



Science and Technology Committee

House of Commons London SW1A 0AA

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From Rt Hon Greg Clark MP, Chair

Rt Hon Alok Sharma MP

Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy

1 Victoria Street,

London. SW1H 0ET

30 March 2020

Dear Alok,

The Government announced in its 2019 Spending Round that there would be a Spending Review in 2020. The outcome of this review will have a significant impact on what departments can deliver over the next few years.

Departmental Select Committees are appointed under House of Commons' standing orders to examine the expenditure, administration and policy of a particular government department. To do this effectively, the Science and Technology Committee needs to scrutinise funding decisions, relating to science, research and innovation, which affect your department – whether taken as part of, or following, the Spending Review – and the impact which those decisions are likely to have on delivery of future outcomes.

For that reason, it is critical that this Committee can engage at an early stage to understand, scrutinise and influence those spending decisions and their consequences. To do so effectively, we need good information to understand the issues facing your department and the plans you have for spending public money in the future.

In addition to the evidence my Committee took on the 18 March relating to the research and development spending commitments made in the Budget, we are collaborating with the House of Commons Scrutiny Unit and Treasury Committee, to seek the following information from you, in relation to your department and associated arm's length bodies:

- What your policy priorities are for the Spending Review period for science, research and innovation, including how these differ from those published in last year's Single Departmental Plan, and commitments made by the Government during the election and at the Spring Budget 2020;
- Details of spending commitments already made for the Spending Review period relating to science, research and innovation, by year, and by amount;
- How your department has analysed its priorities and work relating to science, research and innovation for this spending round, including how it identified areas of cost saving, programmes and projects that can be brought to an end and the total resources dedicated to the Spending Round;
- How you intend to engage those outside the department, such as civil society, in formulating ideas for savings and priorities in the science, research and innovation portfolio;
- What science, research and innovation policy areas you have identified that require assistance from other departments, and how you have liaised with them;

- Policy commitments (including those in legislation) made, relating to science, research and innovation, which may have a significant spending impact such as reducing carbon emissions to net zero by 2050 over the Spending Review period, with likely costs;
- Details of known unavoidable volume, demand, demographic or cost pressures relating to science, research and innovation, and their likely costs impacts;
- Details of science, research or innovation investment/capital spending priorities and likely costs;
- Plans for efficiencies in science, research or innovation policy, including information on how they might be achieved and details of the amounts of savings they are expected to generate. Which areas of policy or provision you regard as being efficient or where further savings can be made; and where further cuts may mean loss of provision or affect policy;
- How you intend to measure your performance given any funding settlement for science, research and innovation;
- How, as part of the Spending Review, you intend to assess the likely impacts of different spending proposals relating to science, research and innovation on advancing equality for different protected groups under the Equality Act 2010? Will full equality impact assessments of the outcome of the Spending Review, for each of the different protected groups, be published?

We will be sharing your response with the House of Commons Scrutiny Unit, Treasury Committee and Women and Equalities Committee to enable Committees to work together to scrutinise overall plans. I will publish your response when received.

With best wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Greg Clark'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name 'Greg' and the last name 'Clark' clearly distinguishable.

Rt Hon Greg Clark MP

Chair