



Business, Innovation and Skills Committee

House of Commons London SW1A 0AA

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Mr Mike Ashley
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28 April 2016

Dear Mr Ashley

Attendance at Select Committee

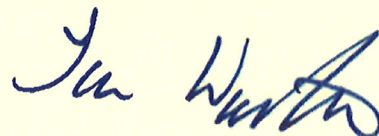
Thank you for your letter of 22 April regarding your attendance at the BIS Select Committee on 7 June.

In answer to your specific questions, I can confirm that select committees have the power under the Standing Orders of the House (No. 152(4)(a)) to send for "persons, papers and records" and, according to *Erskine May*, "failure to attend a committee when formally summoned is a contempt" and this should be reported to the House. Accordingly, that is what my Committee would do. It would then be for the House to decide whether to refer the matter to the Committee of Privileges to investigate whether the action constituted a contempt or whether there was a reasonable excuse for non-attendance. The precise procedure to be followed by that Committee in investigating the matter would be a matter for them, but you would clearly be given the opportunity to make your case, with legal assistance if you wished. It would then be for the House to consider any recommendation made in due course by that Committee, including any relating to sanctions.

Of course, I would hope that you would wish to avoid what might be a lengthy process by attending the Committee on 7 June. The decision as to whether you answered the questions of my Committee is a matter for you, but if you are prepared to answer our questions at Shirebrook I cannot see why you would choose not to do so at a different venue. Indeed, I find your concern about a "media trial" somewhat curious, given that you invited the media to Shirebrook to subject you to questioning only last month.

I hope that in the light of your own review you will want to contribute to this work.

We look forward to seeing you on 7 June.

Yours sincerely,


Iain Wright MP

Chair of the Business, Innovation and Skills Committee