

My Interventions in the Digital Markets, Competition and Consumers Bill

...There have been suggestions, which I generally support, that either we have enhanced capacity and resources for existing Select Committees to do more work in holding regulators and arm's length bodies to account for their day-to-day work, or that we set up a new specialist Select Committee that takes on the job of having oversight of regulators across Whitehall. Some people will be concerned by the suggestion of additional Committees, either because of the perceived need for regulators to have to engage, inform and appease parliamentarians on a day-to-day basis and the amount of time that may take, or because of the influence that lobbyists may have on a fixed number of parliamentarians on the Committee tasked with oversight of the regulator.

Is there not a clear distinction? We and the Government should not intervene in individual decisions that under the law are in the regulators' remit, but Parliament and Ministers should take a timely and regular interest in the overall achievement—the cost, whether they need more resource or less resource, and whether we need to change the legal framework under which they operate—which should be a regular review item.

I find myself in the unusual situation of being in complete agreement with the right hon. Gentleman, and perhaps that shows the cross-party support for the points I am making about the Bill.