

Vol. 772
No. 39



Wednesday
14 September 2016

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES
(HANSARD)

HOUSE OF LORDS

WRITTEN STATEMENTS AND WRITTEN ANSWERS

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[I] indicates that the member concerned has a relevant registered interest. The full register of interests can be found at <http://www.parliament.uk/mps-lords-and-offices/standards-and-interests/register-of-lords-interests/>

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Ministers and others who make Statements or answer Questions are referred to only by name, not their ministerial or other title. The current list of ministerial and other responsibilities is as follows.

<i>Minister</i>	<i>Responsibilities</i>
Baroness Evans of Bowes Park	Leader of the House of Lords and Lord Privy Seal
Earl Howe	Minister of State, Ministry of Defence and Deputy Leader of the House of Lords
Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Transport
Baroness Anelay of St Johns	Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office and Department for International Development
Lord Ashton of Hyde	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Culture, Media and Sport, Whip
Lord Bridges of Headley	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Exiting the European Union
Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Communities and Local Government, Wales Office
Baroness Chisholm of Owlpen	Whip and Spokesperson on Cabinet Office Business in the House of Lords
Earl of Courtown	Deputy Chief Whip
Lord Dunlop	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Scotland Office and Northern Ireland Office
Lord Freud	Minister of State, Department for Work and Pensions
Lord Gardiner of Kimble	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
Baroness Goldie	Whip
Lord Keen of Elie	Advocate-General for Scotland
Lord Nash	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Education
Baroness Mobarik	Whip
Baroness Neville-Rolfe	Minister of State, Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy
Lord O'Neill of Gatley	Commercial Secretary to the Treasury
Lord Price	Minister of State, Department for International Trade
Lord Prior of Brampton	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department of Health
Baroness Shields	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Home Office and Department for Culture Media and Sport
Lord Taylor of Holbeach	Chief Whip
Baroness Williams of Trafford	Minister of State, Home Office
Viscount Younger of Leckie	Whip

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Written Statements

Wednesday, 14 September 2016

2019 World Road Cycling Championships (Contingent Liability)

[HLWS151]

Lord Ashton of Hyde: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport (Rt Hon Karen Bradley) has made the following Written Ministerial Statement.

I wish to inform the House that on 14th September 2016, the Department for Culture, Media and Sport laid a minute recording the Government's commitment to underwrite the 2019 World Road Cycling Championships to be staged in Yorkshire. The departmental minute will be deposited in the Libraries of both Houses.

As set out in the minute, I am pleased to inform the House that a formal bid to host the World Championships was submitted to the International Cycling Federation by the deadline of 16 August 2016, through collaboration between Welcome to Yorkshire, UK Sport, Government and British Cycling. The Government will provide £9m to support the delivery of the Championships and an underwrite for the event. If the bid is successful, the Government will, in addition, provide £15 million towards developing cycling facilities in England, including closed road circuits, as a lasting legacy for the event. The Government underwrite, therefore, creates a contingent liability for the Department in relation to the Championships in 2019.

The Statement includes the following attached material:

Departmental Minute on World Road Cycling [UCI Departmental Minute - 14.09.2016.docx]

The material can be viewed online at:
<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-statement/Lords/2016-09-14/HLWS151/>

Contingencies Fund

[HLWS155]

Lord O'Neill of Gatley: My honourable friend the Economic Secretary to the Treasury (Simon Kirby) has today made the following Written Ministerial Statement.

The Aire Valley Master Trust (AVMT) is a Residential Mortgage Backed Securitisation (RMBS) programme, which currently encumbers approximately £8.5 billion of mortgage assets and provides Bradford & Bingley (B&B) with just over £2.6 billion of funding. As at 30 July 2016 the balance of the outstanding AVMT notes was approximately £5.4 billion. B&B holds £2.8 billion of these notes, with the remaining £2.6 billion (the funding) held by market. B&B propose to call the notes to unencumber the mortgages enabling them to be included in any future sales when market conditions allow. The transaction replaces expensive legacy B&B-issued debt

with cheaper DMO-issued debt, with no change in balance sheet totals. The transaction is, therefore, neutral from both a Public Sector Net Debt and budgetary perspective.

B&B has a working capital facility loan agreement with HM Treasury, allowing them to borrow up to a maximum of £11.5 billion to cover everyday operations of the company. B&B propose to draw down £2.975 billion from this facility to redeem the notes.

The cash for the loan will form part of HM Treasury's Supplementary Estimate 2016-17, which will not receive Royal Assent in the associated Supply and Appropriation bill until mid-to-late March 2017. HM Treasury will, therefore, be utilising the Contingencies Fund to make this urgent payment. Whilst B&B's capital facility draw down will be £2.975 billion to redeem the notes, £0.750 billion will be repaid from income. The additional amount, therefore, that HM Treasury requires – and will form part of their Supplementary Estimate request – is therefore £2.225 billion.

Parliamentary approval for additional cash of £2,225,000,000 for this expenditure will be sought in a Supplementary Estimate for HM Treasury. Pending that approval, urgent expenditure estimated at £2,225,000,000 will be met by repayable cash advances from the Contingencies Fund.

Falklands Demining

[HLWS154]

Baroness Anelay of St Johns: My right Honourable Friend, the Minister of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (Sir Alan Duncan), has made the following written Ministerial statement:

Under the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention, which sets out the worldwide approach to landmine removal, the UK is required to clear all mined areas under its jurisdiction or control. In the case of the Falkland Islands, I am pleased to announce that the Government has decided to provide a further £20m to this process. As a result, thousands of landmines will be cleared in the next phase of work making safe dozens of areas which have been unusable since the mines were laid during the 1982 conflict.

This significantly increased funding will build on previous demining projects, which have so far cleared more than 30 minefields. The latest phase of work will be jointly funded by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and Ministry of Defence. It will see teams of expert contractors clear 46 minefields and carry out surveys to prepare for the clearance of another 27 over the next two years, as the UK continues to work towards fully clearing mines from its territories.

The UK is committed to meeting its international obligations under the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention and to doing its part to uphold the rules-based international system. This project is just one of many UK demining projects around the world.

Independent Reporting Commission

[HLWS150]

Lord Dunlop: My Right honourable friend the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (James Brokenshire) has today made the following written statement:

The Independent Reporting Commission is one of a series of measures set out in the 2015 Fresh Start Agreement to tackle ongoing paramilitary activity connected with Northern Ireland.

Provision for the Independent Reporting Commission to be established by agreement (“the Agreement”) between the UK Government and the Government of Ireland was included in the Northern Ireland (Stormont Agreement and Implementation Plan) Act 2016. The Agreement was signed on 13 September.

The Agreement establishes the IRC as an independent, international body. It sets out the functions, duties and membership of the IRC, and provides for certain privileges and immunities to be conferred through legislation. It also requires the Commission not to do anything in carrying out its functions which might put at risk the safety or life of any person, prejudice national security interests, have a prejudicial effect on any proceedings which have, or are likely to be, commenced in a court of law, or have a prejudicial effect on the prevention, investigation, detection or prosecution of crime.

Paramilitary activity continues to be a scourge on Northern Ireland society and to cause untold damage to individuals and their communities. It was never justified in the past in Northern Ireland and it has no place in society today. This new Commission will therefore play an important role in assisting efforts to tackle paramilitary activity and associated criminality.

Specifically, the Independent Reporting Commission will report on progress towards ending continuing paramilitary activity connected with Northern Ireland. It will provide assessments of the implementation of the relevant measures of the UK Government, the Government of Ireland and the Northern Ireland Executive. These include oversight of the Northern Ireland Executive’s strategy to end paramilitarism.

The Commission will consult a wide range of stakeholders, including law enforcement agencies, local councils, communities and civic society organisations and its reports will also inform the Executive’s Programme for Government priorities through to 2021.

The Commission will be independent of the UK and Irish Governments and will have a significant degree of discretion in fulfilling its functions. This independence will help to ensure the credibility of its reports and enable it to carry out its work effectively.

North Korea Nuclear Test

[HLWS153]

Baroness Anelay of St Johns: My Honourable Friend, the Parliamentary Under Secretary for State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (Alok Sharma), has made the following written Ministerial statement:

On 9 September North Korean state media claimed that the country had successfully conducted its fifth nuclear test at 00:30 GMT (09:00 Pyongyang). The Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty Organisation reported seismic signatures from a location close to where North Korea conducted its January nuclear test. We assess that the seismic event was caused by a nuclear test. The magnitude of this latest test was slightly larger than the one that occurred in January.

This nuclear test is a serious violation of UN Security Council resolutions 1718, 1874, 2087, 2094 and 2270. The Democratic People’s Republic of Korea’s nuclear weapon and ballistic missile programmes continue to pose a significant threat to international security and regional stability, and hinder the prospects for lasting peace on the Korean peninsula.

On 9 September the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, my Rt Hon. Friend the Member for Uxbridge and South Ruislip (Boris Johnson), issued a statement strongly condemning the nuclear test as a grave violation of UN Security Council Resolutions. The Foreign Secretary has spoken to his counterparts in Japan and Australia to discuss the nuclear test and the international response and we are in close touch with other partners, including the United States and the Republic of Korea.

The UK strongly supported the UN Security Council’s swift condemnation of this nuclear test in an emergency session on 9 September. The UN Security Council agreed that this test was a clear violation of existing Security Council Resolutions, and that there should be a robust response including immediate work on further significant measures.

I summoned the North Korean Ambassador to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office on 12 September in order to underline, in the strongest terms, the UK’s firm condemnation of this nuclear test and to make clear to North Korea that it must engage constructively with the international community or it will face an increasingly tough international response. Amid reports of widespread hardship and human rights violations, the priority must be the health and welfare of the North Korean people rather than continuation of the nuclear and ballistic missile programmes.

We continue to urge the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea to return to credible and authentic multilateral talks on its nuclear programme, to abide by its obligations under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, and to permit full access by the International Atomic Energy Agency.

Syria: Chemical Weapons

[HLWS152]

Baroness Anelay of St Johns: My right Honourable Friend, the Secretary for State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (Boris Johnson), has made the following written Ministerial statement:

I wish to make a statement about the use of chemical weapons in Syria and the steps Her Majesty's Government is taking to respond to the situation.

This Government wholeheartedly condemns the use of chemical weapons, by anyone, anywhere. It is appalling that three years after the Ghouta attacks in 2013, where hundreds died from exposure to nerve agent, Syrian civilians continue to be the victims of chemical weapons.

In 2013, following concerted international pressure, Syria joined the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), and declared a stockpile of 1300 tonnes of chemical weapons and precursors. These have been destroyed by the international community. The UK contribution to this effort included the safe destruction, by incineration, of approximately 200 tonnes of chemical precursors. However, Syria has yet to satisfy the international community and Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) that the declaration it made of its chemical weapons programme is complete and accurate. The OPCW have stated that Syria's declaration contains "gaps, inconsistencies and inaccuracies" which need to be answered. We continue to press for the Syrian regime to provide the required level of cooperation and transparency for the OPCW to be able to resolve these issues.

The UN Security Council has made clear repeatedly, in resolutions 2118 (2013), 2209 (2015), and 2235 (2015), that there would be consequences for those responsible for using chemical weapons in Syria. The Security Council thus sent a clear signal that all chemical weapons attacks in Syria must cease. Despite this there have been frequent allegations of chemical weapons use in Syria, including in Aleppo earlier this month.

The UK has been at the forefront of international efforts to ensure that reports of attacks are properly investigated and those responsible identified. In August 2015 the UN Security Council established the UN/OPCW Joint Investigative Mechanism (JIM) to "identify to the greatest extent feasible individuals, entities, groups, or governments who were perpetrators, organisers, sponsors or otherwise involved in the use of chemicals as weapons, including chlorine or any other toxic chemical, in the Syrian Arab Republic". The UK argued for the establishment of the JIM and has strongly supported its work, including providing £500,000 to help it become operational. This was in addition to our contribution in excess £3.5 million to the OPCW, including £2 million to the OPCW's Syria Trust Fund, for destruction and verification activities.

In its report of 24 August the JIM focussed on nine incidents in Syria, between 2014 and 2015, which the OPCW had identified as involving chemical weapons. The report confirmed what the UK and others have strongly believed for a long time, that the Syrian regime is directly responsible for chemical weapons attacks. Specifically, the JIM concluded that attacks in Sarmin and in Talamenes were the responsibility of the Syrian regime. This is the first time either the UN or OPCW have publicly attributed use of chemical weapons to the Syrian regime.

The JIM concluded that one incident, involving sulphur mustard gas, was the responsibility of Daesh (an attack in Marea in August 2015). The use of chemical weapons by Daesh is completely unacceptable. The UK continues to play a leading role in efforts to defeat Daesh and prevent its further use of chemical weapons, including through the Global Coalition.

The UK is working with international partners, including other members of the Security Council, to ensure there are consequences for those responsible for using chemical weapons and to send a clear message that such attacks are completely unacceptable and must stop.

Written Answers

Wednesday, 14 September 2016

Armed Forces: Data Protection

Asked by **Lord Alton of Liverpool**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they made of the risks to national security and to service personnel before publishing the names of soldiers and potential recruits online. [[HL1602](#)]

Earl Howe: The Armed Forces have a long history of publishing a nominal roll of serving officers, in the form of the 'The Navy List', 'The Army List' and the 'The Air Force List', generically known as the Armed Forces Lists.

The Armed Forces Lists' information was first published online in 2014, following requests under the Freedom of Information (FOI) Act and as part of our overall commitment to transparency. This information was judged to be releasable, having previously been published annually for over 200 years.

In September 2015, the policy on the publication of the Armed Forces Lists was reviewed and a decision was made to significantly reduce the information published, limiting this to information on officers at one star rank (Brigadier and equivalents) and above, except in respect of the Royal Navy. Details of those officers commanding a warship would continue to be published through release of a suitable version of the 'Fleet Bridge Card', which provides information on the number of RN Senior officers in command of the Fleet, the Flotillas and the warships. This decision was informed by advice on security risks. The previous Service Lists published on the Gov.uk website have now been removed.

Names of soldiers at Warrant Officer rank and below and potential recruits have never been published online in the Armed Forces Lists.

Army

Asked by **The Marquess of Lothian**

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether the government of the USA has made representations to them about the manpower reductions in the British army. [[HL1679](#)]

Earl Howe: Whilst changes in the British Army have been discussed during regular meetings between UK and US officials, no formal representations of this nature have been made by the US Government.

Borders: Northern Ireland

Asked by **Lord Eames**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what is their current assessment of the significance of the possible changes in the status of the land border between the UK

and the Republic of Ireland for commercial life in Northern Ireland. [[HL1695](#)]

Lord Dunlop: The open border for people and businesses has served us well and no-one wants to see a return to the borders of the past. There is a strong will – within this Government, among the Northern Ireland parties and in the Irish Government – to preserve the common travel area and to ensure we get the right deal for trade in goods and services with the European Union. We must now focus on securing a deal that is in the interest of both of the UK and the Republic of Ireland.

Asked by **Lord Eames**

To ask Her Majesty's Government to what extent the Northern Ireland Executive will be involved in any proposals to alter the status of the land border between the UK and the EU. [[HL1697](#)]

Lord Dunlop: As the Prime Minister and the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland have made clear, in putting into effect the decision of the people of the United Kingdom to leave the European Union the Government wants to ensure that the unique interests of Northern Ireland are protected. This is particularly the case in relation to the land border with the Republic of Ireland. In so doing we will engage fully with the Northern Ireland Executive.

EU Grants and Loans: Northern Ireland

Asked by **Lord Empey**

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they will guarantee to fund the remaining period of Peace IV in the event that the UK leaves the EU before the conclusion of that fund in 2020. [[HL1547](#)]

Lord Dunlop: The Government has set out that all European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIFs) projects with signed contracts or funding agreements in place with government, and projects signed before the Autumn Statement, including the PEACE programme will be fully funded, even when these projects continue beyond the UK's departure from the EU.

For qualifying projects under the PEACE programme signed after the Autumn Statement, we will work with the devolved administrations on funding arrangements to allow them to prioritise projects within their devolved responsibilities. As we make the transition to longer-term arrangements, we will ensure the devolved administrations are treated fairly and that their circumstances are taken into account.

Horse Meat

Asked by **Baroness Jones of Whitchurch**

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many people were convicted of food crime following the horsemeat scandal in 2013. [[HL1742](#)]

Lord Prior of Brampton: The City of London Police investigation into how food products became adulterated with horsemeat led to three men being charged with fraud offences on 26 August 2016.

The charges follow a complex international criminal investigation that saw the City of London Police, which is the National Policing Lead for Fraud, working in partnership with the Food Standards Agency and Crown Prosecution Service, as well as law enforcement agencies from across the United Kingdom and Europe.

Hospital Beds

Asked by Lord Ouseley

To ask Her Majesty's Government what is the cost of bed-blocking in NHS hospitals in each of the past three years and what plans they have to invest in social care services to reduce those costs. [HL1558]

Lord Prior of Brampton: To date, the Department has made no formal estimate of the costs of delayed discharge to the National Health Service. However, the Department and NHS Improvement are working together to implement Lord Carter's recommendations on hospital productivity. As part of this, the two organisations are working with providers to develop a richer dataset around all aspects of the patient pathway, including estimates of the cost of delayed discharge.

At the same time, the Department continues to work closely with the NHS and local government to help local areas improve transfers out of hospital, share best practice, and reduce unnecessary delays. We are funding the NHS's own plan for the future with £10 billion and we are giving local authorities access to up to £3.5 billion of new support for adult social care by 2019/20.

Since April 2015, the Government's £5.3 billion Better Care Fund has provided much needed investment in better integrated care through locally developed plans and by putting resources where the local NHS and social services think they are needed. Alongside this we are working with local areas to improve the transfer of patients back into the communities.

In 2016-17, there is a new Better Care Fund requirement on local areas to develop a clear, focused action plan for managing delays, including locally agreed targets. The requirement is designed to reduce delays across the health and care system.

Military Aircraft: Training

Asked by Lord West of Spithead

To ask Her Majesty's Government how much Ascent Flight Training charges the Ministry of Defence to train a fast jet pilot to the point where they are ready to move on to the Operational Conversion Unit of their chosen aircraft. [HL1528]

Earl Howe: Ascent Flight Training charges approximately £610,000 to train each fast jet student pilot

to the point where they are ready to move on to the Operational Conversion Unit stage.

Asked by Lord West of Spithead

To ask Her Majesty's Government how much Ascent Flight Training has been fined for failing to deliver an adequate service since it signed the 25-year contract with the Ministry of Defence. [HL1530]

Earl Howe: Up to June 2015, £308,000 was deducted from payments to Ascent Flight Training. No further deductions have been made since that time.

National Food Crime Unit

Asked by Baroness Jones of Whitchurch

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether the National Food Crime Unit's budget and enforcement powers are being reviewed in the light of Professor Chris Elliott's recent comments that it does not have enough authority. [HL1722]

Lord Prior of Brampton: In response to Professor Elliott's 2014 review of the integrity and assurance of food supply networks, the Government established a National Food Crime Unit (NFCU) to give a focus to enforcement efforts against fraud and criminality in the food chain. The Government, in its response to the Elliott review, agreed there should be a review of progress and likely future need after two years. A copy of the Elliott review and the Government's response is attached.

The NFCU reaches the two year milestone at the end of December 2016 with the review scheduled to be completed by that time. Work has already begun on the review, which is being carried out within the Food Standards Agency's resources under the oversight of an independent steering group, made up of three external experts representing law enforcement, consumers and industry. Among other issues the review is considering the resources and enforcement powers available to the NFCU.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

Elliott Review [elliott-review-final-report-july2014 (2).pdf]

Elliott Review Government Response [elliott-review-gov-response-sept-2014.pdf]

The material can be viewed online at:
<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2016-09-08/HL1722>

Asked by Baroness Jones of Whitchurch

To ask Her Majesty's Government what criteria they will use to decide whether the National Food Crime Unit should have direct enforcement powers. [HL1743]

Lord Prior of Brampton: The review of the National Food Crime Unit (NFCU) will consider the following issues:

- Current and likely future reactive demand from food crime;
- Current and likely future proactive opportunities to disrupt and prevent food crime;
- Gaps between reactive/proactive demand and current response;
- The current and future role of local authorities, the police service, other government departments/agencies and the wider food crime response landscape, including the international response and cross border collaboration post European Union exit;
- Value for money of current and potential responses; and
- The current form and function of the NFCU, and whether this meets current and future demand.

In the first Food Crime Annual Strategic Assessment, the NFCU highlighted the limitations of current intelligence and reporting, and the difficulties in estimating the scale and impact of food crime. The review will therefore take these limitations into account when considering the current and future demands and opportunities, and make reasonable judgements where evidence is incomplete or lacking.

NHS: Finance

Asked by Lord Bradley

To ask Her Majesty's Government which (1) NHS Foundation Trusts, and (2) NHS Trusts, have an accumulated surplus of (a) up to £1 million, (b) £1–5 million, (c) £5–10 million, (d) £10–20 million, (e) £20–30 million, (f) £30–50 million, and (g) over £50 million. [1] [HL1690]

Lord Prior of Brampton: 'Accumulated surplus' has been interpreted to mean the closing balance of a trust's retained earnings reserve at 31 March 2016. This represents the accumulated balance of annual surpluses and deficits, adjusted for any amounts offset against other reserves, such as the revaluation reserve. As this is an accumulated balance, it will differ from the annual surplus or deficit reported in the trust's Statement of Comprehensive Income, which forms part of figures published for the provider sector by NHS Improvement.

Trusts with accumulated surpluses in the bands specified are detailed in the attached document.

All other trusts reported an accumulated deficit overall at 31 March 2016.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

HL1690 ANNEX [HL1690 Annex.docx]

The material can be viewed online at:

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2016-09-08/HL1690>

North South Implementation Bodies

Asked by Lord Empey

To ask Her Majesty's Government what discussions have taken place with the government of the Irish Republic on the future funding of the six cross-border bodies established following the Belfast Agreement of 1998, in the light of the UK's decision to leave the EU. [HL1546]

Lord Dunlop: The Government has regular discussions with the Irish Government on a range of issues, including matters arising from the UK's exit from the European Union.

The UK's exit from the EU does not change the firm commitment of the UK Government and the people of Northern Ireland to the settlement set out in the Belfast Agreement and its successors and to the institutions they establish.

Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman: Public Appointments

Asked by The Countess of Mar

To ask Her Majesty's Government when the report of the independent review commissioned by the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman (PHSO) into the adequacy of the procedures and governance arrangements that the organisation applied prior to the appointment of the deputy PHSO, Mr Mick Martin, will be published; and whether the full report will be released into the public domain, together with the PHSO's findings and actions. [HL1683]

Lord Prior of Brampton: This is a matter for the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman.

The Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman is independent of Government, and accountable to Parliament through the Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs Committee.

Profumo Inquiry

Asked by Lord Hennessy of Nympsfield

To ask Her Majesty's Government what is the date most recently set for the declassification and release to the National Archives of the papers relating to Lord Denning's Report on the Profumo affair, published in 1963 (Cmnd 2152). [HL1553]

Baroness Chisholm of Owlpen: The Cabinet Office has transferred the papers of Lord Denning's Report into the Profumo Affair to the National Archives. I refer the noble Lord to their publicly-available catalogue, which states that that they will remain closed until 1 January 2048. This follows a decision by the Advisory Council on National Records and Archives.

This date reflects the fact that individuals mentioned in the Denning files are still alive, and Lord Denning gave

assurances to those from whom he took evidence that the papers would never be published.

RFA Diligence

Asked by Lord West of Spithead

To ask Her Majesty's Government what was the cost of the refit to RFA Diligence in 2013 to extend its life to 2020. [[HL1595](#)]

Asked by Lord West of Spithead

To ask Her Majesty's Government what was the cost of the refit to RFA Diligence in 2015. [[HL1596](#)]

Earl Howe: Refits of RFA DILIGENCE were carried out from June 2012 to February 2013, and from September 2014 to February 2015, costing £17.6 million and £11 million respectively.

The timings of the refits were driven by factors including the mandatory requirements to renew safety and environmental certification and the need to address equipment obsolescence issues.

Asked by Lord West of Spithead

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether RFA Diligence has been fully manned since her refit in 2015. [[HL1597](#)]

Earl Howe: Since the refit that completed in February 2015, RFA DILIGENCE has not been fully manned by Royal Fleet Auxiliary personnel. In addition, personnel

supplied by contractors ensure that the safety and integrity of the ship is maintained until she goes out of service in December 2016.

Royal Fleet Auxiliary

Asked by Lord West of Spithead

To ask Her Majesty's Government, in the light of the response by Navy Command Headquarters to a member of the public on 12 February, what new studies in the Ministry of Defence have superseded the statement made in that response that the operational capabilities of both Diligence, as the operational maintenance and repair ship, and Argus, as the primary casualty receiving facility with aviation training capability, are "invaluable to the support of the Royal Navy". [[HL1662](#)]

Earl Howe: It was stated in the letter to which the noble Lord refers that Navy Command was actively considering the out of service dates for both RFA DILIGENCE and RFA ARGUS, as well as the replacement capability. As a result of those considerations, and taking into account DILIGENCE's age and increasing obsolescence, it was concluded that retaining her in service would no longer represent good value for money to the taxpayer, and the decision was taken to retire her early.

This decision does not detract from the invaluable service that DILIGENCE has provided for over 30 years.

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