

16 August 2024

Dear Nick,

Thank you for your email dated 25 July on the figures the Home Secretary used in her statement to Parliament on 22 July.

The Home Secretary's statement included the £700 million figure, which encompasses the direct costs of the UK-Rwanda Partnership as detailed in the National Audit Office report released on 1 March, as well as expenses related to preparing for relocation flights to Rwanda and implementing the Illegal Migration Act (IMA).

The direct costs of the Migration and Economic Development Partnership between the UK and Rwanda includes funding through the Economic Transformation and Integration Fund (ETIF) and the £20 million advance for Rwanda's operational costs. The £700 million figure accounts for expenses such as legal challenge responses, charter flights, and airfield and escort charges for individuals relocated to Rwanda. Further detail is contained within the Impact Assessment that accompanied the Retrospection Statutory Instrument that was laid before parliament; this passed through all the standard clearances and checks prior to publication.

As the Permanent Secretary and Accounting Officer, I ensure oversight of the Department's spending, and have done so throughout this process. My team and I collaborated with the National Audit Office for its report. However, the report did not cover some expected Home Office costs for MEDP-specific flights. My officials have verified these figures.

In reviewing departmental expenditure, my colleagues and I provided Ministers with comprehensive information on current and planned spending related to the partnership and the Illegal Migration Act's operation. However, I cannot disclose communications between ministers and officials as you requested. Such disclosure could harm the effective conduct of public affairs and the candid provision of advice and limit the space for Ministers to consider policy options safely.

I understand the significant public and parliamentary interest in this policy. The Home Office commits to transparency and must balance this with the need to provide Ministers with private advice for effective government operation.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Matthew Rycroft', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Sir Matthew Rycroft KCMG CBE

Permanent Secretary

