I have a great many thoughts about the effectiveness of select committee systems, not least following many years’ experience in the House of Commons, including designing scrutiny systems and involvement in the revitalisation of the Departmental Select Committees (the *Shifting the Balance*) initiative. So far as your present inquiry is concerned, however, I am very happy to leave the expression of views to those who have longer experience of this House than I; with one exception.

The relationship of the two Houses is, as it should be, one of complementarity. The Lords and Commons do many similar things, but they do not compete; and in complementing each other they increase the influence, and indeed the power of Parliament. The complementary approaches to Select Committees are a case in point. Through the Departmental Select Committees the Commons pursue what might be called a “vertical” approach – examining the expenditure, administration and policies of an individual Department, and drilling down into related agencies and regulators. Our House, on the other hand, majors on cross-cutting Committees – a “horizontal” approach.

I am sure that there will be those who would urge us to move closer to the Commons structure and, for example, to have our own Departmental Committees (in key areas, at least, if not across the board). I would counsel strongly against any such move. The political and news agenda will mean that a Commons Committee and its Lords equivalent will tend to choose similar or identical subjects for investigation, competing directly for the attention and attendance of Ministers and other high-profile witnesses, and for media coverage. More seriously, when two Committees come to different views on a subject, the Government of the day will assume *carte blanche* to ignore both.

I hope that the outcome of your inquiry will reflect the differing, but complementary, approaches of the two Houses.

I should be very happy to have a chat about wider matters at any stage if it would be helpful to you.

**19th April 2018**