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My Lords,

DIGITAL ECONOMY BILL – DPRRC RECOMMENDATIONS ON PART 5 (DIGITAL GOVERNMENT)

I am writing to provide further information about the government amendments tabled yesterday. These all concern Part 5 of the Bill which will be considered by the House at our next day of report on 20 March.

Part 5 of the Bill contains the information sharing powers to allow public authorities to deliver better public services, to better manage debt, prevent fraud, support research and to deliver better statistics. These powers have been developed in partnership with practitioners, experts and others interested parties across both the public and private sector involving an open policy making process and full public consultation. This process has led us to develop legislation with tightly defined powers, layered with safeguards to ensure that data is securely handled and protected against unlawful disclosure.

The Delegated Powers and Regulatory Reform Committee (DPRRC) made many further recommendations on the scope of the powers and the appropriate level of Parliamentary oversight. Having always approached these powers through open consultation and engagement we are receptive to the proposals made and responded positively to the committee on 16 February. We have tabled the necessary amendments. Further detail on each of the amendments is enclosed.

We have tabled these amendments, separate from other amendments responding to the DPRRC because they are needed to allow a forthcoming debate on legislative consent in the National Assembly for Wales to proceed. Additionally, we have also tabled an extension of the power to share non-identifying information by HMRC to provide equivalent powers for the Welsh Revenue Authority and Revenue Scotland. These powers have been sought by the respective devolved administrations.



Department for Culture, Media & Sport

I will write again when we table further amendments. I will place a copy of this letter in the House library.

Henry Ashton

Lord Ashton of Hyde
Parliamentary Under Secretary of State