



Nick Timothy
Member of Parliament for West Suffolk
House of Commons, London, SW1A 0AA
Email: nick.timothy.mp@parliament.uk

5 November 2024

Dear Sir Robert,

I am writing in regard to the claim made by the Home Secretary on 22 July that scrapping the retrospective element of the Duty to Remove in the Illegal Migration Act will save £7 billion of taxpayers' money over the next ten years.

The Impact Assessment published by the Home Office appears to assume that no one in the cohort would have been removed to Rwanda or another country and would instead have remained in publicly funded accommodation for ten years. Notwithstanding the various assumptions and causes for concern about the Impact Assessment, the Home Office Permanent Secretary said to me in a letter dated 16 August 2024 that the Home Secretary's statistic included the cost of sending the very same migrants to Rwanda. My concern is that the claim of £7 billion of savings was acquired through double counting.

As Chair of the UK Statistics Authority, I am requesting that you investigate this matter urgently. I would encourage you to ask the Home Secretary and the Permanent Secretary at the Home Office to publish all internal correspondence and the methodology related to the £7 billion figure so Parliament can fully understand whether it is an honest calculation.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Nick Timothy".

Nick Timothy
Member of Parliament for West Suffolk



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ANNEX

1. Letter to Home Office Permanent Secretary – 25 July 2024

Dear Matthew

I hope you are very well.

I am writing regarding the statistics used by the Home Secretary in her statement to Parliament on Monday, 22 July. In that statement she said: “two and a half years after the previous Government launched it, I can report that [the Rwanda programme] has already cost the British taxpayer £700 million.”

She went on to say: “The potential costs of asylum support over the next four years if we continue down this track could be an eye-watering £30 billion to £40 billion.”

And: “I am laying a statutory instrument that ends the retrospective nature of the Illegal Migration Act provisions, so that the Home Office can immediately start clearing cases from after March 2023. Making this one simple change will save the taxpayer an estimated £7 billion over the next 10 years.”

These numbers seem very unlikely to me. So I am writing to ask you, as the Home Office permanent secretary and accounting officer, the following:

1. Do you endorse each of the numbers presented to Parliament by the Home Secretary?
2. Can you please provide me with the full breakdown of all the spending items and full workings used to calculate each statistic?
3. What was the precise wording of the original request commissioning these estimates from the Department? Did the commission change between the original request and the production of the numbers used by the Home Secretary?
4. Were the estimates presented by the Home Secretary the original numbers produced by the Department’s officials and statisticians in their first draft?
5. Were any changes made to the methodology used between the first and final draft estimates produced by the Department’s officials and statisticians?
6. If any changes were made to the methodology and/or the estimates made, what involvement did ministers and special advisers have in making those changes?
7. Were the final numbers produced and signed off by the Department’s statisticians and officials?
8. Was the final methodology signed off by the Department’s statisticians and officials?
9. Was any dissent lodged by the Department’s statisticians, officials or you, as permanent secretary and accounting officer, regarding the numbers given?
10. What role did special advisers play in (a) commissioning the estimates, (b) contributing to the estimates, and (c) presenting the estimates?
11. What estimates have been made by the Department’s statisticians and officials of the total projected costs of the policy set out by the new government by comparison – including all future welfare, housing and other costs?



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As you stated in your letter to Ed Humpherson at the Office for Statistics Regulation in November 2022, “our data should be accessible, with the context and sources clearly explained.” I agree with that commitment entirely, and I hope you will be able to reassure me that the statistics presented to Parliament by the Home Secretary were to the complete satisfaction of you, your statisticians and your officials.

Yours sincerely

Nick Timothy

2. Letter from the Home Office Permanent Secretary – 16 August 2024

Please see attached.

3. Letter to the Home Secretary – 1 September 2024

Please see attached.