

Labour urge ministers to meet deadline for releasing Brexit impact studies

Keir

Starmer, Labour's Shadow Brexit Secretary, has urged ministers to meet the deadline for handing over the 58 Brexit impact studies to MPs tomorrow

[Tuesday 28 November] or risk being held in contempt of Parliament.

Earlier

this month, MPs unanimously backed a Labour motion for the economic impact studies to be released to the Select Committee for Exiting the European Union. MPs on that Select Committee will then have the right to review the impact studies and determine what information is put in the public domain.

The

Speaker of the House of Commons said motions of the kind tabled by Labour "have in the past been seen as effective or binding."

Responding

to the decision, the Brexit Secretary, David Davis, said on Tuesday 7 November: "The Government is committed to providing the information to the Committee as soon as possible. I have made plain to the House authorities that we currently expect this to be no more than three weeks [Tuesday 28 November]."

If

ministers fail to respond to Labour's motion, then they risk falling in contempt of Parliament.

Parliament's

rulebook Erskine May states that "actions which...obstruct or impede" the Commons "in the performance of its functions, or are offences against its authority or dignity, such as disobedience to its legitimate commands."

Labour

is calling for the papers to be handed over, unredacted before Parliament rises tomorrow.

Keir Starmer said:

“There is huge anxiety across the country about the impact of the Government’s Brexit approach on jobs and the economy.

“Labour fully understand the importance of protecting the UK’s negotiating position with the European Union. However, the decision agreed unanimously by MPs earlier this month was about transparency and ensuring Parliament had the information it needs to hold ministers to account during the Brexit process.

“Ministers have accepted that the vote was binding and they must now respect Parliament’s decision. That means releasing the impact studies to the Brexit Select Committee in full and unredacted before Parliament rises on Tuesday. If ministers fail to act then we will have no choice but to raise this matter with the Speaker of the Commons.”