

Session 2021-22
No. 76



Monday
22 November 2021

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES
(HANSARD)

HOUSE OF LORDS

WRITTEN ANSWERS

Written Answers.....1

[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	Deputy Leader of the House of Lords
Lord Agnew of Oulton	Minister of State, Treasury and Cabinet Office
Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon	Minister of State, Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office
Lord Ashton of Hyde	Chief Whip
Baroness Barran	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Education
Lord Benyon	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
Baroness Bloomfield of Hinton Waldrist	Whip
Lord Caine	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Northern Ireland Office
Lord Callanan	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy
Baroness Chisholm of Owlpen	Whip
Earl of Courtown	Deputy Chief Whip
Lord Frost	Minister of State, Cabinet Office
Baroness Goldie	Minister of State, Ministry of Defence
Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park	Minister of State, Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office
Lord Greenhalgh	Minister of State, Home Office and Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities
Lord Grimstone of Boscobel	Minister of State, Department of Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy and Department for International Trade
Lord Kamall	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department of Health and Social Care
Lord Offord of Garvel	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Scotland Office
Lord Parkinson of Whitley Bay	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport
Baroness Penn	Whip
Baroness Scott of Bybrook	Whip
Lord Sharpe of Epsom	Whip
Baroness Stedman-Scott	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office and Department for Work and Pensions
Lord Stewart of Dirleton	Advocate-General for Scotland
Lord True	Minister of State, Cabinet Office
Baroness Vere of Norbiton	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Transport
Baroness Williams of Trafford	Minister of State, Home Office
Lord Wolfson of Tredegar	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Ministry of Justice
Viscount Younger of Leckie	Whip

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Written Answers

Monday, 22 November 2021

Afghanistan: Famine

Asked by **Lord Birt**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have, if any, to help alleviate the risk of a winter famine in Afghanistan. [HL3754]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The Prime Minister has announced that the Government will increase our overall assistance for Afghanistan to £286 million this financial year. On 31 October he announced the allocation of £50 million of that money for humanitarian purposes to those who need it most. We are working closely with the World Food Programme to ensure that food insecure adults and children receive the support they need.

Agriculture: Methane

Asked by **Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to reduce agricultural methane emissions. [HL3767]

Lord Benyon: The UK has a strong record on reducing emissions from methane, one of the main greenhouse gases warming our planet, with around 60% of methane emissions cut across the waste, energy and agricultural sectors compared with 1990 levels. Moreover, as announced at COP26, the UK is proud to be one of the first signatories of the The Global Methane Pledge, a commitment to take voluntary actions to reduce global methane emissions by at least 30% by 2030, against 2020 levels.

The Government's recently published Net Zero Strategy sets out our plans to reduce all greenhouse gas emissions, including a range of policies and actions further to reduce greenhouse gas emissions (including methane) from agriculture.

For example, ruminant livestock are the leading cause of agriculture methane emissions, but feed additives with methane inhibiting properties have the potential to reduce emissions, especially from housed cattle. Whilst this is an emerging technology, the Government is actively investigating the promising role these products may have in delivering emissions savings in the medium term.

An application for a promising feed additive is currently being processed by both the Food Standards Agency and Food Standards Scotland. The application has been formally validated and will now be subject to a robust risk assessment as part of the regulated products process.

More broadly the Government will support the agricultural sector to decarbonise through the schemes set out in the Agricultural Transition Plan, which aims to support farmers to adopt low greenhouse gas emission

farming practices and increase the carbon stored on their farms, helping to improve business productivity and profitability gains.

Alcoholic Drinks: Consumption

Asked by **Baroness Merron**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact of the proposed reform of alcohol duty announced in the Autumn Budget Statement on alcohol consumption. [HL3893]

Asked by **Baroness Merron**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact of the proposed reform of alcohol duty announced in the Autumn Budget Statement on (1) alcohol-related hospitalisations, (2) alcohol-related deaths, and (3) other health outcomes. [HL3894]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: The reform of alcohol duty has been designed to support the Government's public health objectives. From 2023, all drinks will be taxed according to their alcohol content. Some high strength products such as white cider will go up in duty, whilst draught beer and cider in pubs will pay less duty. The Government expects that these changes will have a positive impact, with the potential to reduce alcohol-related hospitalisations and deaths, as well as providing other positive health outcomes.

Asylum: Napier Barracks

Asked by **The Lord Bishop of Durham**

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they sought planning permission from Shepway District Council for the continued use of Napier Barracks to house people seeking asylum; and if not, why not. [HL3776]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: Planning permission was not sought from Shepway District Council as we pursued the Special Development Order process, which meant there was no requirement to seek planning permission from local authorities.

Engagement with both Folkestone and & Hythe District Council (formerly Shepway District Council) and Kent City Council, outlining the background and explaining our plan to continue using the site was undertaken as part of the Special Development order process.

Belarus: Migrants

Asked by **Lord Roberts of Llandudno**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what (1) aid, and (2) assistance, they are providing to help ease the migrant crisis in Belarus. [HL4109]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: As the Foreign Secretary wrote on 14 November, the situation at the

Polish border marks the latest step by the Lukashenko regime to undermine regional security. He is using desperate migrants as pawns in his bid to create instability and to cling on to power regardless of the human cost. We have made clear to the Belarusian authorities, including through their Ambassador to the UK, that this harmful, aggressive and exploitative behaviour must stop.

The UK is supporting its humanitarian partners to help alleviate the suffering of migrants at the border, including through our contributions to the Disaster Relief Emergency Fund, organised by the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, and through our political advocacy. As President of the G7, the UK led on a 18 November Foreign Ministers statement, which called on the Belarusian regime to provide international organisations with immediate and unhindered access to deliver humanitarian assistance. We were also pleased to send a small team of personnel to Poland to provide engineering support to ease pressure at the border. The Foreign Secretary discussed the situation with her Polish counterpart on 16 November, reiterating the UK's support and solidarity with Poland.

Borrowing: Sheffield City Region

Asked by Lord Scriven

To ask Her Majesty's Government what further information they need in order to confirm (1) Sheffield City Region's borrowing plans announced in March 2021, and (2) the debt cap agreed by the Treasury and Sheffield City Region. [HL3906]

Lord Greenhalgh: South Yorkshire Combined Authority formally signed off their agreed debt cap with HM Treasury on 15 November 2021. The next step is for the required secondary legislation empowering the combined authority to borrow to be prepared and laid before Parliament in due course.

Bosnia and Herzegovina: Peacekeeping Operations

Asked by Lord Hylton

To ask Her Majesty's Government what support they are providing via NATO to Operation Althea (the European Union Force in Bosnia-Herzegovina); and whether any military contingent will be of equal size to that previously provided. [HL4088]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: Earlier this month, the United Nations Security Council authorised the EU stabilisation force's (EUFOR) mandate for a further 12 months. Although the UK no longer participates in EUFOR following our withdrawal from the European Union, we liaise closely with Commander EUFOR and his team. We also support the NATO HQ in Sarajevo including through the secondment of UK staff officers, who are playing an important role in building the capacity of the Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) Armed Forces. Further discussions of how to support stability in

BiH will take place at the upcoming NATO Foreign Ministers' meeting in Riga, which the Foreign Secretary will attend.

Bus Services: Finance

Asked by Lord Bradshaw

To ask Her Majesty's Government, (1) what criteria will be used to assess bids for funds available in the Bus Strategy for England, (2) whether those criteria will include the relief of congestion, and (3) what plans they have, if any, to increase the funding available. [HL4068]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: All Local Transport Authorities in England outside London have published Bus Service Improvement Plans, setting out local visions for transformed bus services. These plans will be assessed against the expectations that we set out in the National Bus Strategy and supporting guidance, including that there should be significant increases in bus priority to tackle congestion and speed up bus services. At the Budget we announced £1.2 billion of new dedicated funding for bus transformation deals and we will say more about how this funding will be allocated in due course.

Business Banking Resolution Service

Asked by Lord Sikka

To ask Her Majesty's Government what powers they have to examine the operations of the Business Banking Resolution Service. [HL3910]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: The Business Banking Resolution Service (BBRS), which launched on 15 February 2021, offers a free, independent service designed to settle unresolved and new complaints that are not eligible for the FOS. The Government has always been clear that it welcomes the BBRS. However, it is an independent non-governmental body, and this independence is vital to its role. Its credibility, authority and value to SMEs would be undermined if it were possible for the Government to intervene in its decision-making or operational matters.

Children's Rights: Impact Assessments

Asked by The Lord Bishop of Durham

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether a Children's Rights Impact Assessment has been conducted for the provisions in the Nationality and Borders Bill. [HL3779]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: The Nationality and Borders Bill is part of our New Plan for Immigration, delivering the most comprehensive reform of the asylum system in decades.

An Equality Impact Assessment was published on 16 September, and this includes consideration of possible impacts on children. The Equality Impact Assessment can be found on the GOV.UK website.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-nationality-and-borders-bill-equality-impact-assessment>.

Commonwealth: Health Services

Asked by Lord Boateng

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to increase the level of spending of Overseas Development Assistance in strengthening health care systems in (1) Ghana, (2) Nigeria, and (3) other Commonwealth countries. [HL3764]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: With the Spending Review 2021 settlement in place, the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office will now begin to allocate its resources. An internal process of budget setting will begin shortly and conclude later this financial year. No decisions on specific programmes and geographical areas have yet been made. This internal process will be driven by the International Development Strategy which will ensure the UK's development assistance is aligned with the vision the Prime Minister set out in the Integrated Review.

Deportation: Jamaica

Asked by The Lord Bishop of Southwark

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they have taken following the remarks by the High Commissioner for Jamaica on 4 November: "from a human rights perspective I am deeply concerned about cases in which persons are being removed having lived in the UK since childhood and have no known relations in Jamaica or familiarity with Jamaica". [HL3845]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: We are committed to an immigration policy which welcomes and celebrates people here legally, but which deters illegal immigration, prevents the abuse of benefits and services, removes immigration offenders and foreign national offenders from the UK and disrupts the Organised Crime Groups that prey on the vulnerable.

We worked very closely with the authorities in Jamaica and the Jamaican High Commission in the UK in the planning of this charter flight.

The Government is clear that foreign nationals who abuse our hospitality by committing crimes should be in no doubt of our determination to deport them. Under the UK Borders Act 2007, the Home Secretary is required by law to make a deportation order in respect of a foreign national convicted in the UK and sentenced to at least 12 months' imprisonment, unless an exception applies.

A person's age upon arrival to the UK or length of time they have lived in the UK are not exceptions to automatic deportation but may be relevant factors, as well as the strength of their social, cultural and family ties in the UK, in considering whether a human rights exception applies. All human rights claims and claims to have been a victim of modern slavery are fully considered and determined

before deportation including, where applicable, via the Courts.

The Home Office supports two Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) in Jamaica who provide re-integration support to those who are deported. This includes initial reception support and longer-term support including training and skills to enable them to find employment within Jamaica. They can also provide emotional and wellbeing support to those who need it. The UK is one of the few countries in the world who provide this support.

Electoral Register: Northern Ireland

Asked by Lord Empey

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they have reached an agreement with the Electoral Commission for Northern Ireland on a funding package for the next three years; and if so, what sums have been allocated. [HL3783]

Lord Caine: The UK Electoral Commission was established by the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000 and is independent of Government. It is accountable to Parliament via the Speaker's Committee on the Electoral Commission (save for where its finances and Five Year Plan relate to the Commission's devolved Scottish and Welsh functions). Each financial year, the Commission is required to submit to the Speaker's Committee an Estimate of its income and expenditure in relation to non-devolved elections. After its examination, the Speaker's Committee lay the Estimate before the House of Commons. The Commission reports on outturn against the Estimate in the Annual Report and Accounts, which is certified by the Comptroller and Auditor General. Where the Commission's Annual Report and Accounts relate to Welsh and Scottish devolved functions, the Comptroller and Auditor General certifies those for the devolved Parliaments, not the UK Parliament.

The internal allocation of funding between the four national offices of the Electoral Commission is an internal matter for them.

Environmental Land Management Scheme

Asked by Lord Moynihan

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the reply by Lord Benyon on 27 May (HL Deb, col 1097), when they will publish details of how new Environmental Land Management schemes will deliver the "very clear access commitment, backed by funding". [HL3685]

Asked by Lord Moynihan

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the reply by Lord Gardiner of Kimble on 7 July 2020 (HL Deb, col 1070), how the new Environmental Land Management schemes will deliver improvements in public access to water bodies and waterways. [HL3686]

Lord Benyon: Public access is of high importance when considering how people can enjoy treasured landscapes and water bodies.

The Agricultural Transition Plan was published in November 2020 and the Government published an update in June 2021. Further information on the Environmental Land Management Schemes will be published later this year.

Equitable Life Assurance Society

*Asked by **Baroness Bowles of Berkhamsted***

To ask Her Majesty's Government which of the deficiencies in insurance company accounting that were identified by the Penrose Inquiry into Equitable Life have been dealt with by the International Financial Reporting Standards Foundation; how they were dealt with; and if they were not dealt with, why not. [[HL3771](#)]

Lord Callanan: The Penrose Inquiry into Equitable Life focussed on UK financial and regulatory reporting in the years leading up to 2001, and how they related to the Equitable Life Assurance Society.

The Inquiry identified that life insurance company accounts needed a consistent and realistic accounting basis for the preparation of accounts. They recommended the creation of consistent standards for the preparation and presentation of accounts for long term business. The IFRS Foundation has stated that this was a key aim when developing and publishing IFRS17. In order to make insurers' financial statements more useful for users of financial statements.

Family Hubs: Finance

*Asked by **Lord Farmer***

To ask Her Majesty's Government how much new funding for family hubs they have set aside in the Autumn Budget and Spending Review for each financial year to 2024–25; and how local authorities can apply for these funds. [[HL3994](#)]

Baroness Barran: At Budget, the government announced £82 million to create a network of family hubs. This is part of a wider £300 million package to transform services for parents, carers, babies and children in half of council areas across England. The department will set out more detail in due course on how this new funding will be allocated.

The department has previously announced £39.5 million of funding to support the implementation of family hubs. Some of this has been direct support to local authorities:

- A £12 million transformation fund to open family hubs in at least 12 new areas in England. This fund launched on 2 November 2021. Eligible local authorities have been invited to submit bids to the department by 17 December 2021.

- Grants to accelerate the opening of family hubs across all regions of the country (through the Children's Social Care Covid-19 Regional Recovery and Building Back Better Fund). 9 local authorities have been chosen to work regionally to share good practice (total £1 million). 25 local authorities have been allocated funding to accelerate the opening of family hubs in their local areas (total £2.2 million).

The remainder of funding is for programmes to support the development of family hubs policy, evidence and data and digital implementation, covering mixed teams of local authorities, officials, and contracted partners. This includes:

- A new national centre for family hubs to provide expert advice and guidance and an evaluation innovation fund to build the evidence base (£2.5 million over three years from the 2020/21 academic year to the 2022/23 academic year, announced at Budget 2020).
- Data and digital products that will support the practical implementation of family hubs, through the family hubs-growing up well project (£11.8 million from the Shared Outcomes Fund, announced at Autumn Budget 2020; £10 million from a second Shared Outcomes Fund award announced in October 2021 totalling £20 million, of which the other £10 million was put to the Transformation Fund above (the £12 million total for the Transformation Fund includes a further £2 million of capital funding from the Department for Education's budget)).

Ferries: Isles of Scilly

*Asked by **Lord Berkeley***

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the announcement of a £48 million award to the Council of the Isles of Scilly for passenger and freight vessels, who will own the vessels; how much private sector finance has been committed; whether the Council had to put the operation of the vessels out to competitive tender; whether an Option Assessment Report was provided; and, if such a report was provided, whether they will place a copy in the Library of the House. [[HL3917](#)]

*Asked by **Lord Berkeley***

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the announcement of a £48 million award to the Council of the Isles of Scilly for passenger and freight vessels, what assurances, if any, have been made by the Council to the Government on (1) the operating timetables for the vessels, (2) the passenger fares, and (3) freight charges; and what remedies are available if any such assurances are not achieved. [[HL3919](#)]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: The Council of the Isles of Scilly submitted a full application which included an Options Assessment Report. The Department for Transport reviewed these documents through a detailed assessment process. The process was set out in full in the Fund's Technical and Explanatory Notes published on GOV.UK. Officials from the Department for Transport

will be writing to the Council of the Isles of Scilly to discuss further business case requirements, as set out in the Fund's technical note and FAQs published on GOV.UK.

Financial Reporting Council: Misconduct

Asked by Lord Sikka

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have, if any, to publish a list showing fines collected from auditors admonished for misconduct by the Financial Reporting Council. [HL3835]

Lord Callanan: The Financial Reporting Council (FRC) publishes all financial sanctions imposed against audit firms and individuals in an Outcomes document on its website. This document is maintained and updated throughout the year.

In addition, on a yearly basis, the FRC publishes its Annual Enforcement Review, which contains a list of all sanctions imposed in the year. The Review for 2021 is available on the FRC website.

Fossil Fuels

Asked by Baroness Sheehan

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the response by Lord Callanan on 3 November (HL Deb col 1215), what estimate they have made of the amount of (1) oil, (2) gas, and (3) coal, currently accessible and expected to be extracted from open sites in UK jurisdictions. [HL3834]

Lord Callanan: The Oil and Gas Authority's estimate for proven and probable (2P) UK petroleum reserves as at end 2020 is 4.4 billion barrels of oil equivalent, and the estimate for the UK's contingent (2C) resources as at end 2020 is 6.8 billion barrels of oil equivalent.

It is not possible to say with certainty how much of this will be extracted as this will be driven by a range of commercial and regulatory factors.

As of June 2021, the Coal Authority estimates that overall there are 3,814 million tonnes of coal resources. There are five current commercial projects* with a projected tonnage of around 35 million tonnes, of which around 14 million tonnes has been worked.

**Not including Forest of Dean gales.*

Fossil Fuels: Carbon Emissions

Asked by Baroness Sheehan

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the response by Lord Callanan on 3 November (HL Deb, col 1215), what estimate they have made of the amount of (1) oil, (2), gas, and (3) coal, needed for domestic consumption during the transition to net zero. [HL3833]

Lord Callanan: Like our independent advisers, the Climate Change Committee (CCC), the Government sees continued but declining use of fossils fuels during the

transition to net zero. The recently published Net Zero Strategy (figure 14, page 81) shows that we expect both natural gas and oil consumption to more than halve by 2037 as fossil fuels are replaced by new sources of energy.

Freedom of Religion or Belief Ministerial Conference

Asked by The Lord Bishop of Southwark

To ask Her Majesty's Government (1) what progress they have made in organising a Ministerial Conference on freedom of religion or belief in July 2022, and (2) what steps they have taken, if any, to involve civil society and faith organisations in the planning and proceedings of this conference. [HL3840]

Asked by The Lord Bishop of Southwark

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they have taken to implement the recommendations of the Bishop of Truro's Independent Review for the Foreign Secretary of FCO Support for Persecuted Christians, published on 8 July 2019. [HL3841]

Asked by The Lord Bishop of Southwark

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they plan to take to independently review the implementation of the recommendations of the Bishop of Truro's Independent Review for the Foreign Secretary of FCO Support for Persecuted Christians, published on 8 July 2019. [HL3842]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK is committed to defending freedom of religion or belief (FoRB) for all, and promoting respect between different religious and non-religious communities. Promoting the right to FoRB is one of the UK's longstanding human rights priorities.

The Bishop of Truro's review provided recommendations for an enhanced Government response to support members of all faiths, beliefs, and those of no religious belief. We are making good progress on implementing all the recommendations, including on the recommendation to review the recommendations independently three years from publication of the report.

Hosting an international Ministerial conference on FoRB in July 2022 will build on this ongoing commitment to promoting FoRB for all. Work to deliver this conference is underway, including early engagement with a range of stakeholders. Civil society, faith and belief actors have a key role to play in championing the right to FoRB - as plans progress, we will widen consultation further with FoRB stakeholders.

Freeports: Northern Ireland

Asked by Lord Kilclooney

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Greenhalgh on 2 November (HL3296), what legal obligations apply to the Freeports

model in Northern Ireland which did not delay the selection of Freeports in England. [HL3813]

Lord Greenhalgh: We are continuing to work positively and constructively with the Northern Ireland Executive to agree a suitable Freeport model. This will ensure that the model delivers a compelling offer for ports and businesses and their local communities in Northern Ireland.

Gambling

Asked by Baroness Davidson of Lundin Links

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many times (1) ministers, and (2) officials, from HM Treasury have met representatives of the gambling industry since June 2020; and what was the nature of those discussions. [HL3869]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: Details of ministerial meetings with external bodies are published at [1].

Officials meet regularly with stakeholders from across the gambling sector to hear their views on the gambling market, tax and economic issues.

[1] [HMT ministers' meetings, hospitality, gifts and overseas travel - GOV.UK](#)

Hebron: Rural Areas

Asked by Baroness Janke

To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they plan to make to the government of Israel about the closure of the village of Sussia by the Israeli army. [HL3810]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We remain deeply concerned about restrictions on freedom of movement within the West Bank, including to and from East Jerusalem. We continue to stress to the Israeli authorities the damage that their restrictions on movement, access and trade are doing to the living standards of ordinary Palestinians.

Hereditary Peers: By-elections

Asked by Lord Grocott

To ask the Senior Deputy Speaker what was the cost of delivering each of the seven hereditary peer by-elections this year in respect of (1) outside contractors, and (2) the time of House staff. [HL4082]

Lord Gardiner of Kimble: There have been five hereditary peer by-elections this year, with three Conservative vacancies filled by means of a single by-election. The cost in respect of outside contractors was as follows:

	<i>Date</i>	<i>Civica invoice (inclusive of VAT)</i>
Mar, C. – Whole House	June 2021	£1,440
Selborne, E., Denham, L., Selsdon, L. (combined) – Conservative	June 2021	£600
Elton, L. — Whole House	July 2021	£1,440
Rea, L. – Labour	July 2021	£0 (<i>no ballot</i>)
Simon, V. – Whole House	November 2021	£1,440
TOTAL		£4,920

These costs were in addition to the cost of House of Lords staff time spent organising the by-elections. Such time forms part of their normal duties and therefore cannot be costed separately.

House of Lords: Times of Sittings

Asked by Lord Balfe

To ask the Senior Deputy Speaker, further to the Written Answer by Lord Gardiner of Kimble on 9 November (HL3511), whether he will ask the appropriate committee of the House to make this facility for staff late-night travel home available on similar terms to Members of the House. [HL3854]

Lord Gardiner of Kimble: As set out in my previous reply there are no current plans to make the facility available more widely on similar terms to Members of the House. The Noble Lord is welcome to submit his proposal directly to the Commission, should he so wish.

Housing Act 1985

Asked by Lord Goodlad

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to repeal section 618 of the Housing Act 1985. [HL3794]

Lord Greenhalgh: The City of London Corporation have brought this matter to the Department's attention. The Committee on Standards in Public Life (CSPL) review of Local Government Ethical Standards made a number of recommendations that relate to disclosable pecuniary interests. Ministers are considering the CSPL report and recommendations. The government will issue its response in due course.

Human Trafficking and Smuggling: Balkans

Asked by Baroness Helic

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the illegal traffic into the UK of (1) drugs, (2) firearms, and (3) people, originating in or going via the Western Balkans. [HL3796]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: Western Balkan organised crime groups are involved in the production and supply of cannabis into the UK. The Western Balkans is a major transit route for heroin shipments into Europe. Some of these shipments will be destined for the UK. The scale of Organised Immigration Crime in and through the region has reduced but remains problematic. More generally the Western Balkans is a transit route for victims of modern slavery and human trafficking. The Western Balkan region is highly likely to be a key source for criminal firearms in many states across Europe. However, the UK sees very few Original Lethal Purpose firearms from the region. We are continuing to reduce the supply and availability of illegal firearms to prevent their use by criminal or terrorist groups in the UK. Alongside the threat to the UK posed by drugs, firearms and people coming from or going through the region, OCGs based in or originating from the region pose a threat through their activities in the UK or transporting illicit commodities into the UK from other parts of the world.

The Government's response to the threat posed by these groups is set out in the Serious and Organised Crime Strategy launched in November 2018. Our approach has been to work closely with international partners, including those in the Western Balkans, to ensure we leave no safe spaces for criminals and their associates. We have mobilised a robust international response using multilateral channels, and have increased our international presence by deploying liaison officers to the region.

Insulate Britain: Demonstrations

Asked by Lord Rogan

To ask Her Majesty's Government the total cost of policing the Insulate Britain protest in Westminster on 3 November. [HL3826]

Asked by Lord Rogan

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many (1) Metropolitan Police officers were diverted from their other duties, and (2) police staff hours were expended, due to policing the Insulate Britain protest in Westminster on 3 November. [HL3828]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) confirmed that there were 59 arrests made in connection to the protest by Insulate Britain at Parliament Square on 4 November.

Figures are not currently available relating to number of officers diverted, police hours expended, or total cost of that protest. However, MPS has stated that the cost of policing Insulate Britain protests between the 13 September and the 10 October totalled £1,961,616.44. The breakdown of these costs are; opportunity costs of £1,721,700.31, fleet costs of £22,020.90 and overtime amounting to £217,895.23.

Asked by Lord Rogan

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many (1) Metropolitan Police officers were injured, and (2)

protesters were arrested, during the Insulate Britain protest in Westminster on 3 November. [HL3827]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: There were no reports of injuries to the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) officers who responded to the protest by Insulate Britain on Thursday 4 November, which took place on Parliament Square in Westminster. MPS confirmed that there were 59 arrests made in connection to the protest.

The right to peaceful protest is a vital part of a democratic society. However, this does not extend to unlawful behaviour. Should a protest contravene the law, the police have comprehensive powers to deal with activities that spread hate or deliberately raise tensions through violence or public disorder. The use of these powers and the management of demonstrations are an operational matter for the police.

Through the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill, the Government is introducing new measures which will allow the police to take a more proactive approach in managing highly disruptive protests.

Interserve: Audit

Asked by Lord Sikka

To ask Her Majesty's Government what proportion of the fines levied by the Financial Reporting Council on Grant Thornton and its partner for audit failures at Interserve will be retained by HM Treasury; and what proportion will be distributed to stakeholders negatively affected by those failures. [HL3965]

Lord Callanan: The FRC undertook the investigation into the audit of Interserve under its Audit Enforcement Procedure (AEP), the regime applicable to statutory audit investigations since 2016. All fines imposed under the AEP are paid into HM Treasury's consolidated fund in line with the general principles applying to the treatment of fines or other penalties imposed by public bodies in central government.

In this case, the fine imposed on Grant Thornton LLP amounted to £1.3 million. This was adjusted for mitigating factors and admissions / early disposal, in line with the FRC's published Sanctions Policy for AEP cases, to £718,250. The fine imposed on Simon Lowe, the audit engagement partner, was £70,000. This was adjusted for mitigating factors and admissions/early disposal to £38,675.

The £467,780 costs recovered have been paid to the Institute for Chartered Accountants in England and Wales (ICAEW), as the Recognised Supervisory Body (RSB) who paid for the investigation. (In accordance with paragraph 20ZA, Schedule 10 of the Companies Act 2006, the RSB, which has approved the persons as eligible for appointment as statutory auditors must pay the costs of the investigation).

There is no provision under the AEP for any proportion of fines or successfully reclaimed costs to be paid to any negatively affected stakeholders.

Israel and Russia: Politics and Government

Asked by Lord Grocott

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking in response to UN member states that have annexed parts of neighbouring states, in particular, in respect of (1) Russia's annexation of Crimea, and (2) Israel's annexation of the Golan Heights. [HL3795]

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: Annexation of territory by force is prohibited under international law. Any declaration of a unilateral border change goes against the foundation of the rules-based international order and the UN Charter.

The UK does not recognise the illegal annexation of Crimea and Sevastopol by Russia. We continue to make clear to Moscow that Crimea is, and will remain part of, Ukraine.

We have used our G7 Presidency to keep Crimea high on the international agenda, as shown by our G7 Foreign Ministers' statements on Crimea in March and April and the G7 Cornwall Summit communiqué in June, in which leaders reiterated their support for the Ukraine's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity and called on Russia to withdraw troops and materiel from Crimea. We strongly support the establishment of the International Crimea Platform, as a means to raise global ambition on Crimea and hold Russia to account for its actions. We will continue to call for international monitoring missions to have access to Crimea, currently denied by Russia.

The UK's position on the status of the Occupied Golan Heights is well-known and has not changed. We do not consider them part of the territory of the State of Israel.

Israel: Jordan

Asked by Baroness Janke

To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they plan to make to the government of Israel concerning (1) the demolition of tents, livestock pens, and water tanks, and (2) the confiscation of a battery and metal poles by Israeli forces from the community of Ein al-Meyteh in the northern Jordan Valley. [HL3809]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK regularly raises the issue of demolitions, confiscations and forced evictions of Palestinians from their homes with the Government of Israel, most recently with Israel's Ministry of Defence on 19 October. The former Foreign Secretary raised ongoing evictions, demolitions and settlement activity with the Israeli Authorities during his visit to the region on 26 May. The UK is clear that in all but the most exceptional of circumstances, demolitions and evictions are contrary to International Humanitarian Law. We continue to urge the Israeli and Palestinian leaderships to avoid actions which make peace more difficult to achieve.

Israel: Palestinians

Asked by Baroness Janke

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of (1) the reports of the killing of 13-year old Palestinian Mohammed Da'das by Israeli forces in the West Bank, and (2) the riot dispersal methods used in such circumstances by Israeli forces. [HL3812]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: On 6 November Minister Cleverly publicly expressed condolences to the family of 13 year old Mohammed Da'das, who was killed near Nablus following clashes between Palestinians and Israeli Defence Forces. We urge the Israeli authorities to carry out a swift and thorough investigation. Our Embassy in Tel Aviv regularly raises the importance of the Israeli security force's adherence to the principles of necessity and proportionality when defending its legitimate security interest. We continue to stress the importance of the Israeli security forces providing appropriate protection to the Palestinian civilian population, in particular the need to protect children, and urge restraint in the use of live fire.

Local Enterprise Partnerships: Aarhus Convention

Asked by Baroness Bennett of Manor Castle

To ask Her Majesty's Government how their obligations under Article 7 of the Aarhus Convention 1998 are discharged regarding Local Enterprise Partnership (1) plans, and (2) programs. [HL3753]

Lord Callanan: The Government requires each LEP to set out in their local assurance framework their arrangements for governance and transparent decision making in regard to LEP plans and programs. In relation to Article 7 of the Aarhus Convention 1998, these assurance requirements include:

1. Board membership, including an identified board member to represent and engage with the SME business community.
2. Collective engagement with local authority leaders in decision-making on growth priorities.
3. A dedicated website through which local partners and the public can check progress on the delivery of Growth Deals and access key documents such as the Strategic Economic Plan, ensuring that this information can be found easily and is accessible to all.
4. Through their accountable body, ensure that Freedom of Information and Environmental Information Regulation requests are dealt with in line with relevant legislation.
5. Ensure that there is ongoing local engagement with public and private sector stakeholders to inform key decisions and set out how they will evidence effective engagement.

6. Ensure that there is local engagement with and feedback to the general public about future Local Enterprise Partnership strategy development and progress against delivery of the SEP, including key projects and spend against those projects and that this can be evidenced.

Lung Diseases: Oxygen

Asked by *Baroness Masham of Ilton*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they have taken to build a resilient supply of oxygen for patients with (1) serious respiratory conditions, and (2) asthma, in (a) hospitals, (b) their homes, or (c) care homes. [HL3817]

Asked by *Baroness Masham of Ilton*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of whether there are adequate supplies of oxygen for all hospital patients with respiratory conditions. [HL4021]

Lord Kamall: Oxygen resilience is primarily achieved through sufficient production capacity within the United Kingdom. Current National Health Service use of oxygen is approximately 320 metric tonnes of oxygen per day, while total UK oxygen production capacity is approximately 1,650 metric tonnes of oxygen per day.

We have worked with gas providers, which has led to an increase in capacity within the cylinder supply chain and improved supply chain timing. In addition, the National Medical Devices Reserve includes over 2,500 oxygen concentrators and a range of ancillary oxygen equipment for deployment to meet a range of supply contingencies.

Minimum Wage: Fines

Asked by *Lord Sikka*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to increase financial penalties for employers violating the minimum wage law. [HL3909]

Lord Callanan: This Government takes the enforcement of the minimum wage seriously. That's why we have doubled HMRC's budget for enforcing the minimum wage since 2015.

In April 2016 we doubled the minimum wage penalty paid by employers; from 100% to 200% of the arrears owed to the worker, up to a maximum of £20,000 per worker. Any employer found to have underpaid their workers is subject to this substantial penalty and also to be publicly named and shamed. This is a significant deterrent against any employer who may be tempted to underpay their workers.

Our priority has always been to ensure that workers receive the money they are owed as quickly as possible. It

is for this reason, in the vast majority of cases, HMRC pursue civil enforcement, and why since 2015 the Government has been able to order employers to repay £100 million to 1 million workers.

National Problem Gambling Clinic: Children and Young People

Asked by *Baroness Davidson of Lundin Links*

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many people aged between 13 and 25 have received treatment from the National Problem Gambling Clinic since 2019. [HL3936]

Lord Kamall: The information requested is not held centrally.

Northern Ireland Protocol: Customs

Asked by *Lord Taylor of Warwick*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to unilaterally stop checks on some goods sent across the Irish Sea as an alternative to triggering Article 16 to suspend the Protocol on Ireland/Northern Ireland. [HL4115]

Lord Frost: The Government has already secured unfettered access for Northern Ireland firms for goods moving from Northern Ireland to Great Britain through the legislative protections we have provided, notably enshrining in the UK Internal Market Act 2020 full unfettered access for qualifying Northern Ireland goods to all parts of the UK market.

For movements from Great Britain to Northern Ireland, we have set out proposals that would largely eliminate checks on goods remaining within the UK. We would prefer to secure this reduction through negotiations with the EU. However, the Article 16 safeguards within the Protocol remain on the table if that should be the only way to secure our position.

Office for Environmental Protection: Public Appointments

Asked by *Baroness Parminter*

To ask Her Majesty's Government when they will add the Chair of the Office for Environmental Protection to the list of significant public appointments it agrees with the Commissioner for Public Appointments. [HL4103]

Lord True: The Minister for the Cabinet Office has already agreed with the Commissioner for Public Appointments that the appointment of the Chair of the Office for Environmental Protection is treated as a regulated public appointment and that it is a significant appointment. The appointment of the current Chair was treated in this way.

Palestinians: Non-governmental Organisations

Asked by *Baroness Janke*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they have made to the government of Israel concerning the allegations that the secret evidence used against four NGOs—Defense for Children International-Palestine, the prisoners' rights group Addameer, the human rights group Al-Haq and the Bisan Center for Research and Development—was based in part on prisoners' confessions obtained under torture. [HL3808]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK is aware of the decision by the Israeli authorities to designate six Palestinian Civil Society Organisations. We are in contact with the Government of Israel to understand the basis of the designations. We have made clear that human rights and civil society organisations have a vital role to play in both Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories, including those focused on Israel's conduct in the Palestinian Territories.

Palestinians: Third Sector

Asked by *The Earl of Sandwich*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they have made to the government of Israel following the designation, on 22 October, of six Palestinian civil society groups as terrorist organisations; and what assessment they have made of the consequences of the government of Israel's actions for the UK's support for civil society in the West Bank and Gaza. [HL3831]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We are aware of the decision by the Israeli authorities to designate six Civil Society Organisations. We are in contact with the Government of Israel to understand the basis of the designations. We have made clear that human rights and civil society organisations have a vital role to play in the development of thriving, open societies. Israel's long-standing commitment to democratic values is one of its great strengths as a fellow democracy, and we continue to make clear that a strong, vibrant civil society is in Israel's own interest. As a friend of Israel, we are concerned by any developments that may undermine this commitment.

Parking: Fees and Charges

Asked by *Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth*

To ask Her Majesty's Government when they will respond to the further technical consultation on private parking charges, discount rates, debt collection fees and appeals charter, published on 30 July. [HL3980]

Lord Greenhalgh: The 'Private parking charges, discount rates, debt collection fees and appeals charter: further technical consultation' contained proposals to bring private parking charges into closer alignment with

Local Authority Penalty Charge Notices, along with a number of other measures to improve the private parking sector. The consultation closed on 27 August and the department is finalising its analysis of the responses. Our intention is to publish the consultation response together with the new Code of Practice as soon as possible so that motorists can benefit and industry has time to adapt itself to the new requirements.

Peers: Correspondence

Asked by *Lord Foulkes of Cumnock*

To ask the Senior Deputy Speaker, further to the Written Answer by Lord Touhig on 15 November (HL3572), what financial assistance is available to backbench members to employ the three secretarial and research support staff who are entitled to passes. [HL4132]

Lord Gardiner of Kimble: Members are entitled to claim a daily allowance and certain travel expenses as detailed in the *Guide to Financial Support for Members*, which is available on the intranet. No financial assistance is specifically made available for those members who sponsor passes for secretarial or research staff.

Post-mortems: Carbon Monoxide

Asked by *Lord Hunt of Kings Heath*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have, if any, to introduce an automatic test for carbon monoxide poisoning in post-mortems in line with the automatic test for drugs and alcohol. [HL3806]

Lord Wolfson of Tredegar: Coroners are independent judicial office holders and the way they conduct their investigations, including any post-mortem examinations and related tests they commission is a matter for them. Coroners will, however, only ask for toxicology in appropriate cases – they do not ask for it in every death – and the Government has no plans to introduce legislation for automatic testing for carbon monoxide poisoning.

Prisons: Pepper Spray

Asked by *Lord German*

To ask Her Majesty's Government on how many occasions pelargonic acid vanillylamide (PAVA) incapacitant spray has been (1) drawn, or (2) drawn and deployed, in prisons since 1 April 2019, broken down by prison. [HL3791]

Lord Wolfson of Tredegar: We ensure all our prison officers are trained in how to use PAVA professionally, safely and lawfully and that it is only used when necessary and proportionate.

The data provided for this response is collected as internal management information and reflects the data held at the date of extraction. It is not quality assured in the same way as data prepared for publication and is subject to change.

<i>Establishment*</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Drawn only</i>	<i>Drawn and deployed</i>
Aylesbury	20	5	15
Bedford	6	4	2
Belmarsh	1	1	0
Berwyn	1	0	1
Brinsford	18	4	14
Bure	1	1	0
Channings Wood	1	1	0
Durham	4	4	0
Elmley	1	0	1
Featherstone	6	4	2
Ford	1	0	1
Garth	1	0	1
Gartree	1	1	0
Hindley	13	5	8
Hull	25	4	21
Humber	1	0	1
Isis	1	0	1
Manchester	3	2	1
Moorland	3	1	2
Norwich	4	3	1
Nottingham	1	1	0
Preston	22	3	19
Ranby	2	1	1
Risley	42	15	27
Rochester	1	0	1
Stafford	2	1	1
Stocken	1	0	1
Swaleside	1	1	0
Swinfen Hall	31	5	26
Wakefield	7	6	1
Wandsworth	2	1	1
Wayland	2	2	0
Wealstun	36	11	25
Whitemoor	11	4	7
Winchester	3	0	3
Woodhill	3	1	2
Total	279	92	187

Note* The above prisons comprise both those which have been through full rollout and deployed to over 50% of their eligible staff, and also prisons that have only issued as part of an exceptional deployment to a very small number of staff.

Asked by Lord German

To ask Her Majesty's Government on how many occasions pelargonic acid vanillylamide (PAVA) incapacitant spray has been (1) drawn, or (2) drawn and deployed, in prisons since 1 April 2019, broken down by (a) ethnicity, (b) religion, and (c) disability status, of the prisoner. [HL3792]

Lord Wolfson of Tredegar: We ensure all our prison officers are trained in how to use PAVA professionally, safely and lawfully and that it is only used when necessary and proportionate.

The data provided for this response is collected as internal management information and reflects the data held at the date of extraction. It is not quality assured in the same way as data prepared for publication and is subject to change.

There have been a total of 279 incidents involving PAVA since 1st April 2019, of those incidents in 187 incidents PAVA was drawn and deployed and in 92 PAVA were as drawn only.

We are unable to provide this for disability as data for this is not available.

<i>Ethnicity</i>	<i>Individuals Impacted</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Drawn and Deployed</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Drawn only</i>	<i>%</i>
Asian/Asian British	33	6%	28	7%	5	3%
Black/Black British	182	35%	147	39%	35	24%
Mixed	57	11%	38	10%	19	13%
Other ethnic group	8	2%	7	2%	1	1%
White	241	46%	159	42%	82	57%
Not recorded	4	1%	2	1%	2	1%
Total	525	100%	381	100%	144	100%

<i>Religion</i>	<i>Individuals Impacted</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Drawn and Deployed</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Drawn only</i>	<i>%</i>
Buddhist	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Christian	198	38%	131	34%	67	46%
Hindu	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Jewish	3	1%	2	1%	1	1%
Muslim	133	25%	103	27%	30	21%
Sikh	2	0%	1	0%	1	1%
Other	12	2%	10	3%	2	1%
No religion	151	29%	112	29%	39	27%
Not recorded	26	5%	22	6%	4	3%
Total	525	100%	381	100%	144	100%

Asked by Lord German

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many people have been held in prisons where pelargonic acid vanillylamide (PAVA) incapacitant spray has been issued, broken down by (1) ethnicity, (2) religion, and (3) disability status, since 1 April 2019. [HL3793]

Lord Wolfson of Tredegar: PAVA is presently in 80 HMPPS prisons *, the below tables provide population figures across those 80 prisons firstly by ethnicity and secondly by religion. We are unable to provide this breakdown for disability as data is not available.

Note The 80 prisons comprises 26 live sites which have issued to over 50% of their staff and the remainder have only issued to a small number of staff as part of an exceptional deployment.*

Table 1: Prisoners held in prisons where pelargonic acid vanillylamide (PAVA) incapacitant spray has been issued, by ethnicity, March 2019 - September 2021, in England and Wales

	31- Mar-19	30- Sep-19	31- Mar-20	30- Sep-20	31- Mar-21	30- Sep-21
All	59,070	59,958	59,657	57,223	56,594	57,224
Asian / Asian British	4,599	4,642	4,635	4,464	4,534	4,709
Black / African / Caribbean / Black British	7,786	7,964	7,839	7,615	7,541	7,494
Mixed / Multiple ethnic groups	2,724	2,808	2,848	2,803	2,758	2,764
Other ethnic group	918	916	932	888	853	858
White	42,624	43,228	42,912	40,918	40,399	40,869
Not recorded	240	236	320	376	314	354
Not stated	179	164	171	159	195	176

Table 2: Prisoners held in prisons where pelargonic acid vanillylamide (PAVA) incapacitant spray has been issued, by religion, March 2019 - September 2021, in England and Wales

	31- Mar- 19	30- Sep-19	31- Mar- 20	30- Sep-20	31- Mar- 21	30- Sep-21
All	59,070	59,958	59,657	57,223	56,594	57,224
Anglican	9,751	9,750	9,522	8,866	8,391	8,223
Free Church	505	535	547	559	539	531
Roman Catholic	10,380	10,453	10,386	9,873	9,547	9,723
Other Christian	7,741	7,828	7,584	7,302	7,350	7,570
Muslim	9,612	9,920	10,096	9,953	10,202	10,424
Hindu	263	271	271	237	247	256
Sikh	431	399	406	365	344	349
Buddhist	1,181	1,183	1,227	1,171	1,135	1,104
Jewish	363	406	406	395	384	383

	31- Mar- 19	30- Sep-19	31- Mar- 20	30- Sep-20	31- Mar- 21	30- Sep-21
Other religious groups	1,345	1,420	1,433	1,410	1,366	1,362
Other non- recognised	7	5	6	6	5	5
No religion	17,381	17,702	17,676	16,879	16,843	17,120
Not recorded	110	86	97	207	241	174

Data sources and quality. The figures in these tables have been drawn from administrative IT systems which, as with any large scale recording system, are subject to possible errors with data entry and processing.

Source: Prison NOMIS System

PQ HL3793 (Ministry of Justice; DASD-DES)

Railways: Bridges*Asked by Baroness Randerson*

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Baroness Vere of Norbiton on 1 November (HL3360), which Historic Railways Estate structures have had infilling and demolition contracts issued since the programme was paused in the summer; what was the value of each of those contracts; whether the review of future maintenance proposals will also take account of the ecological sensitivity and environmental impact; and whether the core membership of the Stakeholder Advisory Forum includes ecological and environmental expertise. [HL4028]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: There is only one Historical Railways Estate structure, Barcombe Bridge, where the contract/price acceptance was undertaken since the infilling and demolition programme was paused on 23 July 2021. The procurement process for minor works to this structure commenced on 5 May. Although a price of £175,838.79 was accepted on 12 August the acceptance letter clearly states that all infill activity has been paused and no works should commence until National Highways have been given confirmation to do so.

The acceptance letter also makes clear that works should not commence until the site has been checked by the ecologist and that National Highways will not pay for any works unless it has been specifically authorised in writing.

Ecological impacts and environmental considerations are taken into account as part of the planning process and National Highways continue to conduct their own ecological assessments and also ensure Natural England (and devolved partners) are involved as necessary. As a matter of course, for all major works proposals National Highways already conduct the following:

- A desktop review of the area (looking for SACs, SSSIs, conservation areas and published sightings of protected species).

• Site visit by an ecologist, including a Preliminary Ecological Assessment, where they review the structure and surrounding area to identify possible mammals, reptiles & amphibians as well as protected plant species, birds nesting & invasive species. If anything is discovered additional surveys are undertaken, and, if necessary, applications for the relevant licences are submitted.

The Stakeholder Advisory Forum includes a range of stakeholders with an interest in the Historical Railways Estate with membership kept under review as stated in its Terms of Reference.

Railways: Freight

Asked by Lord Bradshaw

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Baroness Vere of Norbiton on 10 November (HL3612), what additional schemes they are establishing to support rail freight to counteract the shortage of HGV drivers. [HL3985]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: Pursuant to the answer of 16/11/2021 to question HL3612 "To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they have taken in the last six months to make it easier for railways to replace trips made by Heavy Goods Vehicles": Government continues to work closely with Network Rail (NR) and the rail freight industry to maximise the sectors role in supporting resilient supply chains. The Government will continue to explore the potential to increase freight capacity and capability on the rail network and is supportive of modal shift of freight from road to rail wherever possible.

We will continue to manage NR delivered rail enhancements, including freight schemes, within the Rail Network Enhancements Pipeline (RNEP).

Refugees: Families

Asked by The Lord Bishop of Durham

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether family reunion rights will be restricted for all group 2 refugees as a result of the proposed changes to the law in the Nationality and Borders Bill. [HL3777]

Asked by The Lord Bishop of Durham

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact of the proposed changes to family reunion rights in the Nationality and Borders Bill on the number of (1) men, (2) women, and (3) children, who will come to the UK via family reunion; whether they expect the number of such people to be lower than in previous years; and if so, by how many. [HL3778]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: Family reunion will only be permitted to Group 2 refugees where refusing would be a breach of our international obligations under Article 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights.

Taken in combination with wider measures in the Nationality and Borders Bill, this policy seeks to deter migrants from undertaking extremely dangerous journeys to the UK from safe countries.

Refugees: Rented Housing

Asked by Lord Hylton

To ask Her Majesty's Government what specific sites have been identified to provide rented housing for (1) Afghan refugees coming to the UK under the Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme (ACRS), (2) other newly accepted refugees, and (3) British Overseas Nationals from Hong Kong. [HL3807]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: The Home Office works with the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC), as well as other Government departments, on the provision of support, including housing, for refugees and asylum seekers in the UK.

For those resettled through UK Resettlement Schemes, local authorities are provided with funding to support their welcome and integration. Before committing to offering resettlement places a local authority should think about whether they have, or are able to put in place, the accommodation and support needed to ensure the appropriate care and resettlement of people in need of our help.

Afghans who have been evacuated before, during and since Operation Pitting are being looked after as set out in the funding package of 13 September 2021.

Local authorities assist newly granted refugees with finding accommodation. Migrant Help also provide support to newly granted refugees following a positive decision via the AIRE (Advice, Issue Reporting and Eligibility) contract.

Those arriving in the UK on the British National (Overseas) [BN(O)] visas are free to choose where to settle in the UK. BN(O) status holders should be able to demonstrate self-sufficiency with the UK for a period of six months as a prerequisite to the visa being granted. DLUHC, have provided practical advice to BN(O)s through an online Welcome Pack on settling in the UK, which includes guidance (in English and Cantonese) on renting and buying accommodation. DLUHC have also written to landlord and letting agent representatives to raise awareness of the BN(O) visa route, further supporting BN(O) status holders to access accommodation.

Sizewell C Power Station: Construction

Asked by Lord Foster of Bath

To ask Her Majesty's Government, in relation to the building of Sizewell C nuclear power station in Suffolk, (1) what is the basis for the claim that using a Regulated Asset Base (RAB) financing model for its construction "will add at most a few pounds a year to typical household energy bills during the early stages of

construction and on average less than £1 per month during the full construction phase of the project” as stated in the BEIS press release of 26 October, (2) what capital sum would be subject to RAB, (3) how many households would pay, and (4) what rate of return investors would receive. [HL3784]

Lord Callanan: The Government remains in active and constructive negotiations with EDF over the Sizewell C project. No decisions have yet been taken and the negotiations will be subject to reaching a deal that is value-for-money and achieving all relevant Government approvals.

BEIS has published an Impact Assessment (IA) to support the Nuclear Energy (Financing) Bill which illustrates the cost savings of funding a generic nuclear plant through a Regulated Asset Base (RAB) model versus a Contract for Difference. The IA contains estimates of the capital costs and a range of rates of return.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

IA - Regulated Asset Base model for new nuclear [Impact Assessment - Regulated Asset Base model for new nuclear.pdf]

The material can be viewed online at:
<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2021-11-08/HL3784>

Asked by Lord Foster of Bath

To ask Her Majesty's Government, in relation to the building of Sizewell C nuclear power station in Suffolk, what plans they have, if any, to publish (1) details of the (a) process, and (b) outcomes, of the value for money assessments conducted to date, and (2) a schedule of future assessments. [HL3785]

Lord Callanan: The Government remains in active and constructive negotiations with EDF over the Sizewell C project. No decisions have yet been taken and the negotiations will be subject to reaching a value for money deal and relevant Government approvals. Value for money assessments will be carried out in line with guidance set out in the HM Treasury Green Book.

The Government is fully committed to transparency and is including measures in the Nuclear Energy (Financing) Bill to support this.

Asked by Lord Foster of Bath

To ask Her Majesty's Government what are the latest cost assessments for the building of Sizewell C nuclear power station in Suffolk. [HL3786]

Lord Callanan: Constructive negotiations between the Government and EDF over the Sizewell C project are ongoing and subject to commercial sensitivities. As part of the negotiations, detailed assessment and diligence activities are underway to substantiate the basis of the project cost estimates. No decisions have been taken. The negotiations will be subject to Government approval and securing a deal that ensures value for money.

Asked by Lord Foster of Bath

To ask Her Majesty's Government what proportion of any cost overruns in the construction of Sizewell C nuclear power station in Suffolk would be passed on to (1) consumers, and (2) taxpayers, under the Regulated Asset Base financing model. [HL3787]

Lord Callanan: The Government remains in active and constructive negotiations with EDF over the Sizewell C project. No decisions have yet been taken and the negotiations will be subject to reaching a value for money deal and relevant Government approvals.

A nuclear project would be subject to detailed value for money assessments before being approved for a Regulated Asset Base (RAB), or awarded a Government Support Package (GSP).

Under a RAB model, risks are shared between investors and consumers. This will facilitate private investment into new nuclear projects, thereby reducing the cost of capital, and ultimately costs to consumers. My Rt. Hon. Friend the Secretary of State would take costs to consumers into account when modifying a licence for a nuclear company to insert a RAB, as well as considering our decarbonisation targets and the need to ensure future energy security. An economic regulatory regime will incentivise the project and its investors to manage costs and delivery effectively, to ensure the project is on time and to budget. The GSP would offer Government protection for investors and consumers from low probability but high impact events.

Asked by Lord Foster of Bath

To ask Her Majesty's Government when they expect the Final Investment Decision in relation to the building of Sizewell C nuclear power station to be taken. [HL3788]

Lord Callanan: In the 2020 Energy White Paper, the Government set out its objective to bring at least one large-scale nuclear project to a final investment decision (FID) by the end of this Parliament, subject to clear value for money and all relevant approvals. The Government announced £1.7 billion funding in the Spending Review to enable a final investment decision this Parliament. The Government remains in active and constructive negotiations with EDF over the Sizewell C project.

Social Security Benefits: Disability

Asked by Baroness Lister of Burtersett

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Baroness Stedman-Scott on 1 November (HL3172), (1) whether the decision not to publish the report commissioned from NatCen on the uses of health and disability benefits is consistent with the Publication Protocol for Government Social Research, and (2) what plans they have, if any, to explain how the private space for policy development is relevant to the decision not to publish the NatCen report. [HL3815]

Baroness Stedman-Scott: The Publication Protocol for Government Social Research provides guidance on the publication of social research, but it is important that Ministers consider research and its publication on a case by case basis and in the best interests of Government policy formation.

The report in question engages an exemption from disclosure because it relates to the formulation or development of this government policy – Section 35(1)(a) of the Freedom of Information Act. This exemption protects the private space within which Ministers and their policy advisers can develop policies without the risk of premature disclosure.

I am satisfied that in this instance the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosure. Therefore, I do not intend to publish this research at present.

Social Services: Children

Asked by Lord Laming

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Baroness Barran on 9 November (HL3490), what assessment they have made of (1) the effects on children in care of waiting for the final report of the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) before taking steps to address the issues identified in the interim report, and (2) the interim report's finding that some children in care are being housed in unsuitable accommodation; and what steps they intend to take, if any, to address issues identified by the CMA's interim report before the final report is completed. [HL4012]

Baroness Barran: The interim report from the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) is welcome but we are not waiting for the final report before acting. Every child in care deserves to live in accommodation that meets their needs and keeps them safe. Councils are responsible for providing suitable, safe accommodation for vulnerable children in their care. As part of the Spending Review, my right hon. Friend, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, announced investment of £259 million to help them meet this duty, by increasing the number of places in open and secure children's homes. This builds on work that has already started to maintain capacity and expand provision in existing secure children's homes, alongside new capital funding to help councils create new homes. We have also consulted on national minimum standards for any unregulated provision accommodating 16 or 17 year olds.

The government is also undertaking a widescale review of children's social care, taking a fundamental look at the needs, experiences, and outcomes of the children it supports, and what is needed to make a real difference. The review will be bold, broad, and independently led, taking a fundamental look across children's social care, with the aim of better supporting, protecting and improving the outcomes of vulnerable children and young people. The review will be evidenced based and bring together a broad range of expertise.

The department is engaging with the CMA and the independent review of social care, and will respond to both sets of recommendations when available.

Summertime

Asked by Baroness Neville-Rolfe

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of remaining on British Summer Time all year round; and what plans they have, if any, to make such a change. [HL3952]

Lord Callanan: The Government believes that the current daylight-saving arrangements represent the optimal use of the available daylight across the UK.

Travel: Coronavirus

Asked by Baroness Randerson

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have, if any, to facilitate travel for (1) school groups, and (2) families, to countries where vaccine passports for children aged 12 to 17 are a requirement. [HL3961]

Lord Kamall: The NHS COVID Pass for travel is available to those aged 16 years old and over to demonstrate vaccination or recovery status. A small proportion of children over 12 years old have or will receive full vaccination following the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation's advice. International standards for travel require a full course to be recognised as 'fully vaccinated'. The Government is exploring ways to provide fully vaccinated 12 to 15 year olds with a travel NHS COVID Pass, supporting school groups and families. We will keep the position of 12 to 15 year olds who have recovered from COVID-19 and those with recovery and a single dose under review. While some countries treat under 16 year olds as fully vaccinated, others accept testing or recovery as equivalent to full vaccination.

UK Endorsement Board: Standards

Asked by Baroness Bowles of Berkhamsted

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answers by Lord Callanan on 28 October (HL3092, HL3093, HL3094 and HL3095) whether (1) the UK Endorsement Board Limited, and (2) the UK Endorsement Board, are public bodies and subject to all the requirements incumbent on public bodies; and if not, why not. [HL3859]

Lord Callanan: The UK Endorsement Board Limited is a subsidiary of the Financial Reporting Council (FRC). As such, it is also subject to the requirements incumbent on central government bodies, such as Managing Public Money and Cabinet Office spending controls.

The UK Endorsement Board (UKEB) ("the Board") is an unincorporated association. The Secretary of State has delegated the powers to adopt and endorse IFRS for use in the UK to the Board. While the Board is independent and

has autonomy of decision-making in relation to the functions conferred upon it, this decision-making autonomy does not extend more widely to economic activities.

UNRWA: Finance

*Asked by **The Lord Bishop of Southwark***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact of the reduction in their funding of the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees for 2021 compared to 2020. [[HL3843](#)]

*Asked by **The Lord Bishop of Southwark***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of (1) the financial position of the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees, and (2) the sustainability of the Agency's provision of services to Palestinian refugees. [[HL3844](#)]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The United Kingdom (UK) is a long-term supporter of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA). We recognise UNRWA's unique mandate from the United Nations General Assembly, to provide protection and core services including health and education to Palestinian refugees across the Middle East. The UK's annual contribution to UNRWA's programme budget helps

UNRWA to provide basic education to more than 533,000 children a year (half of whom are girls), access to health services for 3.5 million Palestinian refugees and social safety net assistance for around 255,000 of the most vulnerable across the region. The UK is working with UNRWA and other donors to improve UNRWA's financial viability. This includes broadening UNRWA's donor base, encouraging the full disbursement of pledges and encouraging support through multi-year funding.

World Food Programme

*Asked by **Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking with international partners to financially support the World Food Programme; and what plans they have to address the (1) poverty, and (2) malnutrition, faced by Afghanis by supplying additional food. [[HL3821](#)]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The Prime Minister has announced that the Government will increase our overall assistance for Afghanistan to £286 million this financial year. On 31 October he announced the allocation of £50 million of that money for humanitarian purposes to those who need it most. We are working closely with the World Food Programme to ensure that food insecure adults and children receive the support they need.

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