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**PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES  
(HANSARD)**

# **HOUSE OF LORDS**

## **WRITTEN STATEMENTS AND WRITTEN ANSWERS**

**Written Statements .....1**

**Written Answers.....3**

[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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<b>Earl Howe</b>	Deputy Leader of the House of Lords
<b>Lord Agnew of Oulton</b>	Minister of State, Treasury and Cabinet Office
<b>Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon</b>	Minister of State, Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office
<b>Lord Ashton of Hyde</b>	Chief Whip
<b>Baroness Barran</b>	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport
<b>Baroness Berridge</b>	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Education and Department for International Trade
<b>Lord Bethell</b>	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department of Health and Social Care
<b>Baroness Bloomfield of Hinton Waldrist</b>	Whip
<b>Lord Callanan</b>	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy
<b>Earl of Courtown</b>	Deputy Chief Whip
<b>Lord Gardiner of Kimble</b>	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
<b>Baroness Goldie</b>	Minister of State, Ministry of Defence
<b>Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park</b>	Minister of State, Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office
<b>Lord Greenhalgh</b>	Minister of State, Home Office and Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government
<b>Lord Grimstone of Boscobel</b>	Minister of State, Department of Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy and Department for International Trade
<b>Lord Parkinson of Whitley Bay</b>	Whip
<b>Baroness Penn</b>	Whip
<b>Baroness Scott of Bybrook</b>	Whip
<b>Baroness Stedman-Scott</b>	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Work and Pensions
<b>Lord Stewart of Dirleton</b>	Advocate-General for Scotland
<b>Lord True</b>	Minister of State, Cabinet Office
<b>Baroness Vere of Norbiton</b>	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Transport
<b>Baroness Williams of Trafford</b>	Minister of State, Home Office
<b>Lord Wolfson of Tredegar</b>	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department of Justice
<b>Viscount Younger of Leckie</b>	Whip

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# Written Statements

*Wednesday, 27 January 2021*

## Bovine TB

[HLWS735]

**Lord Gardiner of Kimble:** My Rt. Hon Friend the Secretary of State for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (George Eustice) has today made the following statement:

I am updating the House on publication of a consultation on delivery of the next phase of our 25-year strategy to eradicate bovine TB (bTB) in England by 2038.

BTB is one of the most difficult and intractable animal health challenges that England faces today. In the last year, we compulsorily slaughtered over 27,000 cattle in England to tackle the disease. This causes devastation and distress for hard-working farmers and rural communities and is damaging our reputation as world leaders in high standards of animal health and welfare.

The bTB eradication strategy we published in 2014 is making progress. We are now seeing sustained improvements in the high risk area. We need to build on this momentum to achieve bTB free status for England by 2038.

In 2018, my predecessor commissioned Professor Sir Charles Godfray to conduct an independent review of our strategy ('the Godfray Review'). In March 2020, we published a response setting out key priorities for the next phase. Today, I am launching a public consultation and a call for views on a range of proposals and longer-term options in keeping with that response, to take us into this next phase.

I am also pleased to report that work on developing a deployable cattle bTB vaccine continues and is on track to be completed within the next five years. Our goal is to deliver on the significant investment we have made to date in developing a candidate diagnostic test to detect infected animals among vaccinated animals to enable use of the vaccine. Although a cattle bTB vaccine will not be the single solution to the problem of bTB, it will be a strong additional tool at our disposal. The Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA) has awarded a contract to Eville & Jones, to run veterinary field trials aimed at generating the necessary evidence to enable UK marketing authorisations. The trials are scheduled to get underway in the coming months.

Badger culling is one of the most contentious and divisive policies within our bTB eradication strategy. Our current policy enables four-year intensive cull licences in defined areas with scope for a further five years of supplementary culling. The consultation sets out proposals for Natural England (NE) to stop issuing the current intensive cull licences for new areas post 2022 and enable new licences issued to be cut short if the Chief Veterinary Officer considers this acceptable. Furthermore,

I am proposing to restrict any new supplementary cull licences to two years and cease re-issuing such licences in any areas in which supplementary culling has previously been licensed.

As proposed in the Government's response to the Godfray Review, APHA recently released a new analysis showing the estimated distribution of TB infection in badgers in England's bTB Edge Area. This will be of assistance to NE in assessing applications for badger culling and vaccination licences in the future.

The farming community has invested heavily in badger culling, which the evidence shows has played a critical role in helping to start turn the tide on this terrible disease. But we were clear that culling badgers indefinitely is not acceptable. My proposed approach will enable us to complete the objective we set out to achieve when we started the culls. It will also support our stated intention of phasing out culling over the next few years. I envisage that in future, some form of culling would be an option in exceptional circumstances to address any local disease flare-ups. This transitional period will also give us time to undertake badger vaccination pilots and develop our future badger vaccination policy. The end of widespread culling is also anticipated to coincide with changes in cattle measures, including our timeline for a deployable cattle bTB vaccine. Taken together, it is anticipated that these cattle and badger measures should preserve the benefits from intensive culling.

I am also proposing some targeted changes to our cattle bTB testing policy, to ensure we root out the disease more effectively in herds with recurring problems, and further help protect lower bTB risk areas.

In parallel to the consultation, I am also seeking views to explore other options for further accelerating eradication of disease. These include possible further changes and improvements to bTB testing, supporting responsible cattle movements and rewarding low risk cattle purchasing behaviour. Our call for views also discusses ways we can continue to adapt how we reward farmers for 'best practice', in line with our wider agricultural transition plan.

There is no single solution to the scourge of bTB but by deploying a range of policy interventions, we can continue to turn the tide on this terrible disease and achieve our long-term objective of eradicating it in England by 2038.

## Contingencies Fund Advance

[HLWS734]

**Lord Grimstone of Boscobel:** My hon Friend the Minister for Exports (Graham Stuart MP) has today made the following statement.

UK Export Finance is seeking a repayable cash advance from the Contingencies Fund of £500,000. The requirement has arisen due to an urgent need to refresh its existing IT equipment (laptops) to meet the needs of the Department and manage its response to Covid-19.

Parliamentary approval for additional capital of £500,000 will be sought in a Supplementary Estimate for UK Export Finance. Pending that approval, urgent expenditure estimated at £500,000 will be met by repayable cash advances from the Contingencies Fund.

The cash advance will be repaid upon receiving Royal Assent on the Supply and Appropriation Bill.

### **Electronic Communications Code Consultation**

[HLWS736]

**Baroness Barran:** My Honourable Friend the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, Matt Warman MP, has made the following Statement:

The Government has ambitious plans to achieve nationwide rollout of future proof, gigabit-capable broadband and 5G networks as soon as possible to unlock the huge economic and social benefits this will bring. As we emerge from the Covid-19 pandemic, ensuring the whole country has access to world-class digital infrastructure will be critical to our economic recovery.

We are working with industry to target a minimum of 85% gigabit-capable coverage by 2025 and to get as close to 100% as possible. We are also aiming to ensure that 95% of the UK's geographic landmass has 4G coverage from at least one mobile network operator by 2025 and that the majority of the UK population has 5G coverage by 2027.

My department is making significant progress, through the implementation of the recommendations made in our Future Telecoms Infrastructure Review published in 2018. However, in order to accelerate this work it is important that we deliver the changes that are needed to

speed up commercial and public investment in gigabit-capable networks.

The Electronic Communications Code ("the Code") is the legal framework underpinning the rights of telecoms operators to install and keep electronic communications apparatus on public and private land, and to carry out other activities needed to maintain and improve digital communications networks. The Code was substantially reformed in 2017. Those reforms specifically recognised the increasing importance of access to fast and reliable digital services for society and the economy. While there have been no substantive changes to the policy underpinning the 2017 reforms, feedback from a wide range of stakeholders suggests further changes may be needed.

I am pleased to inform the House that we have today published a consultation to examine the scope for further legislative changes to the Electronic Communications Code. If we decide changes to the Code are needed, these will be focused on supporting our digital networks and ensuring the aims of the 2017 reforms are realised.

Telecommunications policy is reserved and the Electronic Communications Code applies and extends across the UK. As with the 2017 reforms, we will work closely with the Devolved Administrations to develop the finalised policy.

I have placed a copy of the consultation in the House Libraries.

The Statement includes the following attached material:

ECC Consultation [ECC consultation 27 January 2021.pdf]

The material can be viewed online at:

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-statement/Lords/2021-01-27/HLWS736/>

## Written Answers

Wednesday, 27 January 2021

### Carbon Emissions: Military Operations

*Asked by Lord Greaves*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the case for including emissions from military sources in targets for carbon emission reductions; and what plans they have to support their inclusion in international agreements during the 2021 United Nations Climate Change Conference. [\[HL12101\]](#)

**Lord Callanan:** There is no exclusion for reporting emissions from military sources under the Paris Agreement. The UK sets its Greenhouse Gas (GHG) inventory in accordance with international guidelines and emissions from some military sources (e.g. aircraft and shipping) are already included.

At COP26, Parties will develop the products required for full implementation of the Enhanced Transparency Framework of the Paris Agreement. This includes the tables and formats Parties will use to report their GHG emissions in accordance with international guidelines.

### Climate Change and Trade: Departmental Coordination

*Asked by Viscount Waverley*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to ensure cooperation between the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy and the Department for International Trade, on (1) trade, and (2) climate strategy and policy implementation. [\[HL12128\]](#)

**Lord Grimstone of Boscobel:** Climate change and trade are top priorities for the Government, and cooperation across government departments will be vital for delivering our ambitious environmental commitments. Therefore, the Prime Minister established the Cabinet Committee on Climate Change which brings together ministers responsible for domestic and international climate change policy. This includes representation from the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA), the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) and the Department for International Trade (DIT).

We will continue to work together at all levels to factor climate change and environmental impacts into the Government's trade strategy, in order to drive the transition to a more sustainable global economy, whilst delivering economic benefits for the UK.

### Crime

*Asked by Baroness Greengross*

To ask Her Majesty's Government when the Office for National Statistics removed the upper age limit from the Crime Survey for England and Wales; and when the statistics from this survey relating to those aged 75 and older will be published. [\[HL12104\]](#)

**Lord True:** The information requested falls under the remit of the UK Statistics Authority. I have therefore asked the Authority to respond.

20 January 2021

Dear Baroness Greengross,

As National Statistician and Chief Executive of the UK Statistics Authority, I am responding to your Parliamentary Question asking when the Office for National Statistics (ONS) removed the upper age limit from the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW); and when the statistics from this survey relating to those aged 75 and older will be published ([HL12104](#)).

The CSEW is a face-to-face victimisation survey which asks people aged 16 and over resident in households in England and Wales about their experiences of a range of crimes. Self-completion modules are included on the survey to collect information on topic areas that respondents could feel uncomfortable talking to an interviewer about. The upper age limit for respondents eligible for the self-completion modules of the CSEW was increased from 59 years to 74 years in April 2017. This is different to the main face-to-face part of the survey which has no upper age limit.

In response to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, it was necessary to move the CSEW from a face-to-face survey to a telephone-only survey (by which it may be referred to differently as the TCSEW, or "Telephone-operated Crime Survey for England and Wales", in publications). As a result, we are currently not asking questions around any sensitive topics, including domestic abuse and sexual assault, because of ethical and safeguarding concerns with this new mode of delivery.

Once it is possible to return to the face-to-face mode of delivery, we will immediately remove the upper age limit for respondents to the self-completion modules, in the interests of inclusivity. It will then take at least 12 months of data collection to enable us to produce accurate victimisation estimates for adults aged 75 and over.

Yours sincerely,

Professor Sir Ian Diamond

### Customs: France

*Asked by Lord Macpherson of Earl's Court*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what actions they are taking to rectify issues with commodity codes that are reportedly causing trucks exporting fish to France to be delayed at the UK–France border. [\[HL12112\]](#)



**Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park:** The Fish Export Service (FES) went live on 29 December 2020, providing the functionality to create a UK catch certificate for fish and shellfish caught by UK flagged vessels for export. The FES service included a simplified commodity code selection process designed to assist users as much as possible. FES launched with 1957 commodity codes, covering most fish and shellfish products. Since this date, following user feedback, the system has been further improved and updated to include 1959 commodity codes.

Following further industry feedback since this date, a commodity code review panel has been set up to continuously assure and update commodity code reference data as more traffic comes through the system. The department is also actively engaging with other departments, including HMRC customs leads, to jointly review and respond to feedback being raised by exporters of fish and shellfish products.

### **Dover Port**

*Asked by **The Lord Archbishop of Canterbury***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to increase the (1) capacity, and (2) resilience, of the Port of Dover. [[HL12276](#)]

**Baroness Vere of Norbiton:** The Port of Dover has well-established procedures for handling freight/passenger traffic, including in-built resilience contingencies.

Government is supporting the Port of Dover to meet capacity and resilience challenges in many ways including phasing-in the new Border Operating Model; Kent Access Permits; free COVID testing for hauliers at many sites including Sevington and Manston and a concerted, extensive campaign to brief hauliers on new arrangements and legal requirements. The Government is also taking powers to make it a requirement to have a negative test before entering Kent.

Additionally, Port of Dover is relieved (as is Eurotunnel) of the difficult and expensive prospect of providing border checks facilities on-site. This is due to HMG providing fully-funded inland facilities.

### **Employment: Mental Health Services**

*Asked by **Lord Taylor of Warwick***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to encourage more businesses to provide mental health support to all employees. [[HL12255](#)]

**Baroness Stedman-Scott:** The Government continues to work with business and other stakeholders to share sources of mental health and wellbeing support with employers. We also support the work of the business-led 'Thriving at Work' Leadership Council, which encourages employers to sign up to key mental health commitments and promotes the use of the Mental Health at Work online gateway developed by Mind. This hosts over 400 resources to inform and advise employers on

managing mental health in the workplace. This includes Coronavirus Toolkits that promote staff wellbeing, offer guidance to support employees working from home and advise on change management.

The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) is also leading work with other departments and arms-length bodies, including ACAS and the Health and Safety Executive, to improve and join up Government's wider information and advice support for the management of health in the workplace.

DWP's Access to Work programme provides support in the workplace, including for employees with mental health conditions. The Disability Confident initiative works to improve employer understanding of health and disability issues.

### **Environmental Protection and Trade**

*Asked by **Viscount Waverley***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to create a comprehensive trade and environment strategy; and how they plan to publicise any strategy ahead of COP26. [[HL12127](#)]

**Lord Grimstone of Boscobel:** The Government is clear that more trade does not have to come at the expense of the environment. We are actively working to promote environmental objectives through our independent bilateral and multilateral trade policy as well as through our export and investment promotion support.

For example, under the UK's new Global Tariff, we have liberalised tariffs on over 100 environmentally friendly goods. The Government has also underscored the environment as one of the three priorities for UK leadership in the World Trade Organisation (WTO).

We will use our presidency of COP26 and the G7 this year to continue to push for ambitious international action to tackle climate change and nature loss, including through trade.

### **Eurostar: Coronavirus**

*Asked by **Viscount Waverley***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to provide funding support to Eurostar following the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on passenger numbers. [[HL12323](#)]

**Baroness Vere of Norbiton:** I am aware the international rail sector, as with other sectors, continues to face significant challenges in terms of passenger demand.

Ministers and officials, working with other Government Departments, have engaged very regularly with Eurostar since March 2020 in relation to their financial situation. This has included supporting the company to access support schemes, where eligible and appropriate, as part of the unprecedented package of financial support for businesses that has been made available by the Chancellor.

As is the case with businesses in other sectors, officials continue to engage very closely with Eurostar as we support the safe restart and recovery of international travel.

### Fish: Exports

*Asked by Lord Macpherson of Earl's Court*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact of the UK–EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement on fish exports. [HL12111]

**Lord Gardiner of Kimble:** Under the UK-EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement, the UK has secured tariff free access for fisheries products caught or from aquaculture and a substantial transfer of quota from the EU which will benefit fishing communities across the UK. We recognise the temporary issues the fishing industry is facing, and know businesses involved in the export of highly perishable goods, such as fish, will be more affected by delays at the border. That is why, we have announced a £23 million scheme which will provide crucial support for fishermen and seafood exporters, who have experienced delays and a lack of demand for fish from the restaurant industry in the UK and Europe. This is in addition to the £100 million fund announced by the Prime Minister last month.

### Food Technology

*Asked by Lord Field of Birkenhead*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what is their policy on cooking, nutrition and food education in schools. [HL12095]

**Baroness Berridge:** All schools are required to teach a balanced and broad curriculum that helps provide young people with the knowledge, skills and understanding to prepare them to play a full and active part in society.

The National Curriculum for Design and Technology (D&T) requires maintained schools to teach pupils about food, nutrition, how to cook and healthy eating. Cooking and nutrition is a discrete strand of the D&T curriculum and cooking is compulsory in maintained schools for key stages 1 to 3 (ages 5–14). The curriculum aims to teach children how to cook, with an emphasis on savoury dishes, and how to apply the principles of healthy eating and nutrition. In 2016, we also introduced a new food preparation and nutrition GCSE to provide pupils with practical cookery experience and teach them about the underlying scientific concepts of nutrition and healthy eating.

The importance of a healthy diet is also included in the science curriculum for both primary and secondary schools where healthy eating is covered through topics relating to nutrition and digestion, including the content of a healthy diet and the impact of diet on how the body functions.

### Hong Kong Court of Final Appeal: Judges

*Asked by Lord Adonis*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of British judges continuing to serve on the Hong Kong Court of Final Appeal. [HL12088]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** British judges have played an important role in supporting the independence of Hong Kong's judiciary for many years. We want and hope that this can continue. The UK judiciary is independent of the Government and it is for them to make an assessment on this. It is therefore right that the Supreme Court continues to assess the situation in Hong Kong, in discussion with the Government.

*Asked by Lord Adonis*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have, if any, to ban British judges from serving on the Hong Kong Court of Final Appeal. [HL12089]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** British judges have played an important role in supporting the independence of Hong Kong's judiciary for many years. We want and hope that this can continue. The UK judiciary is independent of the Government and it is for them to make an assessment on this. It is therefore right that the Supreme Court continues to assess the situation in Hong Kong, in discussion with the Government.

### Hong Kong: Barristers

*Asked by Lord Adonis*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the employment of British barristers by the Hong Kong Department of Justice for the prosecution of Hong Kong residents on charges relating to protests against the governments of Hong Kong and China. [HL12086]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** Anyone working on cases involving Hong Kong politicians and activists will want to assure themselves that the very highest legal standards, including fairness, are being upheld. The Government has been clear that the Hong Kong authorities must end their targeting of pro-democracy voices.

*Asked by Lord Adonis*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have, if any, to ban British barristers from being employed by the Hong Kong Department of Justice for the prosecution of Hong Kong residents for charges relating (1) to state security, and (2) to civil protest. [HL12087]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** Anyone working on cases involving Hong Kong politicians and activists will want to assure themselves that the very highest legal standards, including fairness, are being upheld. The Government has been clear that the Hong Kong

authorities must end their targeting of pro-democracy voices.

### Infrastructure: Investment

*Asked by Viscount Waverley*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to invest in infrastructure for local communities and businesses in order to address any impacts of the UK–EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement. [HL12125]

**Lord Agnew of Oulton:** At the Spending Review, the government set out key infrastructure commitments that will bolster local communities and businesses. Amongst others, this included £5 billion to support UK-wide gigabit broadband roll-out and £4.2 billion intra-city transport settlements, both of which will have a significant impact on local economic growth.

The new Levelling Up Fund worth £4 billion for England, will attract up to £0.8 billion for Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland in the usual way. This will invest in local infrastructure that has a visible impact on people and their communities and will support economic recovery. It will be open to all local areas in England and prioritise bids to drive growth and regeneration in places in need, those facing particular challenges, and areas that have received less government investment in recent years.

Furthermore, the government announced a new infrastructure bank that will support private projects alongside lending to mayors and local authorities in order to support their infrastructure ambitions. The government will set out further details on the scale, mandate and operations of the Bank at the Budget.

### Jobcentre Plus: Armed Forces

*Asked by Lord Touhig*

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many Department for Work and Pensions Armed Forces Champions there are (1) in total, (2) on Jobcentre sites, and (3) in Jobcentre plus districts; and how many (a) Jobcentre sites, and (b) Jobcentre plus districts, do not have such a Champion. [HL12123]

*Asked by Lord Touhig*

To ask Her Majesty's Government how much they have spent on increasing the number of Department for Work and Pensions Armed Forces Champions since 4 September 2019. [HL12124]

**Baroness Stedman-Scott:** The Department for Work and Pensions currently has 46 Armed Forces Champions in place, including at least one in each of the 37 Jobcentre Plus Districts.

Our top priority during the pandemic has been to focus on processing claims and paying people quickly, while supporting all those using Jobcentre Plus services. As a result, the planned additional recruitment to increase the number of Armed Forces Champions was paused. Planning for 2020/21 is underway.

The DWP is proud to continue to provide vital and significant support services for veterans which recognises their particular needs and circumstance. During this pandemic the Department has announced it is recruiting 13,500 more Jobcentre Plus Work Coaches to boost its frontline. Every Work coach is trained on how to provide tailored and personalised support to members of the Armed Forces Community and their families, working in partnership with their district Armed Forces Champion where necessary. In those areas where there are particularly high levels of demand, for example garrison towns, this will form a significant part of the work done in individual Jobcentres.

Veterans are also supported in a number of other ways, for example, they are given early voluntary entry to the Work and Health Programme, and using Service Medical Board evidence where we can a severely disabled person does not have to undergo additional examinations for Employment and Support Allowance and Universal Credit purposes. We are also able to signpost veterans to other organisations for further support where appropriate.

Meanwhile, the department is a supporter of the Armed Forces Covenant which helps ensure members of the armed forces community have access to government support in a number of areas, including:

- Starting a new career.
- Access to healthcare.
- Education and family well-being.
- Having a home.
- Financial assistance.
- Discounted services, including travel.

### Overseas Aid: Reviews

*Asked by Baroness Hodgson of Abinger*

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon on 10 December 2020 (HL10766), whether the cross-Government process to review, appraise and finalise the UK's Official Development Assistance allocations has now concluded; and what plans they have to publish the findings of that review. [HL12055]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** The Foreign Secretary has concluded the process and has set out the conclusion in Written Ministerial Statement (HCWS735) to the House today:

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-statements/detail/2021-01-26/hcws735>.

### Parish Councils

*Asked by Lord Greaves*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the proposal in the report by Onward The Policies of Belonging, published on 12 January, that every local area should have the 'right to self government' through a parish or town council; and,



further to this, what assessment they have made of proposals for the removal of the ability of principal local authorities to veto proposals for new town and parish councils. [[HL12103](#)]

**Lord Greenhalgh:** My department notes the proposals set out in this report and the calls to remove the formal role of principal councils in the creation of town and parish councils. It is however the government's view that democratically elected and accountable local government has a vital role to play in this process, ensuring that councils can take a strategic view on governance on behalf of their communities. The Devolution white paper will set out the government's plans for levelling up all areas of the country and empowering our communities.

### Parish Councils: Coronavirus

*Asked by Lord Greaves*

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they have encouraged principal councils to provide financial support to parish and town councils from the funding they have received from the Government; and if so, (1) how, (2) what guidance they have provided, and (3) when any such guidance was issued. [[HL12098](#)]

**Lord Greenhalgh:** The Government does not have powers to offer direct financial support to parish and town councils, which are funded through a precept collected from within the overall council tax paid by the residents of the parish or town. The Secretary of State has written to principal authorities encouraging them to discuss funding issues with parish councils where parishes are performing Covid-related services. In addition the department has written to parish councils encouraging them to engage with their principal council to discuss access to funding. The Government has provided £8 billion of un-ringfenced support to local authorities since the start of the pandemic, recognising that local authorities are best placed to decide how to meet the major service pressures in their local areas.

### Plastics: Waste

*Asked by Viscount Waverley*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to ensure that the UK does not export plastic waste to poorer countries; and what plans they have to address ocean pollution ahead of COP26. [[HL12126](#)]

**Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park:** Recognising the difficulties experienced by some countries in managing imports of plastic waste, the Queen's Speech on 19 December 2019 included a commitment to ban the export of plastic waste to countries that are not members of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development. The Environment Bill will enable us to deliver on this commitment and we will consult on the date by when the ban should be in place. The Bill also allows us to introduce electronic tracking of waste to help

tackle waste crime here in the UK and prevent illegal waste from being shipped abroad.

2021 is a vital year for the ocean, climate and nature. Through the UK's COP26 and G7 Presidencies, the Government will showcase global leadership in tackling key pressures facing the ocean, using its influence to advocate for greater action and champion global collaboration. The Government intends to publish an update to the UK Marine Strategy Part 3, outlining the programmes of measures that will continue to move the UK towards Good Environmental Status in its seas, including contaminants and marine litter.

In 2018 the Government launched the Commonwealth Clean Ocean Alliance with our co-chair Vanuatu calling on Commonwealth countries to pledge action on plastic pollution. The Government has committed up to £70m to tackle plastic pollution, including helping developing countries prevent plastic waste entering the ocean, as well as to develop sustainable manufacturing, and has committed to start negotiations on a new global agreement on marine plastic litter and microplastics.

The Government has also committed to establish a new £500m Blue Planet Fund, to help developing countries protect the ocean from key human-generated threats, including pollution, and is a proactive Contracting Party to the London Convention (1972) and London Protocol (1996) to prevent pollution caused by dumping at sea.

### Poverty: Statistics

*Asked by Baroness Lister of Burtersett*

To ask Her Majesty's Government when they expect to publish poverty statistics based on the measures recommended in the report by the Social Metrics Commission A new measure of poverty for the UK, published in September 2018; and, in preparing these statistics, whether they are incorporating the proposals of that report that indicators of the lived experience of poverty should not be included as part of the central measure used to assess the number of people in poverty. [[HL12110](#)]

**Baroness Stedman-Scott:** With re-prioritisation of workloads during Covid-19, this project was paused. We will provide an update on this work in due course.

### Public Sector: Procurement

*Asked by Baroness Helic*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they will take to ensure that all public sector bodies follow their new procurement rules designed to exclude suppliers linked to human rights abuses. [[HL12107](#)]

**Lord True:** The Government is committed to preventing human rights abuses in the global economy, including in our own supply chains.

The Public Contracts Regulations allow contracting authorities to exclude bidders in particular situations, such

as for human rights abuses, and must be considered by the contracting authority on a case by case basis.

### **Railways: Coronavirus**

*Asked by Lord Berkeley*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they made of the risk of COVID-19 infection arising from the use of refreshment trollies on Great Western Rail and other long distance trains before the Office of Rail and Road prohibited, or significantly reduced, the use of such trollies. [[HL12273](#)]

**Baroness Vere of Norbiton:** It is for train operators to institute safe methods of working for all aspects of their operations and to follow guidance and instructions from the relevant bodies, including the Office of Rail and Road. The Department has not undertaken its own assessment, but understands that the Office of Rail and Road is in discussion with Great Western Railway and others.

### **Railways: Repairs and Maintenance**

*Asked by Lord Greaves*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the effects of changes to the Green Book on the viability of proposed railway enhancement schemes; and whether there will be a greater emphasis on benefits related to regeneration and access to employment for people living in economically deprived areas. [[HL12427](#)]

**Baroness Vere of Norbiton:** Transport business cases (including those for proposed railway enhancement schemes) follow the HM Treasury five case business case model. Decisions are informed by the assessment of the scheme in relation to strategic fit, value for money, deliverability, commercial and financial considerations. The appraisal framework set out in the department's Transport Analysis Guidance (TAG) is intended to support scheme promoters capture the full range of impacts associated with transport investment (economic, social and environmental) as part of the economic case. These impacts include agglomeration, labour supply and land use change impacts, as set out in TAG unit A2.1

The department is planning to publish an initial response to the Green Book Review this Spring as part of wider update to business case guidance. This will set out work already in progress to support the appraisal of schemes which meet Government's strategic priorities and how we plan to implement other changes required by the Review. The department is considering what improvements may be required across business cases to support the Government in delivering on its strategic priorities. This includes ensuring that existing tools and flexibilities in current strategic and economic case guidance are being fully used to support scheme promoters in making the case for investment which

supports levelling up. The department's Rebalancing Toolkit provides guidance to describe how a transport investment scheme fits with the objective of spreading growth across the UK. This tool can be used to assess the impact and identify the benefits that a transport scheme may have on local and regional economic performance. We plan to highlight these flexibilities alongside reviewing existing guidance and ensuring that relevant analysis is presented to decision makers.

The Green Book Review found that existing appraisal practice may lead to a focus on boosting benefit-cost ratios at the expense of analysis which illuminates the impacts of a proposed investment. The department plan to review the existing culture and processes associated with the development of transport business cases to understand and address behaviour and incentives which may be obstacles to supporting the delivery of Government's objectives.

### **Regional Planning and Development**

*Asked by Lord Field of Birkenhead*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what are the key (1) economic, (2) health, (3) education, and (4) other, indicators they plan to use to monitor their 'levelling-up' agenda. [[HL12094](#)]

**Lord Agnew of Oulton:** We are committed to levelling up the economy, ensuring strong employment and increasing productivity across the regions and nations of the UK. The Spending Review established a set of provisional priority outcomes and metrics across all departments and policy areas which have been published on the Gov.uk website.

### **Roads: North of England**

*Asked by Lord Greaves*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what progress has been made on the New trans-Pennine roads study by Highways England, announced by the Secretary of State for Transport on 21 March 2019; and when the results of that study will be announced. [[HL12423](#)]

**Baroness Vere of Norbiton:** Highways England has come to the end of the analytical phase of the study, which has looked at how a number of strategic corridors perform for an enhanced Central Pennines route east of the M65. This has used detailed traffic modelling tools to identify benefits, explore potential costs, understand the implications and opportunities for the environment and examine potential economic impacts. Decisions will be made shortly as to how the findings of the study should be addressed.

### **Self-employed: Finance**

*Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the report by Prospect Inquiry into

the future of self-employment, published in December 2020; and what plans they have to increase financial support for the self-employed. [[HL12121](#)]

**Lord Agnew of Oulton:** The Government has provided a substantial package of support worth £280 billion in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Government will continue to look for ways to improve the package of support available and work closely with stakeholders to explore how it can best support different groups.

The Self-Employment Income Support Scheme (SEISS) is providing generous support to self-employed people affected by the pandemic and HMRC have received over £18.5bn of claims for the SEISS so far.

The third SEISS grant is open for applications. The Government will set out further details on the level of the fourth grant, to cover February to April 2021, in due course.

### Sick Pay: Coronavirus

*Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact of increasing statutory sick pay on compliance with COVID-19 self-isolation requirements; and following any such assessment, what plans they have to increase statutory sick pay. [[HL12315](#)]

**Baroness Stedman-Scott:** This government has a strong safety net that helps people who are facing hardship and are unable to support themselves financially and we have taken steps to strengthen that safety net as part of the government's response to the pandemic.

As part of strengthening this safety net we have made Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) payable from the first day of sickness absence from work, rather than the fourth – where an individual is self-isolating or shielding due to coronavirus and meets all SSP eligibility conditions.

Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) provides a minimum level of income for employees when they are sick or incapable of work. Employers are legally required to pay SSP to eligible employees who are off work sick or incapable of work, where employees meet the qualifying conditions. Some employers may also decide to pay more, and for longer, through Occupational Sick Pay.

SSP is just one part of our welfare safety net and our wider government offer to support people in times of need. Where an individual's income is reduced while off work sick and they require further financial support, they may be able to claim Universal Credit and new style Employment and Support Allowance, depending on their personal circumstances.

Working people on low incomes who are required to remain at home by NHS Test and Trace to help stop the spread of the virus and cannot work from home could be eligible for a £500 payment to financially support them while self-isolating

### Statutory Sick Pay: Coronavirus

*Asked by Lord Jones of Cheltenham*

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to reports of 'long' COVID-19, what plans they have to make changes to statutory sick pay. [[HL12157](#)]

**Baroness Stedman-Scott:** This government has a strong safety net that helps people who are facing hardship and are unable to support themselves financially and we have taken steps to strengthen that safety net as part of the government's response to the pandemic.

Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) provides a minimum level of income for employees when they are sick or incapable of work. Employers are legally required to pay SSP to eligible employees who are off work sick or incapable of work, where employees meet the qualifying conditions. Some employers may also decide to pay more, and for longer, through Occupational Sick Pay.

To receive SSP employees must tell their employer that they are off sick before the deadline the employer has set (or within 7 days if they have not set one). Individuals can self-certify for the first 7 days of an absence, without the need to provide their employer with any medical evidence. Where an employee cannot work for 7 or more days' employers can request medical evidence of their employee's sickness.

SSP is payable for up to 28 weeks per sickness absence. Sickness absences which are less than 8 weeks apart count as the same period of sickness. In a new period of sickness, employees are eligible for 28 weeks of SSP. As such, where individuals remain sick or incapable of work as a result of coronavirus, they will be eligible for SSP, subject to the usual qualifying conditions.

For those who are sick, self-isolating or shielding due to coronavirus, SSP is now payable from the first day of work missed, rather than the fourth.

SSP is just one part of our welfare safety net and our wider government offer to support people in times of need. Where an individual's income is reduced while off work sick and they require further financial support, for example where they are not eligible for SSP, they may be able to claim Universal Credit and new style Employment and Support Allowance, depending on their personal circumstances.

### Transport

*Asked by Baroness Bennett of Manor Castle*

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the report by the Economics Statistics Centre of Excellence Estimating the UK population during the pandemic, published on 14 January, what plans they have to change their plans for transport provision including HS2 as a result of population changes following (1) the COVID-19 pandemic, and (2) the UK's departure from the EU. [[HL12408](#)]

**Baroness Vere of Norbiton:** The Department's investment decisions are based on a fair and rigorous appraisal system which assesses schemes in relation to their strategic fit, value for money, deliverability, commercial and financial considerations. This appraisal is based on forecasts of travel demand underpinned by official projections for population and economic growth produced by the Office for Budget Responsibility.

While it is too early for us to fully understand the impacts that Covid-19 and the UK's departure from the EU may have on travel demand, DfT's Transport Analysis Guidance requires scheme promoters to undertake sensitivity tests to understand the resilience of investment decisions to key input assumptions. For HS2, it is worth noting that the Full Business Case for Phase One published in April looked at both high and low demand scenarios, underpinned by population and economic growth forecasts. The analysis showed that even in a scenario where demand is relatively low, there is still value in pressing ahead with HS2. We have committed to publishing an uncertainty toolkit this year which will provide advice on the analysis and presentation of uncertainty in transport appraisal and modelling, including the use of scenarios.

The Department is also committed to longer term strategic priorities, publishing three Priority Outcomes as part of Spending Review 2020. One of these is to improve connectivity across the United Kingdom. HS2 will play an important role in improving connectivity and will help to spread jobs and opportunity across the country. This will be key in the country's recovery from the COVID pandemic.

### Transport: Capital Investment

*Asked by Lord Greaves*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to revise the algorithms used to assess the benefits of transport investment schemes in order to support their levelling-up agenda. [HL12426]

**Baroness Vere of Norbiton:** Transport business cases follow the HM Treasury five case business case model. Decisions are informed by the assessment of the scheme in relation to strategic fit, value for money, deliverability, commercial and financial considerations. The appraisal framework set out in the Department's Transport Analysis Guidance (TAG) is intended to support scheme promoters to capture the full range of impacts associated with transport investment (economic, social and environmental) as part of the economic case.

The Department is planning to publish an initial response to the HM Treasury Green Book Review this Spring as part of a wider update to business case guidance. This will set out work in progress to support the appraisal of schemes which meet Government's strategic priorities, and how we plan to implement other changes required by the Review. This includes ensuring that existing tools and flexibilities in current strategic and economic case guidance are used fully in making the case

for investment which supports levelling up. The Department's Rebalancing Toolkit provides guidance to describe how a transport investment scheme fits with the objective of spreading growth across the UK and can be used to assess the impact and identify the benefits that a transport scheme may have on local and regional economic performance.

The Green Book Review found that existing appraisal practice may lead to a focus on boosting benefit-cost ratios at the expense of analysis which illuminates the impacts of a proposed investment. The Department plans to review the existing culture and processes around the development of transport business cases to address behaviour and incentives which may be obstacles to supporting the delivery of Government's objectives.

### Turkey: Foreign Relations

*Asked by Lord Patten*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of their (1) political, and (2) economic, links with the government of Turkey. [HL12116]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** Turkey is a strategic partner and key NATO Ally that sits on the frontline of some of the most difficult and serious security and humanitarian challenges we face. The UK will continue to work closely with Turkey on challenges to our peace and security, and on strengthening our trading relationship (which was worth £18.9bn in 2019) following agreement of a Free Trade Agreement in December 2020.

### Turkey: Natural Gas

*Asked by Lord Patten*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact of the government of Turkey's deployment of naval vessels to explore natural gas fields near Greece on peace in the eastern Mediterranean. [HL12114]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** We welcome the positive decision by Turkey on 22 December to remove its seismic survey vessel from waters that are contested by Greece. We also note that Turkey and Greece will restart bilateral exploratory talks on 25 January to seek a resolution to tensions in the Aegean. This should help bring greater stability and prosperity to the Eastern Mediterranean. The UK will continue to work with all parties in support of de-escalation of tensions and dialogue. The Prime Minister raised this with Turkish President Erdoğan on 28 September and Greek Prime Minister Mitsotakis on 20 October. The Foreign Secretary discussed this issue with Turkish Foreign Minister Çavuşoğlu on 19 October and 19 November; and with Greek Foreign Minister Dendias on 24 November.

### Turkey: Religious Freedom

*Asked by Lord Patten*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the extent to which Jewish and



Christian UK citizens resident in Turkey are free to practise their religion. [HL12115]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** Under the Turkish Constitution freedom of religion or belief is protected by law, regardless of the nationality of the individual. We expect Turkey to safeguard the human rights, including that of freedom of religion, of all inhabitants of Turkey, be they Turkish citizens or citizens of other nationalities. The Minister for the European Neighbourhood and the Americas, Wendy Morton MP, raised human rights with her Turkish counterpart on 16 December 2020. FCDO officials in Turkey will continue to engage fully with the Christian and Jewish communities, as well as with all other minorities within Turkey. The British Embassy liaises closely with likeminded foreign missions on human rights issues, including freedom of religion and belief and we regularly raise these issues with the Turkish authorities, both bilaterally and alongside other diplomatic partners.

## United Kingdom: Anniversaries

*Asked by Baroness Eaton*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to celebrate the centenary of the formation of Northern Ireland in (1) England, (2) Wales, and (3) Scotland. [HL12202]

**Viscount Younger of Leckie:** The Government is committed to marking Northern Ireland's centenary in a way that ensures that all parts of the UK are able to experience and reflect on this important milestone in the decade of centenaries.

There are a number of important strands to our centenary programme to facilitate national recognition and international awareness, support trade and investment, and promote historical understanding - including through the £1million Shared History Fund which has received an extraordinary amount of interest from a wide range of arts, heritage, voluntary, community and other non-profit organisations right across the UK.

We are continuing to engage with departments across Government, including the other Territorial Offices, the Cabinet Office and DCMS as we continue to drive this work forward.

## Wind Power: Seas and Oceans

*Asked by Lord Greaves*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact of large-scale offshore windfarms on (1) the ecology of the seabed, (2) the ecology of the sea, (3) birdlife, and (4) maritime geomorphological processes whether undersea or coastal. [HL12099]

**Lord Callanan:** Offshore wind developers are required to carry out an Environmental Impact Assessment as part of any planning application. The Environmental Impact Assessment affords protection to the environment by

ensuring that the planning authority considers any significant effects as part of the decision-making process and that the local community are informed of any impacts.

Planning applications for offshore wind projects in England and Wales above 100MW capacity are determined by my Rt. Hon. Friend the Secretary of State through the Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects regime. In respect of these, details are publicly available on the Planning Inspectorate's website: <https://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/>

In addition, DEFRA has undertaken strategic assessments of the environmental impacts of offshore wind developments, including assessments of the marine environment and ecology, potential compensatory measures, and net gain. Given the Government's ambitions for offshore wind, BEIS and DEFRA are working closely with other Government bodies, the Crown Estate, industry and wider stakeholders. This work will prepare for and mitigate against the environmental impacts of growth in this sector. Included in this is the Offshore Wind Enabling Actions programme, a £4.3m action programme to be jointly run by DEFRA and BEIS and the Offshore Wind Evidence and Change Programme (a partnership between BEIS, DEFRA, The Crown Estate and Crown Estate Scotland) to deliver upon its aims.

*Asked by Lord Greaves*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessments they have made of the effects on the ecology of (1) the seabed, and (2) the intertidal zone, of the construction of (a) powerlines between turbines, (b) powerlines between turbines and the coast, and (c) other associated structures, as a part of offshore windfarm developments. [HL12100]

**Lord Callanan:** Offshore wind developers are required to carry out an Environmental Impact Assessment as part of any planning application. The Environmental Impact Assessment affords protection to the environment by ensuring that the planning authority considers any significant effects as part of the decision-making process and that the local community are informed of any impacts.

Planning applications for offshore wind projects in England and Wales above 100MW capacity are determined by my Rt. Hon. Friend the Secretary of State through the Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects regime. In respect of these, details are publicly available on the Planning Inspectorate's website: <https://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/>.

In addition, DEFRA has undertaken strategic assessments of the environmental impacts of offshore wind developments, including assessments of the marine environment and ecology, cabling impacts, and underwater noise. Given the Government's ambitions for offshore wind, BEIS and DEFRA are working closely with other Government bodies, the Crown Estate, industry and wider stakeholders. This work will prepare for and mitigate against the environmental impacts of growth in



this sector. Included in this is the Offshore Wind Enabling Actions programme, a £4.3m action programme to be jointly run by DEFRA and BEIS and the Offshore Wind Evidence and Change Programme (a partnership between BEIS, DEFRA, The Crown Estate and Crown Estate Scotland) to deliver upon its aims.

### **Xinjiang: Overseas Companies**

*Asked by **Baroness Helic***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what measures they have introduced, if any, to increase scrutiny of supply chains linked to Xinjiang for UK-based companies with an annual turnover below £36 million. [[HL12105](#)]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** On 12 January, Her Majesty's Government introduced new, robust and detailed guidance for UK business setting out the specific risks faced by companies with links to Xinjiang and underlining the challenges of effective due diligence there. We encourage all businesses sourcing from China, regardless of their size to implement this guidance. Her Majesty's Government will be leading a campaign of business engagement to reinforce the need for UK businesses to take action to address the risk. The Modern Slavery Act's transparency requirements only applies to companies with a turnover above £36 million. This ensures proportionality and impact by capturing organisations with the necessary capacity and leverage.

*Asked by **Baroness Helic***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what measures they have established to monitor the involvement of UK-based businesses in Xinjiang; and what further steps they are considering in the event that measures announced on 12 January to prevent UK-based businesses from directly or indirectly contributing to human rights violations in Xinjiang are not successful. [[HL12106](#)]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** We have been engaging with businesses and trade associations for some time, warning of the risk of inadvertently facilitating human rights violations by directly or indirectly providing goods and services to authorities in Xinjiang. Our new advice makes clear that conducting due diligence in Xinjiang is challenging due to limits on access, including for auditors; it being highly unlikely that workers will be able to speak freely; and the extent and severity of human rights violations occurring there. Businesses will need to consider these challenges when assessing whether, through due diligence, they are able to ensure their operations do not directly or indirectly contribute to human rights violations. It is for businesses to reassure themselves - and their customers - that their activities in no way contribute to human rights violations taking place in Xinjiang. The Foreign Secretary announced on 12 January that businesses failing to comply with their transparency obligations under the Modern Slavery Act will be penalised. We keep our policies and their impact under close review.

### **Xinjiang: Sanctions**

*Asked by **Baroness Helic***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what consideration they have given (1) to introducing sanctions on businesses or individuals linked to human rights abuses in Xinjiang, and (2) to mirroring the sanctions imposed by the government of the United States on companies associated with the abuse of human rights in that region. [[HL12108](#)]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** The Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office are carefully considering further designations under the Global Human Rights regime, introduced in July. We will keep all evidence and potential listings under close review. It is not appropriate to speculate on who may be designated in the future, as to do so could reduce their impact.

## Index to Statements and Answers

<b>Written Statements.....1</b>	Turkey: Natural Gas ..... 10
Bovine TB .....1	Turkey: Religious Freedom ..... 10
Contingencies Fund Advance .....1	United Kingdom: Anniversaries ..... 11
Electronic Communications Code Consultation...2	Wind Power: Seas and Oceans ..... 11
<b>Written Answers.....3</b>	Xinjiang: Overseas Companies..... 12
Carbon Emissions: Military Operations .....3	Xinjiang: Sanctions..... 12
Climate Change and Trade: Departmental Coordination .....3	
Crime .....3	
Customs: France .....3	
Dover Port .....4	
Employment: Mental Health Services .....4	
Environmental Protection and Trade .....4	
Eurostar: Coronavirus.....4	
Fish: Exports.....5	
Food Technology.....5	
Hong Kong Court of Final Appeal: Judges .....5	
Hong Kong: Barristers.....5	
Infrastructure: Investment .....6	
Jobcentre Plus: Armed Forces .....6	
Overseas Aid: Reviews.....6	
Parish Councils.....6	
Parish Councils: Coronavirus .....7	
Plastics: Waste.....7	
Poverty: Statistics .....7	
Public Sector: Procurement .....7	
Railways: Coronavirus .....8	
Railways: Repairs and Maintenance.....8	
Regional Planning and Development .....8	
Roads: North of England .....8	
Self-employed: Finance.....8	
Sick Pay: Coronavirus .....9	
Statutory Sick Pay: Coronavirus .....9	
Transport .....9	
Transport: Capital Investment .....10	
Turkey: Foreign Relations .....10	