specifically, you raised concerns that some of the estimated savings of £7 billion from this change was calculated by “double counting”: adding the costs of removing some applicants to the estimated costs of instead accommodating them in the UK.

On 22 July the Home Secretary told¹ Parliament:

“Two and a half years after the previous Government launched it, I can report that [the Rwanda Migration and Economic Development partnership²] has already cost the British taxpayer £700 million... Making this one simple change will save the taxpayer an estimated £7 billion over the next 10 years.”

In response to your questions about this part of her statement, the Permanent Secretary of the Home Office wrote to you on 16 August³. His letter said that “the Home Secretary’s statement included” the figure of £700 million of costs related to UK-Rwanda Partnership⁴. He then wrote that “further detail is contained” within the Impact Assessment⁵ of the change to the law, from which the £7 billion of future savings was calculated. This indicated that the figures of £700 million and £7 billion were related.

Having discussed this issue with the Home Office, we established that the £700 million of costs are not included in the estimated £7 billion of savings outlined in the Impact Assessment and that they cover different time periods. The Permanent Secretary’s letter was not clear about the difference between these two figures, but since then the department has released a further breakdown of the £700 million⁶ which makes this more obvious.

¹ [Border Security and Asylum: Statement by the Secretary of State for the Home Department](#), 22 July 2024

² [Research briefing: UK-Rwanda Migration and Economic Development Partnership](#), 29 May 2024

³ Sir Matthew Rycroft to Nick Timothy MP, 16 August 2024 [enclosed]

⁴ under the UK-Rwanda Migration and Economic Development Partnership. See footnotes 2 and 6

⁵ [Impact Assessment: The Illegal Migration Act 2023 \(Amendment\) Regulations 2024](#), 22 July 2024

⁶ [Breakdown of Home Office costs associated with the MEDP with Rwanda and the Illegal Migration Act 2023](#), 2 December 2024

It is important that Government correspondence is clear and transparent on issues of great public interest, referring precisely to published data. This enables Parliament and the public to understand and independently scrutinise government decision-making.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Rob Chote', with a horizontal line underneath the name.

Sir Robert Chote
Chair