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**PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES
(HANSARD)**

HOUSE OF LORDS

WRITTEN STATEMENTS AND WRITTEN ANSWERS

Written Statements.....1

Written Answers.....4

[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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| <i>Minister</i> | <i>Responsibilities</i> |
|---|--|
| Baroness Evans of Bowes Park | Leader of the House of Lords and Lord Privy Seal |
| Earl Howe | Deputy Leader of the House of Lords |
| Lord Agnew of Oulton | Minister of State, Cabinet Office and Treasury |
| Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon | Minister of State, Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office |
| Lord Ashton of Hyde | Chief Whip |
| Baroness Barran | Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport |
| Baroness Berridge | Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Education and Department for International Trade |
| Lord Bethell | Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department of Health and Social Care and Whip |
| Baroness Bloomfield of Hinton Waldrist | Whip |
| Lord Callanan | Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy |
| Earl of Courtown | Deputy Chief Whip |
| Lord Gardiner of Kimble | Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs |
| Baroness Goldie | Minister of State, Ministry of Defence |
| Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park | Minister of State, Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office |
| Lord Greenhalgh | Minister of State, Home Office and Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government |
| Lord Grimstone of Boscobel | Minister of State, Department of Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy and Department for International Trade |
| Lord Keen of Elie | Advocate-General for Scotland and Ministry of Justice Spokesperson |
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| Baroness Scott of Bybrook | Whip |
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| Lord True | Minister of State, Cabinet Office |
| Baroness Vere of Norbiton | Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Transport |
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Written Statements

Wednesday, 9 September 2020

Building Safety: Northpoint Building

[HLWS439]

Lord Greenhalgh: My Rt Hon. Friend, the Secretary of State for the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (Robert Jenrick) has today made the following Written Ministerial Statement:

I am today informing the House of a contingent liability for the Northpoint Building for £200,000 to enable them to sign a basic asset protection agreement (the Agreement) with Network Rail and progress remediation. Northpoint is a private residential building in Bromley which, over three years after Grenfell, has unsafe Aluminium Composite Material (ACM) which remains unremediated. It is our expectation for high-rise buildings with dangerous ACM to start remediation work on site by the end of the year.

The Northpoint building is adjacent to a railway line managed by Network Rail. For remediation construction works to advance, an Agreement needs to be signed between Network Rail and the Northpoint Management Company. Northpoint leaseholders are paying significant sums in 'Waking Watch' costs for each month the building is not remediated, while the building poses a safety risk. The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) is funding the remediation of (ACM) cladding at the building through the Private Sector Cladding ACM Remediation Fund. However, the risks associated with the Agreement cannot be covered by the Fund. This building is in a unique position, as it is an unsafe ACM building, over 18m, which is adjacent to a railway and managed by a Resident Management Company who require surety for a capped amount of liability. MHCLG will, therefore, underwrite Northpoint Management Company for £200,000 of risk.

MHCLG has undertaken a contingent liability during parliamentary recess. HM Treasury approved this liability before it was activated. The contingent liability was urgent, because it was needed to ensure the remediation of an unsafe building could take place as quickly as possible. This is in line with my Department's aim to ensure that residents of high-rise residential buildings are safe and feel safe from the risk of fire. The liability is capped at £200,000.

If a member has any further enquiries by giving notice of a Parliamentary Question or by otherwise raising the matter in parliament, the Department will be happy to provide a response.

National Data Strategy

[HLWS437]

Baroness Barran: My Right Honourable Friend the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, Oliver Dowden MP, has made the following Statement:

I am pleased to inform the House that the Government is, today, publishing the [UK National Data Strategy](#). This framework document sets out the government's ambitions and global-facing vision for maximising the benefits of the effective and trusted use of data. This publication brings together the UK's ambitions for data within a single, coherent narrative. It also launches a 12 week consultation period.

The National Data Strategy aims to place the UK at the heart of the data revolution. It will harness the power of digital technology to drive our recovery from coronavirus - to boost growth and productivity, create new businesses and jobs, improve public services and position the UK at the forefront of the next wave of innovation.

The government announced it would develop a National Data Strategy in 2018, as part of its unashamedly pro-tech, pro-innovation approach. The coronavirus pandemic has made that commitment more urgent than ever.

Data has been one of our most important tools in the battle against COVID-19. The ability to share information quickly, efficiently and ethically has saved lives, while enabling us to keep the economy going and stay connected with loved ones throughout the pandemic. The Strategy aims to build on that high watermark, and free up businesses and other organisations to keep using data to innovate, experiment and fuel a new era of growth.

The strategy proposes five priority missions, where we think we can take action now to have the biggest impact, and captures a further suite of proposed actions that will support delivery. The missions are:

- 1) Unlocking the value of data across the economy
- 2) Securing a pro-growth and trusted data regime
- 3) Transforming government's use of data to drive efficiency and improve public services
- 4) Ensuring the security and resilience of our data infrastructure
- 5) Championing the international flow of data.

In order to drive successful implementation, we will develop a monitoring and evaluation process for the strategy. We will provide further details of this monitoring and evaluation process in a future publication. The government's response to this consultation will be published following the closure of the consultation period.

A copy of this report will be placed in the library of the House today.

The Statement includes the following attached material:

National Data Strategy [National Data Strategy.pdf]

The material can be viewed online at:

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-statement/Lords/2020-09-09/HLWS437/>

Subsidy Control Regime

[HLWS438]

Lord Callanan: My Right Honourable friend the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial

Strategy Alok Sharma has today made the following statement:

I am today updating Parliament on the Government's plans for a subsidy control regime to replace the EU State aid rules at the end of the transition period on 31 December this year.

From 1 January, the Government will follow the World Trade Organisation rules for subsidy control. These are the internationally recognised common standard for subsidies. The rules apply to goods, not services. They ban subsidies that are dependent on either how much a company exports to other countries or the use of domestic goods over imports. For all other subsidies, they provide a mechanism to resolve disputes between countries. These rules are designed to facilitate an effective international trading system and are followed by the vast majority of countries.

Before the end of this year, the Government will publish guidance for UK public authorities to explain these rules and any related commitments the Government has agreed in Free Trade Agreements.

The Government will also publish a consultation in the coming months on whether we should go further than those existing commitments, including whether legislation is necessary. As our approach will affect businesses and all public authorities that grant subsidies with taxpayers' money, including the Devolved Administrations, we will take the necessary time to listen closely to all those voices and to create a system that promotes a competitive and dynamic economy throughout the UK.

We will shortly lay secondary legislation to remove redundant EU State aid rules from the domestic statute book at the end of the transition period. This will provide the necessary legal certainty for businesses.

The UK Internal Market Bill, which I am introducing into Parliament today, will set out that the UK Parliament alone should legislate for the regulation of subsidies, and will ensure that there is no confusion or ambiguity in UK law about the interpretation of the State aid elements in the Northern Ireland Protocol.

As regards this Government's substantive approach, one of the benefits of having left the EU is that we have the opportunity to design our own subsidy control regime – in a way that works for the UK economy. The EU's State aid system is designed for the particular circumstances of the EU, in which it is the responsibility of the Commission, as an independent authority, to police against subsidies distorting competition between EU member states within the single market. This approach is not suitable for the UK in the future and indeed their particular approach has not been followed in other advanced economies.

We are very clear nevertheless that we do not intend to return to the 1970s approach of Government trying to run the economy or bailing out unsustainable companies. We do not believe that the Government of a modern, competitive market economy should stand in the way or

prevent adjustment to underlying market conditions. That is and will remain our guiding philosophy.

Equally, just as other countries do, the UK will need a modern system for supporting businesses to grow and thrive in a way that suits our interests and is consistent with a dynamic and competitive economy. As we rebuild and recover from COVID, and given the broader uncertainty in the economic environment as a result, we must also maintain flexibility to support and bolster the UK's strategic interests, and to be able to intervene faster and more easily when it is necessary to do so.

Subsidy control is an important issue in the negotiations on our future relationship with the EU. The Government has always been clear about its position: we are seeking a precedent trade deal, similar to those the EU has previously agreed with countries like Canada. Such free trade agreements do not prescribe the specifics of either party's subsidy control arrangements, but instead provide for transparency in subsidies granted and for appropriate means of settling disputes between them. We have proposed such arrangements to the EU and we believe this is the right way forward. We will not give away our ability to determine our laws and funding arrangements in this area in an international treaty: the UK's subsidy arrangements are a matter for people across the UK and Parliament, now and in the future.

UK Commonwealth Chair-in-Office Report 2018-2020

[HLWS436]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: In April 2018, the UK hosted the 25th Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM). The summit was the largest of its kind in our history. 46 Heads of Government and 49 Foreign Ministers met and agreed a range of actions to build a Commonwealth which is fairer, more sustainable, more prosperous, and more secure.

Since then, the UK, as Chair-in-Office, has continued to work with the three pillars of the Commonwealth - its member states, its Secretariat, and its organisations and networks - to deliver commitments made at CHOGM. This work has been supported by over £500 million of UK-funded projects and programmes under the four themes of the summit.

A detailed report, entitled 'Commonwealth Chair-in-Office 2018-20', will be deposited in the Libraries of both Houses. This succeeds the interim report which the then Foreign Secretary provided to the Foreign Affairs Committee in the House of Commons on 15th May 2019. It gives a comprehensive overview of outcomes and achievements against CHOGM 2018 commitments. This Statement highlights some of those.

To build a fairer Commonwealth, the UK has worked with member states to support the delivery of 12 years of quality education for all by 2030. The Girl's Education Challenge, for which the UK announced £212 million funding at CHOGM 2018, is now active in 11 Commonwealth countries, working to ensure

marginalised girls have access to quality education. On inclusive and accountable democracy and promotion of human rights, the UK has supported Commonwealth Secretariat election observation missions to eight Commonwealth countries, a number of which have since undertaken electoral reform. In Geneva, UK-funded human rights and trade advisors have supported Commonwealth Small States to engage more effectively with international human rights and trade mechanisms. The UK-funded Equality and Justice Alliance has provided support to six Commonwealth countries to repeal or reform outdated legislation which discriminates against, or fails to protect, women, girls and LGBT communities.

To build a more sustainable Commonwealth, the UK has continued to champion the Commonwealth Blue Charter launched at CHOGM18. The 'Commonwealth Clean Ocean Alliance', co-led by the UK and Vanuatu, now has 34 members which have committed to tackle marine plastic pollution. The UK-funded extension of the Commonwealth Marine Economies programme has supported 17 Small Island Developing States to further develop sustainable and diverse marine economies. On climate change, the UK has co-funded a centre of excellence on Nationally Determined Contributions based in Fiji, which is now working with 10 Commonwealth Pacific countries on their plans to reduce emissions and adapt to the impacts of climate change.

To build a more prosperous Commonwealth, the UK has continued to be an advocate for intra-Commonwealth trade and has facilitated the delivery of the Commonwealth Connectivity Agenda. The UK has co-led with South Africa work on digital connectivity, and supported Barbados as the lead on regularly connectivity. The UK-funded Trade Facilitation Programme has been working with 18 priority countries to adopt more efficient

customs procedures. The UK-funded Commonwealth Standards Network now comprises the national standards bodies of 50 Commonwealth countries, supporting the effective implementation of international standards which increase opportunities for trade. Gender equality has also been at the forefront of our Commonwealth prosperity work: over 3,000 women-owned businesses have so far been supported to enhance their ability to trade; an extension of this programme was announced by the International Development Secretary in January.

To build a more secure Commonwealth, we have prioritised implementation of the Commonwealth Cyber Declaration, helping member states to enhance their cyber security capacity. 38 out of 54 countries have now completed national cyber security capacity reviews – a cornerstone commitment of the Declaration's implementation plan. Thirteen of these reviews have been completed since CHOGM 2018, of which seven were funded by the UK. We have worked with Commonwealth partners to apply and strengthen legislation on modern slavery and human trafficking. In July 2019, with the support of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and UK funding, Malawi launched four landmark regulations on human trafficking and labour protection.

Following the postponement of CHOGM 2020, we look forward to the gathering of the Commonwealth family in Kigali next year. In the meantime, the UK will continue to serve the Commonwealth family as Chair-in-Office. In that role, we were pleased to facilitate agreement of a comprehensive statement issued by Commonwealth Leaders on 16 July 2020, setting out their commitment to work collectively with international partners on the full range of responses required to mitigate the many adverse impacts of COVID-19, and to ensure that no one will be left behind.

Written Answers

Wednesday, 9 September 2020

Nature for Climate Fund

*Asked by **Lord Randall of Uxbridge***

To ask Her Majesty's Government when they plan to publish details of the Nature for Climate fund announced in the 2020 Budget on 11 March. [[HL7700](#)]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: We announced a £640 million Nature for Climate Fund and are developing plans to deploy that funding in England over this parliament.

We will shortly publish a new England Peat Strategy and are consulting on a new England Tree Strategy. These will set out policies and programs to meet our manifesto commitments, driving up tree-planting and peat restoration, working together to address the combined climate and biodiversity crises.

Index to Statements and Answers

Written Statements.....1

Building Safety: Northpoint Building1

National Data Strategy1

Subsidy Control Regime.....1

UK Commonwealth Chair-in-Office Report 2018-
2020.....2

Written Answers.....4

Nature for Climate Fund.....4