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PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES
(HANSARD)

HOUSE OF LORDS

WRITTEN STATEMENTS AND WRITTEN ANSWERS

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

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

<i>Minister</i>	<i>Responsibilities</i>
Baroness Evans of Bowes Park	Leader of the House of Lords and Lord Privy Seal
Earl Howe	Minister of State, Ministry of Defence and Deputy Leader of the House of Lords
Lord Agnew of Oulton	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Education
Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon	Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office
Lord Ashton of Hyde	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport
Lord Bates	Minister of State, Department for International Development
Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government and Wales Office
Baroness Buscombe	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Work and Pensions
Lord Callanan	Minister of State, Department for Exiting the European Union
Earl of Courtown	Deputy Chief Whip
Lord Duncan of Springbank	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Northern Ireland Office and Scotland Office
Baroness Fairhead	Minister of State, Department for International Trade
Lord Gardiner of Kimble	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
Baroness Goldie	Whip
Lord Henley	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy
Lord Keen of Elie	Advocate-General for Scotland and Ministry of Justice Spokesperson
Baroness Manzoor	Whip
Lord O'Shaughnessy	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department of Health and Social Care
Baroness Stedman-Scott	Whip
Baroness Sugg	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Transport
Lord Taylor of Holbeach	Chief Whip
Baroness Vere of Norbiton	Whip
Baroness Williams of Trafford	Minister of State, Home Office and Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for International Development
Lord Young of Cookham	Cabinet Office Spokesperson and Whip
Viscount Younger of Leckie	Whip

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Written Statements

Monday, 22 October 2018

Call-Out Order: Air Policing Operations

[HLWS992]

Earl Howe: My hon. Friend the Minister of State for Armed Forces (Mr Mark Lancaster) has made the following Written Ministerial Statement.

Changes made by the Defence Reform Act 2014 allow reservists to be called out under section 56(1B) of the Reserve Forces Act 1996 if it appears to the Secretary of State that it is necessary or desirable to use members of a reserve force for any purpose for which members of the regular services may be used. Reservists called out under this power may be required to serve for a period of up to twelve months.

A new order has been made under section 56(1B) of the Reserve Forces Act 1996 to enable reservists to be called into permanent service in support of the United Kingdom's contribution to air policing operations.

With the changing international strategic threat, I consider there is a requirement for an order that enables the mobilisation of reservists to support tasks which provide for, or contribute to UK air security and policing, including associated strategic tasks. This order also provides for related activity elsewhere in the world, including, for example, the protection of the UK's overseas territories, providing Force Protection for air assets, in so far as the activity provides for, or contributes, to the continued security of the UK, its overseas territories, service people and assets.

The order takes effect from the beginning of 1 November 2018 and shall cease to have effect at the end of 29 September 2019, making it coterminous with other standing call-out orders.

For operations that fall outside the scope of these orders, for example Military Aid to the Civil Authorities, or warfighting, or for operations which are likely to involve a large number of reservists, I would expect to make separate call-out orders.

Cross-Border Access: Electronic Access in Criminal Matters

[HLWS993]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: My rt hon Friend the Minister of State for Policing and the Fire Service (Nick Hurd) has today made the following Written Ministerial Statement:

Until the UK leaves it remains a full member of the European Union with all the rights and responsibilities this entails. The Government will continue to consider the application of the UK's right to opt in to, or opt out of, forthcoming EU legislation in the area of Justice and Home Affairs on a case by case basis, with a view to maximising our country's security, protecting our civil liberties and enhancing our ability to control immigration.

The Government has decided not to opt in to the Proposal of the European Parliament and the Council on European Production Orders and European Preservation Orders for cross-border access to electronic evidence in criminal matters.

Law enforcement access to data held by service providers is an important issue and we support the underlying objective of improving cross-border access to electronic evidence. However, from the start of discussions on this issue, we have not supported the need for new EU legislation. That is because it is not clear that new EU legislation will be a practical and effective way to address the global issue of providing lawful access to data held anywhere in the world.

Written Answers

Monday, 22 October 2018

Coastal Erosion: South West

Asked by **Lord Patten**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they have taken to mitigate the effects of coastal erosion in Somerset, Devon and Cornwall since 2012. [[HL10504](#)]

Lord Gardiner of Kimble: Coastal erosion is a natural process that always has and will shape our coastline.

In England, District Councils (known as Coastal Protection Authorities) lead on the management of coastal erosion risk in their areas. Since 1996, coastal protection authorities have collaborated locally with a range of other interested parties to develop Shoreline Management Plans (SMP) for their coastlines. These high level plans set out a top level policy framework to manage the risk of coastal change, covering three time periods of 20, 50 and 100 years, and recommend approaches to manage the local coastline. The Environment Agency (EA) has strategic oversight for the production and quality of SMPs, and over the next three years it will be funding a refresh of the plans by coastal authorities.

In England, between 2015 and 2021, the Government plans to invest £885 million in projects to manage coastal erosion and better protect communities against flooding from the sea.

Community Housing Fund

Asked by **Baroness Jones of Moulsecoomb**

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they will extend the Community Housing Fund beyond 31 March 2020 to enable community groups to progress and complete their current pipeline of projects. [[HL10493](#)]

Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth: The Community Housing Fund is currently scheduled to close in March 2020, at the end of the current Spending Review period. While the Homes England programme to deliver the Fund outside London was launched relatively recently, I hope that there is still sufficient time for community-led schemes to access funding and deliver housing, although I appreciate that this will be more difficult for very new schemes. All proposals to extend the scheme beyond March 2020 will be given due consideration. Factors that will need to be taken into account in considering any extension are likely to include the value for money being achieved by the Fund and the extent to which it has been successful in increasing the number of community-led housing schemes either completed or in progress.

Compulsorily Detained Psychiatric Patients

Asked by **Lord Hylton**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what percentage of sectioned persons seek a second opinion about their treatment. [[HL10626](#)]

Lord O'Shaughnessy: The information requested is not collected.

Compulsorily Detained Psychiatric Patients: Females

Asked by **Lord Boateng**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the quality of data collected on women's and girls' experience of the Mental Health Act 1983. [[HL10533](#)]

Asked by **Lord Boateng**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the relevance of ethnicity in (1) the numbers of BAME girls aged 17 and under who were detained under section 136 of the Mental Health Act 1983, and (2) the numbers of self-inflicted deaths amongst girls and young women from BAME backgrounds. [[HL10534](#)]

Lord O'Shaughnessy: The Government recognises that ethnicity and gender are factors in detentions under the Mental Health Act 1983. Data is not collected centrally on experiences of the Mental Health Act, nor is data available that shows ethnicity as a factor among the numbers of self-inflicted deaths.

Council Housing: Construction

Asked by **Lord Greaves**

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether local housing authorities that divested themselves of their council housing stocks in the past and closed their housing revenue accounts (HRAs) are able to set up new HRAs and build new council housing under their new proposals for lifting the cap on local authority borrowing for such purposes or otherwise. [[HL10483](#)]

Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth: Yes. All local housing authorities (LHA) retain the power to provide housing under Part II of the Housing Act 1985. Where they do they are under a duty to account for this in a Housing Revenue Account by section 74 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989, unless that requirement is dis-applied by direction by the Secretary of State – which may be considered appropriate if the LHA only has limited housing stock.

Cross Country Rail Franchise

Asked by Lord Bradshaw

To ask Her Majesty's Government, following their decision to postpone the letting of a new franchise for Cross Country Trains, what steps do they intend to take to reduce overcrowding across that network. [HL10462]

Baroness Sugg: Reducing overcrowding will be a key priority as we consider future options for the franchise. The Department will consider rolling stock and train service options that will reduce overcrowding, but it is too early, at present, to say what the detail of that will be.

East-West Rail Link

Asked by Lord Patten

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Baroness Sugg on 18 September (HL10098), what estimate they have made of the contribution of the East West Rail programme to annual regional economic growth. [HL10506]

Baroness Sugg: The East West Rail Company are assessing the contribution of the East West Rail programme to both regional and national economic growth. This is yet to be quantified and the work is ongoing.

Electrical Safety

Asked by Lord Tope

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the numbers of owner-occupied dwellings in England that (1) require a rewire, and (2) have residual current device protection. [HL10593]

Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth: Data on electrical safety of dwellings is collected in MHCLG's English Housing Survey. The latest data (2016) is available (attached) online: https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/724422/DA5201_Disrepair_and_electrics_-_dwellings.xlsx

The latest data from 2016 shows that 75 per cent of owner occupied dwellings had a residual current device in a consumer unit or separate residual current devices.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

Data on electrical safety [181015 Data on electrical safety of dwellings HL10593.xlsx]

The material can be viewed online at: <http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2018-10-10/HL10593>

Asked by Lord Tope

To ask Her Majesty's Government what grant schemes are available to home owners to improve electrical safety in their dwellings. [HL10594]

Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth: The Department does not run any grant schemes for home owners to improve electrical safety in their dwellings.

Asked by Lord Tope

To ask Her Majesty's Government what consideration has been given to the merits of introducing free electrical safety checks for homes owned by people over 75. [HL10595]

Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth: The Department has no plans to introduce free electrical safety checks for homes owned by people aged over 75.

Flood Control: Finance

Asked by Lord Porter of Spalding

To ask Her Majesty's Government how much funding has been secured through contributions for investment in flood and coastal resilience schemes from (1) the private sector, (2) utility companies, and (3) local authorities since the start of the current six-year investment cycle. [HL10510]

Lord Gardiner of Kimble: The Government is investing £2.6 billion to protect better the country from flooding and coastal erosion between April 2015 and March 2021. This will improve protection for 300,000 homes in that period.

Since the start of the of the current six-year investment cycle the following contributions have been secured for investment in flood and coastal resilience schemes:

- £31 million directly from private sector – over £2 million of which comes from utility companies;
- £204 million from local authorities; and
- £119 million from local authority 'local levy' funding that has been allocated to specific schemes.

Flood Control: South West

Asked by Lord Patten

To ask Her Majesty's Government what is their assessment of the resilience to flooding in Somerset, Devon and Cornwall; and whether this has improved since 2014. [HL10502]

Lord Gardiner of Kimble:

Across Somerset, Devon and Cornwall, the Environment Agency and partners have successfully delivered over 80 schemes to provide better protection from river and coastal flooding to 6,300 properties since 1 April 2015. The full programme of flood and coastal erosion risk management schemes, including schemes completed in the south west region, can be found here <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/programme-of-flood-and-coastal-erosion-risk-management-schemes>,

The flood risk management schemes in Somerset, Devon and Cornwall include a range of measures, such as property level protection, dredging, building and

improving flood walls and embankments, and asset improvements and reinstatements.

The government does not individually assess each council's flooding plan.

Asked by Lord Patten

To ask Her Majesty's Government what is their assessment of the effectiveness of the arrangements between local authorities and relevant agencies to mitigate flood risks in Somerset, Devon and Cornwall. [HL10505]

Lord Gardiner of Kimble: There are close working relationships between risk management authorities (RMAs) in Somerset, Devon and Cornwall. These include the Environment Agency, Lead Local Flood Authorities and Internal Drainage Boards. Together they promote the creation, funding, and delivery of joint projects to manage flood risk. Assurance is provided through the two Regional Flood and Coastal Committees: South West covering Devon and Cornwall, and Wessex covering Somerset. The Regional Flood and Coastal Committees have membership from all relevant authorities and agencies, including County and Unitary Authorities and water companies.

The RMAs also work together to deliver strategic planning policies, through influencing local and neighbourhood plans, to manage flood risk through economic growth, planning and development.

Local Resilience Forums (LRFs) plan and prepare for flooding in Somerset, Devon and Cornwall. The LRFs are made up of category 1 and 2 responders, including the Environment Agency, county councils, NHS, Fire and Rescue Service, police. The LRFs meet bi-annually to ensure plans and procedures are in place to respond to flooding. Plans are tested regularly through multi-agency training and exercising. The LRFs provide support to communities to prepare for flooding. During flood events, the LRFs coordinate the response. After flood events, multi-agency debriefs identify successes and areas of improvements.

Food: Prices

Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of research conducted by Credit Suisse Bank that found that food costs would rise by 2.3 per cent in a soft Brexit and by 5.6 per cent in a hard Brexit. [HL10516]

Lord Gardiner of Kimble: The Government is committed to securing the best possible deal for Britain as we leave the EU which works for farmers, food producers and consumers. Defra research has shown that currently the most important drivers of change in the cost of food are commodity prices, exchange rates and oil prices. This will not change when we leave the EU.

Whilst the Government does not directly control these factors, we do work closely with industry to promote transparency for consumers and play an important role internationally in promoting open global markets. This helps create a competitive domestic market so producers and retailers can offer the best prices.

Fracking

Asked by Baroness Jones of Moulsecoomb

To ask Her Majesty's Government what baseline tests are carried out at fracking sites and test sites for radiation in air and water. [HL10541]

Lord Gardiner of Kimble: The environmental permits issued by the Environment Agency (EA) set out the pre-operational and operational monitoring requirements according to environmental risk. The type and period of monitoring may vary between sites, according to the sensitivity of the environment and the type and scale of activities.

The permits for both the Cuadrilla and Third Energy sites required baseline monitoring of groundwater, surface water and air quality. The EA has also used its own mobile monitoring units to record ambient air quality.

Since 2017 Public Health England has been undertaking background radon monitoring in air as part of a project coordinated by the British Geological Survey and funded by the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy.

Asked by Baroness Jones of Moulsecoomb

To ask Her Majesty's Government what action is taken by the Environment Agency, and within what timescale, in the event of a pad being ruptured at a fracking site and the water going to ground. [HL10542]

Lord Gardiner of Kimble: The Environment Agency (EA) has the expertise and the resources to respond to any environmental incidents 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

If there is an incident which causes pollution of the environment, environmental damage, or if there is a breach of the permit or non-compliance with environmental legislation, the EA has a range of enforcement powers available.

In the event of damage to the protective membrane on a well pad, the EA would require the operator to carry out immediate repairs and to take remedial works should any environmental damage have been caused.

Asked by Baroness Jones of Moulsecoomb

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether there is regular or random monitoring of the run-off areas downhill from fracking site pads to check for potential contamination caused by site operations. [HL10543]

Lord Gardiner of Kimble: The Environment Agency (EA) requires well pads to be constructed so that water run-off is captured on the site and does not cause pollution. The environmental permits also require

operators to carry out regular monitoring of nearby surface water locations as part of agreed Emissions Monitoring Plans.

The EA carries out regular inspections, audits and unannounced spot checks to ensure operators are compliant with its environmental obligations. During site inspections officers will check for leaks or spillages on the well pad surface. EA staff also carry out visual inspections off site.

*Asked by **Baroness Jones of Moulsecoomb***

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether the public are able to access all the test results from fracking sites and test sites which are reported to the Environment Agency. [HL10544]

Lord Gardiner of Kimble: The Environment Agency (EA) provides information through its Public Register which is available to the public at many of its offices. In some instances the EA also publishes monitoring results and details of its wider regulatory work online.

An example of this for Cuadrilla's Preston New Road site can be seen at:

<https://consult.environment-agency.gov.uk/onshore-oil-and-gas/information-on-cuadrillas-preston-new-road-site/>

Free Schools

*Asked by **Lord Watson of Invergowrie***

To ask Her Majesty's Government, excluding new schools opened following a competition under section 6A of the Education Act 2011, what was their target for the number of free schools to be opened in the 2018–19 school year; how many opened for the start of the September 2018 term; and how many they expect to be opened during the remainder of the 2018–19 school year. [HL10596]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: All new schools are classified as free schools, established either through the central or 'presumption route', the latter being those opening under section 6A of the Education Act (2011). There is no target for the number of free schools to be opened during the 2018-19 school year. In September 2018, 53 free schools, 36 of which were through the central route, and one university technical college were opened. A further four central route schools are currently forecast to open in the current school year.

Gatwick Airport Station

*Asked by **Lord Bradshaw***

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Baroness Sugg on 24 September (HL10300), when did the discussions about enhancing Gatwick Airport railway station begin. [HL10461]

Baroness Sugg: It is not possible to give a precise date when discussions first began about enhancing Gatwick

Airport rail station. The rail industry and the Department have been aware for many years about the problems caused for passenger with heavy luggage by the limited number of lifts and escalators at the station.

The current proposals to improve the station by, among others, adding more lifts and escalators, was given impetus by the interim recommendation of the Airports Commission which was subsequently accepted by the Government.

High Rise Flats: Fire Prevention

*Asked by **Lord Porter of Spalding***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the extent of the current delays in the production of written reports by the Building Research Establishment following BS8414 tests on the performance of external fire cladding systems; and what are the implications of these delays for fire safety in the UK. [HL10508]

Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth: The Government is not aware of any delays in the production of written reports by the Building Research Establishment (BRE) or any other commercial laboratories. Officials from the Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government are in regular contact with building owners and the wider construction industry to identify anything that might prevent remediation of buildings with potentially unsafe ACM cladding systems.

Incinerators

*Asked by **Baroness McIntosh of Pickering***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what is the current capacity for the incineration of household waste; and whether they have any plans to increase this capacity. [HL10558]

Lord Gardiner of Kimble: The Department does not have the data for just household waste. In 2016, the permitted capacity was 11,359,830 tonnes across the forty energy from waste plants treating 'municipal and/or commercial & industrial waste'.

There are currently eleven further plants in construction and two consented. These are forecast to be operational by 2020.

Overseas Aid

*Asked by **The Earl of Sandwich***

To ask Her Majesty's Government, following their response to the International Development Committee's report Definition and administration of ODA (HC 1011), whether any middle-income country on the World Bank's list may be eligible for UK Official Development Assistance (ODA); and which of those countries are currently in receipt of UK ODA. [HL10743]

Lord Bates: The OECD DAC determines which countries are ODA eligible based on World Bank GNI per capita data. The list of ODA eligible countries consists of all low and Middle-Income countries except for those that are members of the G8 or the European Union. The UK provided bilateral ODA through a range of government departments to the following middle-income countries in 2016:

Middle Income Countries (Lower & Upper) in Receipt of 2016 bilateral UK ODA

Albania	Gabon	Nicaragua
Algeria	Georgia	Nigeria
Antigua and Barbuda	Ghana	Pakistan
Argentina	Grenada	Panama
Armenia	Guatemala	Papua New Guinea
Azerbaijan	Guyana	Paraguay
Belarus	Honduras	Peru
Belize	India	Philippines
Bolivia	Indonesia	Serbia
Bosnia-Herzegovina	Iran	Seychelles
Botswana	Iraq	South Africa
Brazil	Jamaica	Sri Lanka
Cameroon	Jordan	St. Helena
Cape Verde	Kazakhstan	St. Lucia
Chile	Kosovo	St. Vincent & Grenadines
China	Kyrgyz Republic	Swaziland
Colombia	Lebanon	Syria
Congo, Rep.	Libya	Thailand
Costa Rica	Malaysia	Tunisia
Cote d'Ivoire	Maldives	Turkey
Cuba	Mauritius	Turkmenistan
Dominica	Mexico	Ukraine
Dominican Republic	Moldova	Uruguay
Ecuador	Mongolia	Uzbekistan
Egypt	Montenegro	Venezuela
El Salvador	Montserrat	Vietnam
Fiji	Morocco	West Bank & Gaza Strip
Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM)	Namibia	

Source: Statistics on International Development 2017

Pakistan: Overseas Aid

Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask Her Majesty's Government what percentage of the UK's bilateral aid programme is directed towards the rebuilding of Pakistan's colony shanty towns in which families from the country's minorities live; what assessment they have made of the number of people, in total, living in those colonies and their access to running water, electricity or education; and when officials from the Department for International Development and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office last visited those colonies to assess the conditions of people living there. [[HL10527](#)]

Lord Bates: Our work targets poor people in Pakistan regardless of race, religion, social background, or nationality. Some of the UK's work has targeted people living in shanty towns and informal settlements. This includes emergency responses to floods, and schools for children from marginalised communities in Karachi, including minorities. We do not hold information on what percentage of the UK's bilateral aid programme is directed towards rebuilding Pakistan's colony shanty towns, and there have been no recent staff visits to these areas.

Prescription Drugs

Asked by Lord Hylton

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence has issued guidance on prescribing psychotropic medicines; and if so, what precautions are advised to ensure that prescribed drugs are suitable for individual patients and that their use is not unnecessarily prolonged. [[HL10627](#)]

Lord O'Shaughnessy: The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) has issued a large range of guidance covering the use of psychotropic medicines, including through its clinical guidelines programme. NICE clinical guidelines provide detailed guidance for healthcare professionals and should be taken fully into account by prescribers in the care of individual patients.

NICE is also scheduled to develop a clinical guideline on the safe prescribing and withdrawal management of prescribed drugs that is expected to begin in early 2019.

We have taken the term 'psychotropic medicines' to refer to all psychiatric medication that is used to treat mental illnesses: this includes antidepressants, antipsychotics and mood stabilisers.

Public Health: Directors

Asked by Lord Bradley

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many directors of public health there are in England; and of those directors, how many are qualified medical doctors. [[HL10535](#)]

Lord O'Shaughnessy: At the end of September 2018, there were 135 Directors of Public Health in England; 48 were registered with the General Medical Council.

Public Houses: Non-domestic Rates

Asked by Baroness Rebuck

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact of the business rates pub relief scheme on the viability of community pubs in England; and what has been the cost of the scheme to date. [[HL10511](#)]

Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth: The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government has not made an assessment of the impact of the business rates pub relief scheme on the viability of community pubs in England. The Ministry will publish data on the amount of relief granted under the pubs relief scheme for 2017/18 as part of its scheduled Nation Non-Domestic Rates (NNDR) statistical release due in November.

Railways: Japanese Knotweed

Asked by Baroness Randerson

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the financial implications of the invasion of Japanese Knotweed onto railway lines; and who is responsible for meeting the costs of clearing Japanese Knotweed from railway lines. [[HL10579](#)]

Baroness Sugg: The infrastructure manager of Britain's railways, Network Rail, are responsible for assessing and meeting the costs of clearing Japanese Knotweed from railway lines.

This invasive species is estimated to cost Network Rail £2.5 million each year to manage. This includes areas covered by Japanese Knotweed on the railway line and at the trackside.

Railways: North of England

Asked by Lord Greaves

To ask Her Majesty's Government when they expect to receive a feasibility study report into the creation of a new trans-Pennine freight route between Liverpool and Yorkshire, via Burnley, Skipton and Leeds, including a reinstatement of a double-track railway between Gannow Junction and Skipton. [[HL10622](#)]

Baroness Sugg: We are working closely with Transport for the North and relevant local transport authorities to evaluate the costs, benefits and funding options for reinstating the Skipton-Colne line for passengers and freight, as part of a freight route across the Pennines. Work is advancing well and we expect to receive the results later this year in the form of a Strategic Outline Business Case prepared in line with the Government's new pipeline approach to rail enhancements.

Sanctions: Iran

Asked by Lord Campbell of Pittenweem

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking together with other members of the European Union to mitigate the effects of the imposition of sanctions on UK companies doing business in Iran. [[HL10467](#)]

Baroness Fairhead: We are working closely with the EU Commission and other member states to mitigate the impact of US sanctions on businesses continuing to trade with Iran. This involves delivering a special purpose vehicle to support European companies engaged in legitimate trade with Iran, raising with the US the need to make allowance for trade in humanitarian goods, and updating the Blocking Regulation.

Schools: Accountability

Asked by Lord Watson of Invergowrie

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Agnew of Oulton on 11 July (HL9052), when they intend to publish the consultation document on reviewing the school accountability system. [[HL10598](#)]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: I refer the Noble Lord to the answer I gave on 11 July 2018, to Question [HL9052](#), which indicated that the consultation would take place during the autumn term. An exact date is yet to be agreed. The consultation will be focused on considering how we can best identify schools that might benefit from an offer of support.

Shops: Non-domestic Rates

Asked by Baroness Rebuck

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact of recent increases in business rates on the sustainability of local high street bookshops in England. [[HL10512](#)]

Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth: The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government has not made an assessment of the impact of the revaluation on bookshops. The Government has introduced a range of business rates reforms and measures to support businesses, including bookshops, worth over £10 billion by 2023.

This includes, from April 2017, permanently doubling Small Business Rate Relief and raising the threshold for relief meaning that over 6500,000 small businesses now pay no business rates at all, and helping all business by switching the measure of inflation, used for the indexation of rates, from Retail Price Index to Consumer Price Index.

Social Rented Housing: Construction

Asked by Lord Kennedy of Southwark

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many more homes for social rent they expect to be built following the announcement by the Prime Minister on lifting the borrowing cap for local authorities. [[HL10549](#)]

Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth: It is for each local authority to determine the tenure of the homes that they build in the Housing Revenue Account. Although we have not estimated the number of homes for social rent that will be built with the removal of the Housing Revenue Account borrowing cap, early estimations suggest that the removal of the cap will enable local authorities to build up to 10,000 council homes per year in the short term. There is potential for ambitious council to go further over time, to provide even more homes for people in need.

Special Educational Needs: Speech and Language Disorders

Asked by Lord Ramsbotham

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans Ofsted has to consider children and young people's speech, language, and communication needs in their future research on special educational needs and difficulties, including provision of joint commissioning of specialist therapies and support. [[HL10575](#)]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: This is a matter for Her Majesty's Chief Inspector, Amanda Spielman. I have asked her to write to you directly and a copy of her reply will be placed in the Libraries of both Houses.

Tanzania: Family Planning

Asked by Baroness Tonge

To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they have made or plan to make to the government of Tanzania following the banning in that country of family planning adverts by FHI 360; and what assessment they have made of reports that the President described family planning as being for those "too lazy to take care of their children". [[HL10517](#)]

Lord Bates: Representatives of the British High Commission in Dar es Salaam remain closely engaged with the Government of Tanzania, who have provided assurances that there is no change in government policy which supports family planning. They have been told by

the Tanzanian Ministry of Health that a review of mass media communication is underway and they hope to recommence airing of advertisements within the next few months.

UN Commission on Population and Development

Asked by Baroness Tonge

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to encourage other countries to send ministers to the UN Commission on Population and Development in 2019. [[HL10746](#)]

Asked by Baroness Tonge

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the recent International Conference on Population and Development +25 review process; and whether a minister will attend the UN Commission on Population and Development in 2019. [[HL10747](#)]

Lord Bates: The UK was pleased to be represented at the recent ICPD+25 review meeting and was delighted there was broad consensus in support of women's sexual and reproductive health and rights.

UK representation at the UN Commission on Population and development will be decided in due course. We would encourage all UN Member states to attend at the highest appropriate level.

Yemen: Humanitarian Aid

Asked by Baroness Tonge

To ask Her Majesty's Government what action, if any, they plan to take to send more humanitarian aid to the people of Yemen. [[HL10520](#)]

Lord Bates: The UK has been at the forefront of the humanitarian response in Yemen, helping secure vital access for food, fuel and medicine to enter the country and consistently being one of the largest donors to the crisis.

On 3 April, the UK announced an additional £170 million in response to the humanitarian crisis in Yemen for this financial year (2018/2019). This funding will meet immediate food needs for 2.5 million Yemenis and will bring the total UK bilateral support to Yemen to over £570 million since 2015.

To date, donors have pledged a total of US\$ 2.01 billion towards the United Nations 2018 Humanitarian Response Plan in Yemen.

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