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HOUSE OF LORDS

WRITTEN ANSWERS

Written Answers.....1

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Baroness Berridge	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Education and Department for International Trade
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Baroness Stedman-Scott	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Work and Pensions
Baroness Sugg	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office and Department for International Development
Lord True	Minister of State, Cabinet Office
Baroness Vere of Norbiton	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Transport
Baroness Williams of Trafford	Minister of State, Home Office
Viscount Younger of Leckie	Whip

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Written Answers

Friday, 24 July 2020

Brazil: Rainforests

Asked by *The Marquess of Lothian*

To ask Her Majesty's Government when the Prime Minister last discussed with the President of Brazil (1) the consequences for the global environment, and (2) the level, of deforestation in the Amazon. [[HL6893](#)]

Baroness Sugg: The UK is committed to encouraging and contributing to international action to address the problem of deforestation in the Amazon region. The Prime Minister spoke to President Bolsonaro on 15 January and they discussed the environment and the need for Brazil and the UK to work together to tackle climate change. The Prime Minister invited President Bolsonaro to attend COP26. The UK has been working with the Brazilian authorities to help them address the issue of deforestation in Brazil for a long time. Since 2012, the UK has invested £259 million in a number of International Climate Finance programmes in Brazil aimed at supporting small landowners to increase their productivity through low-carbon farming, the acceleration of sustainable business in the forest economy, preventing forest fires, and implementing the Forest Code. The UK has committed an additional £100 million for 2021-2025.

Civil Servants: Coronavirus

Asked by *Lord Blunkett*

To ask Her Majesty's Government when they expect those civil servants who have been working at home during the COVID-19 pandemic to resume working physically in departments. [T] [[HL6708](#)]

Lord True: Civil Service departments are planning for a phased return to the workplace from 1 August, in line with all relevant UK Government and devolved administration guidelines. Many civil servants have of course continued to attend their workplaces throughout the pandemic to support the government's response to this emergency, for example through delivering Universal Credit and the Furlough Scheme or other essential services.

Colombia: USA

Asked by *Lord Browne of Ladyton*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the accuracy of reports that US military exports to Colombia were used for illegal surveillance activities. [[HL6710](#)]

Baroness Sugg: We are aware of allegations that Colombian state actors have been conducting illegal surveillance activities against civil society organisations.

We are also aware of media claims that US equipment may have been used in such surveillance. We do not have any information on the accuracy of these reports.

We welcome the Colombian authorities' announcement of an investigation into these allegations and their commitment to hold those responsible to account.

Heating

Asked by *Lord Foster of Bath*

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Review of the methodology for FGHRs in SAP Final Report, published by the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy on 9 June, what plans they have to mandate a minimum domestic hot water seasonal efficiency of at least 100 per cent when measured against EN 13203 Gas fired domestic appliances producing hot water for boilers installed in the UK for (1) new build social housing, (2) other new build housing, (3) as replacement boilers in social housing, and (4) as replacement boilers in all housing. [[HL6771](#)]

Lord Greenhalgh: The Government recognises that the energy efficiency of buildings has an important role to play in meeting our commitment to net zero emissions by 2050 and that generating hot water efficiently is a necessary part of this. The Standard Assessment Procedure accounts for the benefits of installing energy saving measures in hot water systems including flue gas heat recovery systems.

As part of the Future Homes Standard consultation, launched in October 2019, we consulted on energy efficiency standards for new homes, including minimum building services efficiencies. This consultation closed on 7 February. We are analysing the consultation responses, and will publish a Government response in due course. A further consultation will follow, proposing changes to the energy efficiency standards for new non-domestic buildings; for building work to existing homes and non-domestic buildings; and on mitigating overheating in new dwellings.

Large Goods Vehicles

Asked by *Lord Roberts of Llandudno*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what agreement they have reached, if any, with the EU to resolve regulatory differences with regard to driving hours for truck drivers travelling from mainland Europe to the UK. [[HL7022](#)]

Asked by *Lord Roberts of Llandudno*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what agreement they have reached, if any, with the EU to resolve regulatory differences with regard to overloading of vehicles for truck drivers travelling from mainland Europe to the UK. [[HL7024](#)]

Asked by Lord Roberts of Llandudno

To ask Her Majesty's Government what agreement they have reached, if any, with the EU to resolve regulatory differences with regard to vehicle roadworthiness for truck drivers travelling from mainland Europe to the UK. [HL7025]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: Commercial road vehicles in use on UK roads are expected to meet roadworthiness standards, be suitably loaded and have their drivers' hours controlled to ensure road safety standards are maintained. We will continue to enforce these standards in a non-discriminatory way with regard to UK/non-UK operators and expect that European Union Member States will continue to act in a similar manner. Discussions are continuing towards a future UK/EU free trade agreement, including international commercial road transport.

Mobile Broadband

Asked by Viscount Waverley

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Baroness Barran on 13 July (HL6593), whether they will publish their assessment that £200 million will be sufficient to fund a 5G Testbeds and Trials programme; what was the cost of the equivalent programme for 4G; whether they have assessed how much an equivalent programme for 6G will cost; and if so, whether they publish that assessment. [HL6989]

Baroness Barran: While 6G mobile technology is only in the early research phase, the Government is committed to ensuring the UK is at the forefront of technology development and adoption. The Government's current focus is on the UK becoming a world leader in 5G mobile technology. To support this ambition the Government is investing £200 million in a programme of nationally coordinated testbeds and trials, the first programme of its kind in the UK, which launched in late 2017 and will run until the end of March 2022

The Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport has conducted economic and commercial analysis to ensure the scale of funding is proportionate to that of overall nationwide 5G deployment and provides value-for-money for UK taxpayers.

Parking and Road Traffic: Kent

Asked by Lord Pendry

To ask Her Majesty's Government what progress they have made (1) in preparing for any increased traffic, and (2) in providing additional lorry parking capacity, in Kent in preparation for the impact of new trade agreements following the exit from the single market. [HL6859]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: We are continuing to work at pace with the Kent Resilience Forum to revise traffic management contingency plans, to deal with the

potential congestion at the end of the transition period. One such measure is Highways England's Quick Movable Barrier project, which will be operational from December 2020. This flexible concrete barrier can be deployed on the M20 in Kent within 24 hours to form a safe contraflow, compared to the previous steel barrier which required a month of overnight closures to set up.

We can also confirm that the Department has purchased the MOJO site in Ashford. This site will form part of our contingency planning which aims to help ensure the free flow of freight and reduce the risk of disruption at the border at the end of the transition period. It was chosen due to its strategic location, with easy access to the M20, the primary corridor to and from key ports within the Dover Straits.

Parking: Fines

Asked by Lord Shipley

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the increase in the number of fines levied by private car park operators in the past ten years. [HL6725]

Lord Greenhalgh: Government does not hold figures on fines levied by private car park operators.

At present, the private parking industry is self-regulating. However, the Parking (Code of Practice) Act will lead to the creation of an independent Code of Practice for private parking companies and a "one-stop-shop" for private sector parking appeals.

The Code will be developed in consultation with stakeholders but Government fully expects the Code to cover such areas as the clear display of terms and conditions for consumers, grace periods to allow motorists time to pay and leave the car park, professional standards of behaviour expected of parking operators and a fair process for appealing parking charges.

Asked by Lord Shipley

To ask Her Majesty's Government what checks are made by the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency on the fitness of the operators of private car parks to issue valid fines. [HL6726]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: The Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA) will only release vehicle keeper information to private parking companies that are members of an appropriate accredited trade association (ATA). The ATAs carry out checks on parking companies before allowing them to become members. This ensures that the company is legitimate and is monitored for compliance with the ATA's code of practice that promotes fair treatment for motorists.

The DVLA carries out comprehensive auditing of companies, involving remote and also on-site audits in conjunction with the Government Internal Audit Agency. This ensures that keeper information is used appropriately. Any issues are investigated and action taken where necessary. This can include the suspension of

the facility to request vehicle keeper information from the DVLA.

Asked by Lord Shipley

To ask Her Majesty's Government what estimate they have made of the number of motorists who have received invalid fines caused by malfunctioning equipment in private car parks in each of the last three years. [HL6727]

Lord Greenhalgh: We have not made an estimate of the number of motorists who have received invalid fines caused by malfunctioning equipment in private car parks. However, this is an issue which the new Parking Code of Practice should help to address.

At present the private parking industry is self-regulating. The Parking (Code of Practice) Act, will lead to the creation of an independent Code of Practice for private parking companies and a “one-stop-shop” for private sector parking appeals.

The Code of Practice will create consistency for consumers, by having a single set of rules which applies across the private parking sector. It will ensure that the obligations for enforcement and appeal processes are fair, consistent, and proportionate. Those operators who do not meet the standards set out in the code of practice will not be able to access DVLA data and will be unable to pursue motorists for parking charges.

The Government is currently considering the content of the Code and what the obligations by private parking companies to motorists should be and will consult with stakeholders, including industry, motorists and consumer groups later this year.

Asked by Lord Shipley

To ask Her Majesty's Government why a fine levied in a private car park can be more than one levied in a car park operated by a local authority. [HL6728]

Lord Greenhalgh: At present the private parking industry is self-regulating.

Parking on private land is primarily managed through contract law. The signage on a site is the terms and conditions of a contract. When a motorist gets a ticket from a private company, in law this is an invoice for breach of contract. This creates a debt against the motorist that is enforceable through the courts.

Fines issued by private parking companies are currently capped at £100 by the codes of practice which the International Parking Community and British Parking Association hold their members to.

The Parking (Code of Practice) Act will create a Code of Practice with a single set of rules which applies across the private parking sector. It will ensure that the obligations for enforcement and appeal processes are fair, consistent, and proportionate. The issue of fines will also be looked at as part of the development of the Code.

Local authority parking is governed by different legislation to private car parks. The Civil Enforcement of

Parking Contraventions (Guidelines on Levels of Charges) (England) Order 2007 sets guidelines on parking charges by enforcement authorities outside Greater London. Local authorities are not meant to raise revenue on managing parking and under Section 55 of the Road Traffic Management Act (RTRA) 1984, any excess revenue raised must be reinvested in the local transport budget.

The Parking Places (Variation of Charges) Act 2017 will also provide flexibility around allowing local authorities to lower parking charges for seasonal or one-off events, as well as creating a duty to consult residents on plans to increase charges. We are currently working on enacting the legislation and will provide further announcements in due course.

Pornography: Internet

Asked by Baroness Eaton

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the proposals set out in their initial response to the consultation on the Online Harms White Paper, published on 12 February, what are the “reasonable steps” that pornography websites must take to protect children. [HL6934]

Baroness Barran: Our Online Harms proposals will deliver a higher level of protection for children than for the typical adult user. As we set out in the initial response to the Online Harms White Paper consultation on 12 February, we expect companies to use a proportionate range of tools, including age assurance and age verification technologies, to prevent children accessing age-inappropriate content such as online pornography, and to protect them from other harms.

Retail Trade

Asked by Lord Allen of Kensington

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the extent to which an inability to pay rents has contributed to the number of failing retail businesses in 2020. [HL6744]

Lord Callanan: Government recognises that there can be complex reasons behind the failure of certain retail businesses.

The UK government has extended measures to protect struggling companies from eviction over the summer. The extension, until the end of September, comes alongside further support to help local businesses plan for economic recovery following the coronavirus pandemic.

A new code of practice has been developed with leaders from the retail, hospitality, and property sectors to provide clarity for businesses when discussing rental payments and to encourage best practice so that all parties are supported.

These interventions are in addition to the comprehensive financial package provided by the UK Government to businesses during this difficult time and is

in recognition of the strain that the sector is currently under.

Terrorism: Northern Ireland

Asked by Lord Empey

To ask Her Majesty's Government, whether, in the High Court of Northern Ireland, they instructed a Queen's Counsel to argue that an application by a victim of the Troubles in Northern Ireland be set aside in favour of another application; and if so, why. [HL6667]

Viscount Younger of Leckie: The Secretary of State for Northern Ireland is working tirelessly to see a resolution on departmental designation by the Executive Office, which is the next vital step towards this scheme opening. Victims have waited too long for these payments and the Government is extremely disappointed by the lack of progress.

The High Court considered case management of two judicial reviews in respect of the Victims Payments Scheme on Friday 26 June.

As the Noble Lord will appreciate, the Government does not comment on ongoing legal proceedings.

UK Trade With EU: Northern Ireland

Asked by Lord Hay of Ballyore

To ask Her Majesty's Government what discussions they have had with the Northern Ireland Executive about the negotiations in relation to a UK–EU trade deal. [HL6471]

Lord True: The UK Government is in close contact with officials and ministers in the Northern Ireland Executive regarding a UK-EU trade deal.

The Paymaster General has regular calls with Northern Ireland Executive Ministers, including both the First Minister and deputy First Minister of Northern Ireland, and other devolved administration counterparts, to discuss progress with the EU negotiations.

The Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster chaired a meeting of the Joint Ministerial Committee (EU Negotiations) on 16 July to discuss the negotiations with devolved administration counterparts. Both the First Minister and deputy First Minister of the Northern Ireland Executive attended.

At official level, UK Government officials continue to work alongside their counterparts in the Northern Ireland Executive, and other devolved nations.

Unified Patent Court

Asked by Lord Stevenson of Balmacara

To ask Her Majesty's Government what are the estimated costs, to date, (1) of preparing for the UK's participation in the Unified Patent Court, and (2) of any future wind down costs consequent on their decision to withdraw their ratification of the Agreement on a Unified Patent Court and the Protocol on Privileges and Immunities of the Unified Patent Court. [T] [HL7047]

Lord Callanan: UK contribution to the project to date has been from multiple sources and amounted to £9.5m.

The Government committed to leasing accommodation for the UPC in London which is currently being utilised by the IPO and other tenants. We have invoked the break clause set out in the lease. We estimate future IPO costs of approximately £420,000 in net rent, plus costs to return the accommodation to its original state.

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