Review of select committee activity and proposals for new committee activity
The Liaison Committee

The Liaison Committee advises the House on the resources required for select committee work and allocates resources between select committees; reviews the select committee work of the House; considers requests for ad hoc committees and reports to the House with recommendations; ensures effective co-ordination between the two Houses; and considers the availability of Lords to serve on committees.

Current Membership

The Members of the Liaison Committee are:
Baroness Browning
Lord Campbell-Savours
Lord Craig of Radley
Lord Hill of Oareford
Lord Laming
Baroness Royall of Blaisdon
Lord Sewel (Chairman)
Lord Touhig
Viscount Ullswater
Lord Wallace of Tankerness
Baroness Walmsley

Declaration of Interests

A full list of Members’ interests can be found in the Register of Lords’ Interests: http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld/ldreg/reg01.htm

General Information

General information about the House of Lords and its Committees is on the internet at http://www.parliament.uk/business/committees/

Committee Staff

The current staff of the committee are Philippa Tudor (Clerk) and Helena Ali (Committee Assistant).

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REVIEW OF SELECT COMMITTEE ACTIVITY

Introduction

1. Select committee activity continues to be highly regarded both within the House and outside, and to contribute greatly to the House of Lords’ reputation as a second Chamber. In 2012, following the publication of the Report of the Leader’s Group on Working Practices, we reviewed existing select committee activity and recommended an additional unit of committee activity. We also recommended a reduction in the resources available to the European Union and Science and Technology Committees to enable the redeployment of resources to support two new ad hoc select committees appointed for a fixed term of up to one Session to conduct a specific inquiry into a cross-cutting area of domestic policy. We further recommended the appointment of an ad hoc select committee to carry out post-legislative scrutiny of a specific set of Acts.

2. In our 2013 report we reviewed the existing select committee activity of the House in the light of the changes made at the start of the previous Session; reviewed the activity of the three new ad hoc committees, in particular the first House of Lords post-legislative scrutiny committee; and recommended the appointment of three new ad hoc select committees and two post-legislative scrutiny committees in the 2013–14 Session.

3. Having reviewed the select committee activity of the House in each of the last two Sessions, in preparing the present report we have not thought it necessary to carry out a full review at this stage of the Parliament. In the present report we:

   - review the activity of the three ad hoc committees and two post-legislative scrutiny committees appointed in the present Session;
   - consider arrangements for following up the work of ad hoc committees;
   - recommend the appointment of three new ad hoc committees and one post-legislative scrutiny committee in the 2014–15 Session.

Existing scrutiny Committees

4. There are currently five major House of Lords investigative Select Committees:

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3 Liaison Committee, Review of select committee activity and proposals for new committee activity (1st Report, Session 2012-13, HL Paper 135).
6. The experience of recent Sessions has demonstrated the important role pre-legislative scrutiny committees can play in engaging a wider audience in the scrutiny of legislation than is possible on the floor of the House, and in assisting policy formulation. There have been three such committees during the present Session, the Joint Committee on the draft Deregulation Bill, whose report was published on 19 December 2013, the Joint Committee on the draft Voting Eligibility (Prisoners) Bill, whose report was published on 16 December 2013, and the Joint Committee on the Draft Modern Slavery Bill, whose work is still underway.

7. The staff resource currently provided for supporting pre-legislative committees enables the House to administer one such unit of activity at any one time.

8. This has proved adequate in the current Session, although by its nature pre-legislative scrutiny work is very intensive and typically involves the staff concerned working long hours to support it. The current Joint Committee on the Draft Modern Slavery Bill is a case in point, as it is meeting four times a week to fit in a tight schedule of meetings.

9. We remain committed to supporting the work of pre-legislative scrutiny committees. We expect the joint committee on the Draft Modern Slavery Bill to report in April. We anticipate other draft legislation being presented for scrutiny during the course of the next Session.

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The work of the three *ad hoc* committees

10. More *ad hoc* Committees have been appointed this Session than in any previous Session. In order to accommodate as many as possible of the proposals we received from members of the House for *ad hoc* Committees, we appointed two of these Committees as short *ad hoc* Committees of a few months’ duration each, with their staff resources spread between the two consecutive inquiries.

11. We discussed the work of the three *ad hoc* committees appointed in the present Session with their respective Chairmen, Lord Harris of Haringey, Chairman of the Olympic and Paralympic Legacy Committee, Lord Howell of Guildford, Chairman of the Soft Power Committee, and Baroness Noakes, Chairman of the Personal Service Companies Committee. All three Chairmen drew attention to the excellent support they had received from their staff teams. Lord Harris and Baroness Noakes put the case for Committees to start their work earlier. The best way of facilitating this would be informal early identification of the Committee Chairman. Until his or her identity was known there was a limit to how far the secretariat could press ahead with discussing key themes of the inquiry with potential witnesses, sounding out possible specialist advisers, and so on. The time constraints of the two short *ad hoc* inquiries had meant that both Committees had heard most of their oral evidence before receiving written evidence, which was not ideal, and their programmes had been telescoped.

12. Lord Harris said that the Olympic and Paralympic Legacy Committee had made good use of the September recess, meeting on four days in one week, including a useful visit to the Olympic site. He reported that the members of his Committee were keen for the Committee to be reconstituted sometime in the future in order to undertake follow-up activity. Baroness Noakes said that her Committee was considering a much more technical subject, and the timetable once the inquiry had started was manageable as the inquiry had a narrowly defined remit. Her Committee had been disappointed that the Exchequer Secretary had refused to attend an oral evidence session, and later refused to allow Treasury officials to appear alongside colleagues from HMRC, citing the operational independence of HMRC as the reason to preclude attendance in both instances. Consequently, the Committee was only able to direct its questions on the effectiveness of tax policy towards officials from HMRC. This was an unfortunate outcome, and we wish to stress how important it is that the Government engage effectively with the work of select committees. Lord Howell said that the Soft Power Committee was dealing with a huge subject. The Committee had used iPads for paperless circulations, which had helped members to deal with the large amount of written evidence. The Committee had not met during the recess but had on occasion met twice a week. It had not found it necessary to travel, but instead had made use of video-conferencing to take evidence from overseas witnesses.

13. We also discussed with Lord Howell his proposal for an *ad hoc* Select Committee on an international relations subject. Lord Howell envisaged a change in membership each Session, to enable more of the many members of the House with expertise in international relations to serve on a relevant Committee.

14. We consider that the three new *ad hoc* Committees have again worked well this Session, conducting inquiries into topical issues of
widespread importance and making good use of the experience and expertise of the House.

15. This Session’s two short ad hoc Committees were run on a trial basis. The next Session will be the last in the present Parliament, and as such may be compressed. **We do not recommend the appointment of any short ad hoc Committees during the 2014–15 Session.**

16. Building on the experience of the current Session’s ad hoc Committees, we consider that **it would in future be desirable to identify the Chairmen, and so far as possible the members, of ad hoc Committees at the end of the previous Session. This would enable the Committee Office to make better use of the recess period to scope the new inquiries and thus enable the new Committees to start their work earlier.**

The work of the two ad hoc post-legislative scrutiny committees

17. In April 2011 the Leader’s Group on Working Practices, chaired by Lord Goodlad, reported. That report recommended that the House “appoint a Post-Legislative Scrutiny Committee, to manage the process of reviewing up to four selected Acts of Parliament each year.” In our 3rd report of the 2010–12 Session we supported a variant proposal from the Leader of the House, that it would make better use of the expertise of members to establish an ad hoc committee on a particular Act or Acts. We recommended the adoption of a post-legislative scrutiny Committee to examine the Children and Adoption Act 2006 and the Adoption and Children Act 2002. Following the success of the Select Committee on Adoption Legislation in the 2012–13 Session, we recommended the appointment of two new post-legislative scrutiny committees at the start of the present Session. We discussed their work with Lord Hardie, Chairman of the Mental Capacity Act 2005 Committee, and Lord Shutt of Greetland, Chairman of the Inquiries Act 2005 Committee.

18. Both Chairmen drew attention to the excellent support they had received from their staff teams. They also raised the particular difficulties of following up the work of ad hoc Committees in general and post-legislative scrutiny Committees in particular. The Inquiries Act Committee had proposed 11 changes to legislation in tabular form, to make it easy to track whether these recommendations were accepted by the Government. The Mental Capacity Act 2005 Committee had focused more on implementation: its work had received considerable attention, and expectations had been raised that it would lead to improvements in the care and health sectors. During the course of the inquiry the Government had established the Mental Capacity Act Steering Group, which was a welcome development.

19. **We consider that the two post-legislative scrutiny ad hoc Committees have worked well this Session, and appear to have raised awareness of the relevant legislation and issues relating to its implementation during the course of their inquiries.**

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7 The Committee’s two reports were published as *Adoption: Pre-Legislative Scrutiny* (1st Report, Session 2012–13, HL Paper 94) and *Adoption: Post-Legislative Scrutiny* (2nd Report, Session 2012–13, HL Paper 127).
FOLLOWING UP THE WORK OF AD HOC SELECT COMMITTEES

Background

20. As several Committee Chairmen observed to us, the downside of *ad hoc* Committees is that they cease to exist once they have reported, and are thus unable to engage in follow-up. We accordingly considered how this point of weakness might be addressed. On the one hand, the new *ad hoc* Committees were set up as fixed-term entities: any likely follow-up mechanism would be difficult to limit both in time and in resource. A further consideration is that once *ad hoc* Committees have reported the protection of Parliamentary Privilege ceases. On the other hand Committees exist to make recommendations and if these are not followed up the value of Committee reports is diminished.

Following up the work of the *ad hoc* Committees of the 2012–13 Session

21. In terms of following up the work of the three *ad hoc* Committees appointed in the 2012–13 Session, the Small and Medium-sized Enterprises and Exports (SMEEx) Committee asked the Government for a second debate in 12 months time, which the Government agreed to, and the debate is expected to take place shortly. The SMEEx Committee’s report also recommended post-legislative scrutiny on the Bribery Act 2010. By its nature post-legislative scrutiny usually takes place when legislation has had time to bed down, and the Committee expects to consider this proposal at a later date.

22. In June 2013 the Committee agreed to invite the Government to provide a further written response to the Report of the Select Committee on Public Service and Demographic Change approximately one year after the publication of its first response. This response should be submitted to, and received by, the Liaison Committee itself. The Committee also agreed that it would not take oral evidence as part of this process. We expect to receive this further Government response in June 2014.

23. The post-legislative scrutiny Committee on Adoption Legislation also examined some of the draft clauses for the draft Children and Families Bill. In this way the Committee’s recommendations were able to contribute to the debates on the Bill when it was introduced.

Following up the work of the *ad hoc* Committees of the 2013–14 Session

24. In June 2013 the Committee also agreed to encourage the current Session’s *ad hoc* Committees when drafting their reports to identify which issues they thought sufficiently important to merit similar “one year on” follow-up. The first of these Committees to report was the Olympic and Paralympic Legacy Committee, whose report, *Keeping the flame alive*, was published on 18 November 2013. In that report the recommendations which the *ad hoc* Committee had agreed should be followed up are marked with an asterisk, which provides a helpful tracking system. As we have already mentioned, the Inquiries Act 2005 post-legislative scrutiny Committee has proposed 11 changes to legislation in tabular form, to make it easy to track whether these recommendations are accepted by the Government. We invite future *ad hoc* Committees to identify clearly the issues which they wish to be
followed up roughly a year after they have reported, for example by marking them with an asterisk.
PROPOSALS FOR NEW COMMITTEE ACTIVITY

Appointment of new committees

25. Recommendations 45 and 46 of the report of the 2011 Leader’s Group on Working Practices (paragraphs 236 and 237) were as follows:

“We recommend that the House establish two additional sessional select committees, with the intention of enhancing its capacity to scrutinise Government policy. In determining the remit of these committees, we recommend that particular regard be paid to the need for Lords committees to:

Make best use of the knowledge and experience of Members of the House;

Complement the work of Commons departmental select committees;

Address areas of policy that cross departmental boundaries.

We recommend that in future the work of all investigative select committees of the House should be subject to regular and systematic review, and that, following the appointment of the two additional committees recommended above, any further sessional committees should only be appointed to replace existing committees, without creating extra demands on resources.”

26. The increase in House of Lords committee activity over the past two Sessions has been well received. We remain of the view that the best way of ensuring that committees reflect the changing priorities of the House and engage the full range of its membership is to appoint them on a time-limited basis, to conduct a specific inquiry with a membership tailored to that task. Regular turnover of members gives a wider range of members the opportunity to serve, and short, sharp inquiries should also make it easier for members with significant commitments outside the House to participate. Fixed terms also allow us to play a more active role in reviewing and adapting the select committee activity of the House in future, thereby addressing the Leader’s Group’s recommendation that the House’s select committee activity should be kept under regular review. The resources to support new select committee activity are released at the end of each Session, giving this Committee more room to facilitate proposals for new select committees submitted by members of the House in the course of the Session.

27. Following a similar pattern to the previous Session, in autumn 2013 the Chairman invited proposals from members of the House for ad hoc Committees in the 2014–15 Session, setting a deadline of 15 January to allow time for their proper evaluation. We received the following proposals, the first of which was for a new sessional committee, the remainder for ad hoc committees:

- A sessional committee on Foreign Affairs/International Relations Committee (Lord Alton of Liverpool, Lord Hannay of Chiswick, Lord Kerr of Kinlochard)
- Affordable Childcare (Baroness Massey of Darwen)
- The Arctic (Lord Tugendhat)
• Carbon Emissions post 2050 (Lord Dixon-Smith)
• Foetal (or Early) Origins of Adult Disease (Lord Rea)
• Genetically modified crops (Viscount Ridley)
• ICT (Baroness O’Cathain)
• Infrastructure investment (Lord Magan of Castletown)
• An *ad hoc* committee on an International Relations theme, such as the UK’s role in building stable institutions overseas, or on religion and foreign affairs (Lord Howell of Guildford)
• National Policy for the Control of Psychoactive Drugs (Baroness Meacher)
• Post-legislative scrutiny on the Extradition Act and related legislation (Baroness Garden of Frognal)
• Prostitution Law Reform (Lord Faulkner of Worcester)
• “Scotland’s Future” (an inquiry on the Scottish Government’s paper, to report by July) (Lord Forsyth of Drumlean and Lord Foulkes of Cumnock)
• Social Mobility (Baroness Tyler of Enfield)
• Use of robust scientific evidence to improve risk regulation (Earl of Lindsay, Lord Giddens, Lord McKenzie of Luton, Lord Curry of Kirkharle)
• Youth unemployment (Lord Sherbourne of Didsbury)

28. We considered the proposals we received for new committee activity in accordance with the following principles which we set out in our 1st report of the 2010–12 Session,\(^8\) to which the House agreed:

(a) House of Lords committees should generally seek to complement rather than duplicate the areas of scrutiny of House of Commons committees and other Lords committees;

(b) We will continue to support the appointment of one *ad hoc* committee at any one time, though there is a case for *ad hoc* committees with narrower and more topical remits conducting shorter inquiries;

(c) New committees should be appointed for a limited time only;

(d) We will continue to keep resource requirements closely under review to ensure that committee work provides value for money, and can be supported by members;

(e) In assessing proposed or existing committees we will consider whether the committee activity in question represents a productive use of the resources of the House and the administration and, where there is a need to prioritise between two or more alternatives, whether it represents a more productive use than the others in existence or proposed;

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(f) We will continue to seek to evaluate potential impact when considering new proposals for committees, or reviewing existing activity.
29. Baroness Massey of Darwen proposed the establishment of a Select Committee on affordable childcare, following a debate in the House on 9 January 2014. She identified the following issues from the debate: confusion of funding streams; problems facing parents of disabled children; the workings of Universal Credit; rises in costs of childcare; accessibility of childcare; and how parents on low incomes cope. Access to affordable childcare is an important factor both in women’s participation in the labour market and in child development. An ad hoc committee could examine the extent to which Government policy on childcare provision represents a long term strategy to achieve access to affordable childcare.

30. Research into childcare and the maternal labour supply by the Resolution Foundation and Mumsnet found that childcare affordability was the single biggest barrier to non-working mothers working, and working mothers working more. An annual survey of parents by the Department for Education found that more affordable childcare was the most commonly mentioned change that would make childcare provision suit parents’ needs (37%). An ad hoc committee could explore the scale and impact of the costs of childcare on working families and the effectiveness of Government action in improving affordability. It could also explore the impact on affordability of action to increase the availability of childcare overall, and the extent to which apparently lower levels of availability for specific groups, such as disabled children, relates to access to affordable provision. It could further examine the impact on affordable childcare provision of duties on local authorities; and the role of employers in access to affordable childcare, including identification of good practice models.

31. Other issues for an ad hoc committee to consider are the relationship between parental choice and affordability; the impact on affordability of staffing and qualifications of childcare providers and related workforce issues, such as turnover; and the role of regulation of childcare providers in matching quality with affordability, including the role of Ofsted.

32. We recommend the appointment of an ad hoc committee on Affordable Childcare, to report by the end of the 2014–15 Session.

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9 Careers and carers: Childcare and maternal labour supply, Resolution Foundation, January 2014.
10 Childcare and early years survey of parents 2012-2013, Department for Education, January 2014.
AN AD HOC COMMITTEE ON AN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS THEME

33. Several members of the House called for a Select Committee on Foreign Affairs. Lord Howell of Guildford also proposed that the House should appoint a further ad hoc Committee on an international relations subject, to succeed the ad hoc Committee on Soft Power and the UK’s influence abroad which he chaired during the present Session. We were attracted to Lord Howell’s proposal and do not think it appropriate at this late stage in the Parliament to set up any new sessional select committees, whether on international relations or any other subject. We were also attracted to Lord Tugendhat’s proposal for an ad hoc Committee to consider a range of issues relating to the Arctic, and think this would be a good choice for an ad hoc Committee on an international relations subject in the next Session.

34. Such an inquiry would be particularly timely, as in October 2013 the Government published an Arctic policy framework, *Adapting to Change*, pledging the UK to “work towards an Arctic that is safe and secure; well governed in conjunction with indigenous peoples and in line with international law; where policies are developed on the basis of sound science with full regard to the environment; and where only responsible development takes place.” The publication of this policy framework reflects growing recognition of the opportunities and risks presented by the opening up of access to the Arctic. The region is warming faster than any other, and the melting of the ice raises the prospect of the opening of hitherto closed sea routes and the discovery of new hydro-carbon resources. Over the next decade over $100 billion will be invested in the Arctic in exploration, opening of sea routes and building of infrastructure.

35. There is no specific security framework for the Arctic, and some Arctic states are already investing heavily in Arctic-related defence projects. An ad hoc committee could take a broad approach, considering the issue from a variety of angles:

- Militarisation and potential for military co-operation: There is no equivalent to the Antarctic Treaty of 1961, which permanently demilitarised Antarctica. The inquiry could consider how nascent cooperation could be fostered and translated into institutionalised long-term cooperation;
- NATO: The inquiry could consider what role NATO should play in the region;
- Geopolitical Security: The inquiry could map possible threats and consider the parameters of an Arctic security strategy;
- Territorial claims: The inquiry could consider the means for establishing a clear, agreed legal basis for settling territorial claims over the Arctic;
- Future of Arctic governance: The inquiry could consider how new forms of regional governance are developing in the Arctic;

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- Environment and resources: The inquiry could look at likely scenarios for the impact of the melting of the icecap on the environment and for the potential opening up of access to new resources.

36. **We recommend the appointment of an ad hoc committee on the Arctic, to report by the end of the 2014–15 Session.**
AN AD HOC COMMITTEE ON INFORMATION COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY, COMPETITIVENESS AND SKILLS

37. Baroness O’Cathain proposed the establishment of a Select Committee on ICT, competitiveness and skills. The theme that links these issues is the “digital divide”. Any inquiry would be informed by the Government’s 2013 Information Economy Strategy. There is considerable interest in the House on this subject, expressed most recently during the oral question on careers guidance in schools on 25 February (HL Deb col 825).

38. In 2011 the Government found that 11 million working-age adults in England had difficulties with using email and 13 million with using spreadsheets at a functional level where they could work confidently, effectively and independently. The ONS estimated in 2012 that 7 million people in the UK had never used the Internet.12 CBI surveys show that since 2008 at least half of employers have expressed concerns about IT skills in their workforce.13 A committee could explore the scale and impact of this shortfall in IT skills, and the educational, social, technological reasons underlying it.

39. The shortfall is an issue across the UK. Changes to the school curriculum have yet to allay these concerns, and a committee could look at the ways in which education and training are being used to address the shortfall in skills around the UK. Other issues arise in respect of older people, who risk exclusion in an age of online service delivery.

40. Emerging economies appear to be investing heavily in this area, with corresponding improvements in growth and competitiveness. Last year Ministers from Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa agreed to collaborate on ICT in education in conjunction with UNESCO. A committee could consider the long-term implications of these developments on relative skills levels within the UK workforce and those of emerging economies. Infrastructure remains a key barrier to economic development, particularly in Africa. A committee could explore how emerging economies are attracting investment in technology infrastructure to boost growth.

41. We recommend the appointment of an ad hoc committee on ICT, competitiveness and skills, to report by the end of the 2014–15 Session.

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13 [Changing the pace](http://www.cbi.org.uk/media/2119176/education_and_skills_survey_2013.pdf), CBI available at:
POST-LEGISLATIVE SCRUTINY

A post-legislative scrutiny committee on the Extradition Act 2003 and Extradition Law

42. Baroness Garden of Frognal proposed the establishment of a post-legislative scrutiny committee to examine the Extradition Act 2003 and the law relating to extradition. It is now more than 10 years since the Act was passed, and the question of extradition remains as high up on the political agenda as ever. This is not least in the field of EU Justice and Home Affairs measures. The 2014 Justice and Home Affairs opt-out decision, whereby the UK will be able to exercise either a block opt-out or opt-in to justice and home affairs measures passed prior to the Lisbon Treaty in 2009, includes the European Arrest Warrant, which the Government intends to rejoin if an opt-out is exercised. Though fundamental reform may not be guaranteed in that context, it would again set the stage for consideration of some of the practical reforms of the EAW: a topic which was the subject of a recent report from the European Union Committee.

43. Reviewing the state of play on extradition legislation would in our view be a worthwhile deployment of resources in the House. The Committee could build upon the work already undertaken in this field, including in this House, to examine the lessons learned over the 10 years of the Act’s operation. In doing so, it could look forward and reflect upon how extradition arrangements could be made to work more effectively in the future.

44. Issues which the Committee could seek to focus on include: how extradition issues have moved or need to move forward in an age of increased levels of cybercrime; the suitability of arrangements for extradition between the United States and the UK; the effectiveness of the European Arrest Warrant in practice, and how any changes that may be required to improve its operation could be implemented; whether the legal framework in place at present provides for adequate representation for those subject to extradition; whether existing procedural safeguards are adequate, including the case for the introduction of proportionality checks within extradition requests; and whether further extradition bars, such as where people could serve sentences in the UK, should be introduced as a means to protect those subject to extradition.

45. We recommend the appointment of an ad hoc post-legislative scrutiny committee to examine the Extradition Act 2003 and Extradition Legislation, to report by the end of the 2014–15 Session.
SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

46. We remain committed to supporting the work of pre-legislative scrutiny committees. We expect the joint committee on the Draft Modern Slavery Bill to report in April. We anticipate other draft legislation being presented for scrutiny during the course of the next Session.

47. We consider that the three new ad hoc Committees have again worked well this session, conducting inquiries into topical issues of widespread importance and making good use of the experience and expertise of the House.

48. We do not recommend the appointment of any short ad hoc Committees during the 2014–15 Session.

49. It would in future be desirable to identify the Chairmen, and so far as possible the members, of ad hoc Committees at the end of the previous Session. This would enable the Committee Office to make better use of the recess period to scope the new inquiries and thus enable the new Committees to start their work earlier.

50. We consider that the two post-legislative scrutiny ad hoc Committees have worked well this Session, and appear to have raised awareness of the relevant legislation and issues relating to its implementation during the course of their inquiries.

51. We invite future ad hoc Committees to identify clearly the issues which they wish to be followed up roughly a year after they have reported, for example by marking them with an asterisk.

52. We recommend the appointment of an ad hoc committee on Affordable Childcare, to report by the end of the 2014–15 Session.

53. We recommend the appointment of an ad hoc committee on the Arctic, to report by the end of the 2014–15 Session.

54. We recommend the appointment of an ad hoc committee on ICT, competitiveness and skills, to report by the end of the 2014–15 Session.

55. We recommend the appointment of an ad hoc post-legislative scrutiny committee to examine the Extradition Act 2003 and Extradition Legislation, to report by the end of the 2014–15 Session.
APPENDIX 1: COMMITTEE PROPOSALS FROM MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE

Letter to the Chairman from Baroness Massey of Darwen

I would like to suggest an ad hoc committee on affordable childcare. This suggestion follows from a debate I led last Thursday. There were excellent speeches from all Parties, and several people have asked me since how we might follow it up.

Issues raised included the confusion of funding streams, the problems facing parents of disabled children, the workings of Universal Credit, the rises in costs of childcare (today’s Times newspaper [15 January 2014] records another 19% increase), accessibility of childcare and how parents on low incomes cope. These are but some of the issues.

I would be pleased to discuss this idea further or provide more detail if necessary. I believe that it is an issue which has real interest from all Parties and which would be a fruitful topic for an ad hoc committee.

13 JANUARY 2014         MASSEY OF DARWEN

Letter to the Chairman from Lord Tugendhat

The Arctic region is warming faster than any other place on earth. The melting of the ice presents a set of unique and rapidly evolving risks and opportunities. Foremost is the opening of hitherto closed sea routes and the discovery of new hydro-carbon resources. Over the next decade over a $100 billion will be invested in the Arctic in exploration, opening of sea routes and building of infrastructure. New forms of political cooperation are evolving within the inter-governmental Arctic Council but at the same time Arctic states are investing heavily in Arctic related defence projects. The UK Government is also engaged on this issue and in October 2013 published its Arctic Policy Framework.

An ad hoc committee would be particularly well placed to conduct such an inquiry as:

- The issues raised by the topic are cross-cutting and would not fit neatly into the remit of any existing sessional Lords Select Committee;

- Due to its broad scope, the topic is best suited to a year-long inquiry; and

- The membership of an ad hoc committee could be specially selected to bring on board expertise on the different aspects of the inquiry (e.g. science/environment, private sector shipping/mining/oil exploration, foreign affairs expertise on countries around the Arctic, etc.)

An ad hoc committee inquiry could take a broad approach considering the issue from a variety of angles:

- Geopolitical: There are questions around claims to territorial waters (and the resources present there); passage through the sea routes and protection of the environment and resources. The Arctic Council brings together littoral and interested states to discuss these issues but it has no power to compel and its authority is as yet untested in difficult situations. Furthermore, whether the Arctic Council is able to manage and administer to the growing and pressing interest from states such as China
and Singapore as they consider their own strategic and economic interests in the region remains to be seen. An inquiry could consider how rule-making and decision-making could evolve within the Arctic Council, what new international political structures might be necessary to manage and referee global interest in this region and finally how the UK could best leverage its influence in the Council and region.

- **Economic issues:** The melting of the permafrost is opening three significant new trade passages through the Arctic. The northern sea passage along the Russian coast and the north-western passage along the Canadian coast are already traversable during the summer months while the North Pole passage could be open as early as 2016–2030 during the summer months as well. States are investing in the ice-breakers and ships necessary to take advantage of these routes. These new trade routes have the potential to transform global trading routes in an unprecedented way. Beyond trading potential, the warming of the Arctic seas and the greening of the land opens new possibilities in fisheries, agriculture and tourism. An inquiry could both map these new opportunities and how they can be responsibly managed. How the UK responds to these opportunities is a key area for the inquiry to consider.

- **Resources:** Scientists estimate that the Arctic contains 13% of global natural gas supplies (pre-shale gas), approximately 30% of oil reserves; iron-ore mining has been taking place in Greenland and there have been recent new discoveries of rare earth minerals. The European Union which has no rare earth minerals may now have a source. Questions about how these resources can be safely and responsibly extracted also bear further scrutiny.

- **Environment:** The impact of climate change in the Arctic has global consequences. In particular rising sea-levels and new freshwater flowing into the North Atlantic and North Pacific impact global weather patterns and have a ripple effect felt around the globe. Increased economic activity in the region carries the risk of accidental and long-term environmental damage. The inquiry could look at likely scenarios and the regulatory structures necessary for both industry and government to mitigate these risks.

- **Regional and Social Issues:** The displacement and development of indigenous communities and how the interests of these communities can be represented and managed is another fruitful area for exploration. Finally, as the Arctic states discover new resources and as their neighbourhood becomes internationally important a new geopolitical map is likely to be drawn. In particular Greenland and Iceland are well placed and have been keen to seize the initiative and lead on this issue. The regional and bilateral ramifications of these geopolitical shifts have consequences for UK policy in the region.

The inquiry would be an opportunity to consider the UK Government’s Arctic Policy Framework (October 2013). It could offer recommendations to UK policymakers on how to protect and realise the potential of the Arctic, lever the UK’s political and economic influence and take UK interests forward.

15 JANUARY 2014 TUGENDHAT
Letter to the Chairman from Lord Dixon-Smith

I have a proposal for examination in a Committee inquiry but I think it is a possibility for the Science and Technology Committee that I was proposing to put it to in the new session if I continue on the Committee. Briefly—the subject is ‘Carbon emissions post 2050?’

We need to be considering this issue in the near future because it has implications for policy before 2050. Some emissions are more important for society in this context than others and we will need to consider whether they should be protected from the general regime of reduction and if so the degree of protection they might require.

I include in this category food production. Agricultural emissions arise from the livestock industry and are unavoidable unless there are to be powers to control human protein intake which in my view would be intolerable. Cement manufacture and metal smelting are fundamental for modern society to continue to grow. The international transport industries might need protection (aviation and shipping) might have to be protected (difficulties in reaching agreement?) and other problems. Competition between food production and fuel production for the use of land will always be decided in favour of food which will require increasing areas of land as the population continues to grow anyway. We do not yet manage to feed the present population properly anyway. Land based transport will always have the possibility of electricity as its energy source. These factors in combination take us to around 15 per cent of present carbon emissions and there may be other imperatives.

It is my opinion that we need to be taking account of these factors now in policy making.

Perhaps you might think as I do that this should be for the Science and Technology Committee to consider in the first instance.

9 JANUARY 2014

DIXON-SMITH

Letter to the Chairman from Baroness Garden of Frognal

I am writing to recommend that a post-legislative scrutiny committee be established to examine the Extradition Act 2003 and the law relating to extradition. It is now more than 10 years since the Act was passed, and the question of extradition remains as high up on the political agenda as ever.

In October 2010, the Government appointed a panel of three independent lawyers to review the UK’s extradition arrangements: chaired by Sir Scott Baker, a former judge in the Court of Appeal, it reported in September 2011.14 Running parallel to that process, extradition was the subject of an excellent report from the Joint Committee on Human Rights in 2011.15 The Government responded to both reports in October 2012.16 Attention has remained high ever since, sustained by high-profile cases such as those of Gary McKinnon and Julian Assange.

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14 A review of the United Kingdom’s extradition arrangements, presented to the Home Secretary on 30 September 2011.
Extradition thus remains an issue of considerable priority. This is not least in the field of EU Justice and Home Affairs measures. The 2014 Justice and Home Affairs opt-out decision, whereby the UK will be able to exercise either a block opt-out or opt-in to justice and home affairs measures passed prior to the Lisbon Treaty in 2009, includes the European Arrest Warrant, which the Government intends to rejoin if an opt-out is exercised. Though fundamental reform may not be guaranteed in that context, it would again set the stage for consideration of some of the practical reforms of the EAW: a topic which was the subject of a recent report from the European Union Committee.\(^{17}\)

There has also been recent legislative activity on extradition. In the Crime and Courts Act 2013, the Government legislated to introduce a forum bar—a means to enable prosecutions overseas to be barred where action is possible in the UK and doing so is considered by the High Court to be in the interests of justice. Further provisions, including to remove the automatic right of appeal against extradition, and to make changes to the domestic implementation of the European Arrest Warrant, are presently before the House in the Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Bill.

Reviewing the state of play on extradition legislation would, therefore, be a worthwhile deployment of resources in the House. The Committee could build upon the work already undertaken in this field, including in this House, to examine the lessons learned over the 10 years of the Act’s operation. In doing so, it could look forward and reflect upon how extradition arrangements could be made to work more effectively in the future.

The main issue would be how to handle the question of the 2014 opt-out decision, as it would fall to be made midway through the Committee’s work. I do not consider this to be an insurmountable concern: partly because the Committee could simply be empowered to produce an interim report if it was considered worthwhile, but more powerfully because more wide-ranging reforms to the EAW would likely happen in the longer run. The Committee would, therefore, be able to reflect upon the 2014 decision and incorporate any lessons learned into the recommendations that it produces afterwards. As those recommendations would be able to be considered in the round, alongside the broader provisions in the Extradition Act, I would be confident that any committee could avoid duplicating any work done by the EU Committee in this field. Similarly, while the Joint Committee on Human Rights was active in this area previously, it has been some time since its 2011 inquiry, since when there have been some rather significant developments, so I do not think it could be said to be duplicating work elsewhere.

There are many issues that the Committee could seek to focus on: how extradition issues have moved or need to move forward in an age of increased levels of cybercrime; the suitability of arrangements for extradition between the United States and the UK; the effectiveness of the European Arrest Warrant in practice, and how any changes that may be required to improve its operation could be implemented; whether the legal framework in place at present provides for adequate representation for those subject to extradition; whether existing procedural safeguards are adequate, including the case for the introduction of proportionality checks within extradition requests; and whether further extradition bars, such as where people could serve sentences in the UK, should be introduced as a means to protect those subject to extradition.

There would also be no shortage of witnesses for such an inquiry. As well as those involved in law enforcement, such as the police and the prosecuting authorities, the subject would be of interest to civil liberties groups, academics and other policy groups. This could provide a solid base of evidence, and attract significant media interest during the course of evidence being taken.

I can think of no more suitable candidate, overall, as a subject for post-legislative scrutiny. I do hope that the Liaison Committee shares my view, and that it can be established in due course.

15 JANUARY 2014
GARDEN OF FROGNAL

Letter to the Chairman from Lord Rea

The rising prevalence of chronic non communicable disease (NCD) is becoming an increasing burden on health and social services in both the developed and developing world. Because of their degenerative nature they are seldom “curable” and become chronic disabling conditions requiring long term medication or prosthetic (spare part) surgery. This has lead to widespread research into the epidemiology and pathophysiology of these conditions with a view to identifying risk factors to enable their primary prevention.

Genetic factors play a role in determining susceptibility and age of onset, but social and environmental factors are increasingly recognised as playing a major role, in particular nutrition, physical activity and long term exposure to harmful substances, e.g. tobacco smoke. Recently epigenetic factors have been suggested as possible determinants.

The late Professor David Barker of Southampton University (who died last August) was able to show in a pioneering study of cohorts of infants born in the early years of the last century in Hertfordshire, Preston and Sheffield whose birth weights and length had been recorded, that those with low birth weight and especially those whose weight was low in relation to length were more liable to develop diabetes and cardiovascular disease than those with normal birth weights —the “Barker hypothesis”. This has been subjected to much critical assessment especially due to this existence of socioeconomic confounding factors but has emerged as mainly still valid. Other studies have shown that adults in the Netherlands who were born during the famine years of 1941–5 when their mothers were seriously malnourished are at greater risk of diabetes and cardiovascular diseases. Other work on animals has confirmed the long term effects of foetal under nutrition. Related studies in a number of centres is ongoing. There is some evidence that this tendency is carried through to the next generation via epigenetic mechanisms. In humans the higher prevalence of diabetes and CVD in S Asian populations is postulated to be due to similar factors.

A Select Committee enquiry would be able to assess the current status of the Barker hypothesis together with other evidence and discuss possible implications for public health policy.

13 JANUARY 2014
REA

Letter to the Chairman from Lord Alton of Liverpool

During the recent balloted debate on human rights I mentioned the absence of an International Affairs/Foreign Affairs Select Committee in the House of Lords. I have written on previous occasions to your predecessor about this and hope that this is something which you will feel able to support. I know you are currently
Letter to the Chairman from Lord Hannay of Chiswick

I see from “Red Benches” that the time is coming when the Liaison Committee will be looking at ideas for committee work in the 2014/15 Session.

May I yet again put in a plea for a Foreign Affairs Committee to be set up. I hope you will excuse me for not putting in a formal proposal, having done so fairly frequently in the past. But 2013 provided plenty of examples of debates which would have benefited from the scrutiny of a Select Committee—Syria, the Iran nuclear problem, the future of the UN’s Millennium Development Goals are three examples. There are plenty more.

Please let me know if you and the Committee need an approach more formal than this letter.

12 DECEMBER 2013

HANNAY OF CHISWICK

Letter to the Chairman from Lord Kerr of Kinlochard

My suggestion for the Liaison Committee is hardly original: indeed I make it every year. But I still find it extraordinary that this House, unlike all other legislative assemblies of which I am aware, has no Foreign Relations Committee. The excuse that we have an effective EU Select Committee, and that one of its Sub-Committees considers EU relations with the wider world, looks increasingly threadbare: it is not clear to me why we should not emulate the Other Place, and have both, particularly as there is more Foreign Policy expertise here than there.

The excuse also looks increasingly anachronistic as the Government seeks to limit EU competence in international relations and increasingly defines UK policy by distinguishing it from the policies of our EU partners. If we were starting from scratch, would we really decide that we want a Committee structure optimised to monitor Lady Ashton’s policies on Ruritania, but not Mr Hague’s?

12 JANUARY 2014

KERR OF KINLOCHARD

Letter to the Chairman from Lord Howell of Guildford

We had a useful talk just before Christmas on the possibilities for a future Lords Select Committee concerned with international affairs.

In the longer term I share the view, as does the present ad hoc committee which I chair, that it would be desirable to have a standing House of Lords Select Committee on Foreign Policy and international issues. But I also appreciate fully the view that we should get there slowly and that for the coming year, at least, the approach should be to have another ad hoc committee, focused on a fairly specific aspect of foreign and global affairs, to follow the present one.

The present Committee (on Soft Power and British Influence) will report in March, as planned. I have to say that with twenty-three hearings and a mass of written evidence it has been a fascinating experience, opening up crucial new areas of British policy covering several departments, not just the FCO, and illuminating aspects of the new international scene which no other Committee of either House has yet examined. So, I believe it has been a thoroughly worthwhile exercise and good use of the immense experience and talent in your Lordship’s House, with
superb support from the Clerks—although I have to admit that I would say that, wouldn’t I!

Where might a renewed ad hoc international affairs committee turn its attention to in the coming year? Here are some thoughts, based on:

(a) A careful appreciation of the work already being done, or about to be done, both by the Commons FAC and by our own EU sub-committee C, to avoid any overlap or duplication—and indeed maybe build on and reinforce the reports and recommendations of these committees, and

(b) On the fact that the interface between Britain and the world, and the Government response to current international conditions, is now changing at breakneck speed and opening up entirely new vistas on which Parliament should be better informed, and

(c) The point that a new Committee would NOT be just shadowing the FCO (as is the role of the Commons FAC) but looking over the full range of Whitehall departments interlinked with the outside world (as does our present inquiry).

Possible topic areas:

1. The UK and the new Middle East. There is a big unexplored area here covering not just the twists and turns in the soured Arab ‘Spring’ but key geo-politics, national security, major implications of the revolutionised energy scene, commercial and financial aspects and a host more.

2. The centrality of China to the new international scene and the direct impact of many areas of British life, interests and policy.

3. The assault on Christianity as more aggressive forms of Islam gain traction—and the whole challenge to the European structure of values and principles of governance.

4. The implementation of the International Defence Engagement Strategy. (We would be peering here at the visible merging of defence, military, foreign and economic policy in modern conditions—a pattern which our current enquiry will highlight but which requires a considerable further exploration).

5. The UK and the new models of Asian modernisation now emerging. Do we understand and can we relate to what is actually happening outside the West? How do we help shape and work with the new international order that is emerging?

6. The UK, the Maghreb and MENA—again, a whole new scene with direct implications for several Whitehall departments.

7. Eastern Mediterranean—Cyprus/Turkey/Lebanon/Israel/Egypt/Greece. Few have yet realised that the whole East Med scene is being transformed by new politics and new energy discoveries.

8. The changing nature of international terror and its implications for the UK.

9. New international crime patterns, including cyber-crime. Already touched on by other Parliamentary committees but badly needing to be interwoven with foreign policy.
The UK and the USA—obvious time for a re-set, although not all policymakers have yet grasped this.

Nation-building—UK, EU and US efforts—a fairly dismal string of failures so far. Where should we be going?

Frankly, one could itemise a whole lot more. The central point is that enormous expertise exists in the Lords on almost all these issues, and that people outside, including some MPs, find it extraordinary that this is not being better mobilised.

My own preferred subjects—for what it is worth—would be 1, 4 and 5—all large gaps in current foreign affairs discussion.

I hope this is a useful guide for you and the Liaison Committee in considering our future Select Committee structure.

13 JANUARY 2014

HOWELL OF GUILDFORD

Letter to the Chairman from Viscount Ridley

I am writing with respect to your call for suggestions for ad hoc committees for the forthcoming session. I wish to propose a select committee to examine the case for and against the use of genetically modified crops in food production.

The question as to what role genetically modified organisms (GMOs) should play in food and other agricultural production in the UK, and across the world, has been a hotly debated topic for many years.

The subject is presently one of political debate owing to a forthcoming vote at EU level on the approval of an insect-resistant maize for use in EU states, which comes shortly after the reversal of a similar approval by the General Court of the European Union in December 2013.

While the need to protect human health and the environment is the overwhelming concern on all sides, the appropriate regulatory regime that should operate in the field of GM crops, and the effect that such regulation has on future investment in biotechnology in the UK and Europe, remains a live and important question. It is also one that must be addressed in the years to come: if not, investment in the area, if desired, will move to regions where the overarching legal regime is clearer.

An ad hoc select committee could undertake a review of the existing regulatory regime and its fitness for purpose. This would cover food labelling, the authorisation process for releasing GM organisms—a domestic consideration—and the rules for the marketing of GM products—a decision to be made at EU level.

The inquiry would begin by outlining the benefits and risks of GMOs in food production, determining the proportionate approach to take in that light. That review would have to scrutinise the case for cisgenic and transgenic crops, and see whether both called for different approaches to regulation. It could then look at the impact that the regulatory process has on the cost and competitiveness of GM crops, the role the Government should play in supporting access to new developments for farmers, and how agricultural innovation can be encouraged within a suitable regulatory regime. A committee could also be empowered to examine how best to allow farmers to exercise choice as to whether to make use of

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18 See: [http://uk.reuters.com/article/2014/01/07/uk-britain-gmo-idUKBREA060NA20140107](http://uk.reuters.com/article/2014/01/07/uk-britain-gmo-idUKBREA060NA20140107)

19 See: [http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/12/13/eu-gmo-potato-idUSL6N0JS1TH20131213](http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/12/13/eu-gmo-potato-idUSL6N0JS1TH20131213)

20 See, for example, the relocation of BASF from European operations in January 2012, citing the need to focus on markets with “future relevance”.

GM crops. The effect of public attitudes, and possible approaches to changing those attitudes where desirable, could also be the subject of examination. In doing so, the inquiry could look at international comparisons, perhaps most appropriately with the United States, to see whether there are aspects of practice elsewhere that should be borrowed to improve the UK’s approach in this area.

More broadly, an inquiry could look at the question of allowing real and informed choices and fair access to GM crops in the developing world, in the light of arguments regarding their role in addressing issues of food security, agricultural sustainability and climate change. This would give the inquiry a more cross-cutting focus, but could be detached depending on the desired scope: a committee looking solely on the future of GM food markets in the UK would remain a timely and effective use of select committee resources.

As the issue of market authorisation is one adjudicated upon at EU level, I acknowledge that there are elements of overlap with the European Union Sub-Committee on Agriculture, Fisheries, Environment and Energy; and I know that that Committee conducted an inquiry into innovation in EU agriculture in 2011, which referenced the genetic modification of crops.21 The references were, though, part only of a broader examination of innovation, and as far as I know it has not been returned to it since. I submit that a more focused intervention, which looked at the question of GM food in the round, would be a worthwhile addition to debate in this area.

Given the intensity of debate in this area, there would be no shortage of potential witnesses. Government departments and agencies could be canvassed, as could representatives from the US Department of Agriculture. Those companies involved in the production of GM crops, such as the Agricultural Biotechnology Council, could be given an opportunity to provide evidence, as could those opposed. Academics working in the field could provide a scientific underpinning to the debate, while the Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council could give a perspective on research and innovation funding. Other possible witnesses would include agricultural groups, such as the National Farmers’ Union, and consumer groups.

Though perhaps narrower than some topics that may have been put to you, a committee examining GM food production would be timely and would make excellent use of the expertise in the House, putting it in good stead to be persuasive at EU and national levels. I would be grateful if you could give it consideration as a candidate for a committee to be established in the new session.

16 JANUARY 2014

RIDLEY

Letter to the Chairman from Baroness O’Cathain

I would like to propose that an ad hoc Committee be established to inquire into various issues around ICT, competitiveness and skills. The theme that links these issues is the “digital divide”. Any inquiry would be informed by the Government’s 2013 Information Economy Strategy.

Functional Skills in ICT

The Government’s aim, set out by Francis Maude MP in evidence to the House of Commons Select Committee on Science and Technology, is “to promote digital

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inclusion of as many people as possible.” The Committee, in correspondence with Mr Maude, expressed concern about the Government’s strategy to put public services online and felt it important that such services “cater for citizens with basic functional literacy.”

In 2011 the Government found that 11 million working-age adults in England had difficulties with using email and 13 million with using spreadsheets at a functional level where they could work confidently, effectively and independently. The ONS estimated in 2012 that 7 million people in the UK had never used the Internet. CBI surveys show that since 2008 at least half of employers have expressed concerns about IT skills in their workforce. A committee could explore the scale and impact of this shortfall in IT skills, and the educational, social, technological reasons underlying it.

Addressing the shortfall

The shortfall is an issue across the UK, and devolved administrations have addressed it in different ways, but with a focus on education and training. Last year the Welsh Government invested £1.4 million to train 550 people in skills demanded by technology firms in Wales.

The Scottish Government’s 2013 Scotland’s Digital Future targets higher education to fill skill gaps. The Northern Ireland Government is aiming to increase take-up of ICT courses in higher and further education in response to research identifying which skills are in demand.

There is also concern that the ICT curriculum in England and Wales fails to inspire students—a survey of 2,000 pupils in 2013 found that 63% of felt their ICT education had no impact on their career aspirations. Changes to the school curriculum have yet to allay these concerns, and a committee could look at the ways in which education and training are being used to address the shortfall in skills around the UK.

Other issues arise in respect of older people, who risk exclusion in an age of online service delivery, and those living in rural communities. The particular technical and infrastructure challenges facing those living in rural areas (such as the lack of access to broadband or mobile signals) were considered by the Public Accounts Committee in its 2013 report on The Rural Broadband Programme.

Government ICT skills and procurement

The Government’s aim of ensuring that public services are delivered online by default is also threatened by an emerging skills gap, according to the recent update of the civil service reform plan. Francis Maude told the Commons S&T Committee that “The British Government spends more per capita on IT than almost any other Government … yet our performance in poor. In terms of e-Government, we are quite low ranked.”
The Cabinet Office has established a Complex Transactions Team\(^{26}\) to assist in the procurement of complex IT systems. If a Committee were to address ICT skills in Government, it might wish to avoid overlap with the work of the NAO and Public Accounts Committee in respect of particular procurements.

**Comparison with other economies**

The UN Development Programme has concluded that investment in ICT within education systems helps increase access and prepares students for the workplace.\(^{27}\) Emerging economies appear to be investing heavily in this area, with corresponding improvements in growth and competitiveness, most clearly visible in the development of cities such as Lagos, Delhi, Mumbai, Jakarta and Istanbul. Last year Ministers from Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa agreed to collaborate on ICT in education in conjunction with UNESCO.\(^{28}\) A Committee could consider the long-term implications of these developments on relative skills levels within the UK workforce and those of emerging economies.

Infrastructure remains a key barrier to economic development, particularly in Africa, and a recent BBC programme addressed the policies of the Kenyan Government, including distributing a free laptop to every child, as part of a long-term plan to build a £14 billion “tech city” near Nairobi.\(^{29}\) A Committee could explore how emerging economies are attracting investment in technology infrastructure to boost growth.

**Work by other Committees**

Last June, the Commons Science and Technology Committee took evidence on the Government’s Digital by Default strategy but did not conduct a full inquiry. The Public Accounts Committee has addressed public sector ICT projects, as well as the roll-out of rural broadband. The Education Committee has taken evidence on the eBaccalaureate, though without conducting an inquiry specifically on ICT in schools or universities.

Also relevant is the recently established Speaker’s Commission on Digital Democracy, which is likely to consider “how parliamentary democracy in the United Kingdom can embrace the opportunities afforded by the digital world”.

**Possible witnesses**

- Government departments—Cabinet Office, Department for Education, Department for Business, Innovation and Skills, DfID
- Multilateral Organisations (the World Bank, European Commission, UN Economic Commission for Africa etc.) and aid organisations
- Business organisations (CBI, British Chambers of Commerce etc.)

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\(^{26}\) Meeting the Challenge of Change: A capabilities plan for the Civil Service, Cabinet Office, 2013, available at: [http://d3h3a2wvb0vw5m.cloudfront.net/wp-content/uploads/2013/02/2900908-Capabilities-Plan-with-links.pdf](http://d3h3a2wvb0vw5m.cloudfront.net/wp-content/uploads/2013/02/2900908-Capabilities-Plan-with-links.pdf)

\(^{27}\) ICT in Education, United Nations Development Programme, available at: [http://www.saigonentre.com/FDFiles/ICT_in_Education.PDF](http://www.saigonentre.com/FDFiles/ICT_in_Education.PDF)


• Educational charities (NCFE, National Institute for Adults in Continuing Education etc.)
• E-Skills UK partners including Accenture, Microsoft, IBM, Cisco, National Grid
• IT groups, such as Nominet, British Computer Society
• Consultants including Linklaters, Sony Ericsson, Ernst & Young, PWC and Deloitte

9 JANUARY 2014

O’CATHAIN

Letter to the Chairman from Lord Magan of Castletown

I am writing with respect to your call for suggestions for ad hoc committees for the forthcoming session. I wish to propose a select committee on stimulating investment in infrastructure in the United Kingdom.

Infrastructure investment is an important and effective means by which to drive growth in the United Kingdom. Improving the nation’s core infrastructure—roads, rails, ports and flood defences, and communications, waste, water and power networks—will be an important strategic priority in the years to come.

There is clear political consensus as to the necessity of focusing on infrastructure development. In December 2013, the Government set out a national infrastructure plan, containing information on over £375 billion of planned public and private sector investment. In September 2012, the Labour party commissioned Sir John Armitt, former Chairman of the Olympic Delivery Authority, to conduct a review into infrastructure planning; and has commissioned further work on how to establish and operate a National Infrastructure Commission. Given this political focus, now is an opportune time to consider the issues raised about infrastructure investment in the future.

An ad hoc select committee could examine the mechanisms by which to fund infrastructure investment on the scale we require in the coming generations. At its heart, this would involve deliberations on the appropriate balance between public and private funding, as well as an exploration of the possible investment vehicles that should be used in both contexts. Themes that could be explored include:

• The incentives that the Government can put in place to encourage private sector funding in UK infrastructure;
• Whether new institutional structures are required to better enable long-term decision making on infrastructure development;
• Reconciling any divergence between the strategic priorities for UK infrastructure investment and the commercial attractiveness of investment in different infrastructure areas;
• How best to strike the balance between fostering open markets and preserving domestic security in stimulating infrastructure investment;
• Driving innovation and sustainability within infrastructure development;
• How to stimulate infrastructure development across the whole of the United Kingdom to deliver regional growth;
• The role of the financial services, pension and insurance industries in providing capital and investment vehicles that enable investment;
• The future structuring of public sector investment in infrastructure, such as public/private finance initiatives and other financial vehicles.

The benefit of the topic is that its scope could be expanded or circumscribed depending on the time made available. It could focus specifically on decision-making structures, for instance, or alternatively on how to best stimulate investment from the private sector. This means that it can adjust its workload to the time given over to it. I would argue, though, that the pressing nature of the question calls for considered scrutiny over the course of the next session.

There are a wide range of possible sources of evidence for such an inquiry. Evidence could be requested from the following organisations, among others:

Relevant Government departments and agencies;
Academics operating in the field;\(^\text{30}\)
Institutional investors, such as the National Association of Pension Funds, the Association of British Insurers and the Investment Management Association
Representatives of the construction industry, such as Balfour Beatty, Sir Robert McAlpine or Arup;
Representatives of business organisations such as the CBI and the Institute of Directors;
Sir John Armitt;
Groups concerned for sustainable and environmentally-friendly infrastructure development, such as the Campaign for the Protection of Rural England; and
The Centre for the Protection of National Infrastructure

I am aware that the Liaison Committee is keen to avoid duplication of work undertaken by other Select Committees. In that respect, I am conscious that the Science and Technology Committee in the Lords recently examined the question of scientific infrastructure.\(^\text{31}\) I am also aware that the Public Accounts Committee will next week look in a one-off hearing at the impact of infrastructure investment on consumer bills, alongside work it has previously done on specific infrastructure projects.

Consideration in this context, however, would be much wider, and would have the benefit of being cross-cutting in its operation. Infrastructure investment, in terms of planning, implementation and financing, covers a range of departments, as shown by the range of departmental actions outlined in the National Infrastructure Plan. This would put a Lords committee in good stead to work in a complementary manner, rather than covering old ground.

Overall, I am confident that this committee could make excellent use of the talented membership of this House, and could produce considered recommendations that would apply to a range of Government departments. Its broad remit would ensure that it added real value to the debate in this area, so I hope that you will give it due consideration as part of your deliberations on future ad hoc committees.

15 JANUARY 2014

MAGAN OF CASTLETOWN

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\(^\text{30}\) See, for example, Dieter Helm, British infrastructure policy and the gradual return of the state, Oxford Review of Economic Policy, 2013; [http://www.dieterhelm.co.uk/sites/default/files/Brit_infra_oxrep.pdf](http://www.dieterhelm.co.uk/sites/default/files/Brit_infra_oxrep.pdf)

Letter to the Chairman from Baroness Meacher

Summary

It is proposed that a House of Lords ad hoc Committee be set up during 2014 on the question of National Policy for the Control of Psychoactive Drugs. Such a Committee would be extremely useful at the present time as there are major developments in this field at a national, regional and global level. The widespread use of psychoactive substances in the UK whether they are legal or illegal raises a multitude of questions for, not only policing and criminal justice policy, but also health, education, housing, employment, licensing and trading standards. There are not currently parliamentary scrutiny instruments that can easily capture all these issues.

Current Developments

Global level

For fifty years global drug policy has been shaped by the United Nations Conventions on Drugs and for part of that time they have been used to justify the so-called ‘War on Drugs’. In response to growing concerns about the harmful impact of the war on drugs on individuals, communities, states and the environment the UN Secretary General agreed in 2013 that a Special Session of the General Assembly on drug policy (UNGASS) will be held in 2016. His statement sent a clear message about his support for an open debate on drug policy.

“Next year, the Commission on Narcotic Drugs will conduct a high-level review. This will be followed, in 2016, by the UN General Assembly Special Session on the issue. I urge Member States to use these opportunities to conduct a wide-ranging and open debate that considers all options.”

In 2014 all UN member states will be considering how they will contribute to such a review and for the UK these considerations will benefit from the contribution of the ad hoc Committee

Developments in other regions

A number of countries and states within the USA have decided not to wait for the outcome of the UN review. Their concern to remove the problems that illicit markets in certain drugs cause has led them to begin experiments in alternative forms of regulation. Countries following this path include Uruguay who have introduced a regulated system of supply with a national monopoly for cannabis; the US states of Washington and Colorado have similarly gone down the route of regulating the supply of cannabis arguing that supply should not be left in the hands of organised crime without any tax revenue accruing to the state authorities. New Zealand is introducing a system of licensing the supply of party drugs which have gone through a process of testing and assessment and been demonstrated to represent an acceptably low level of harm. The checking process is paid for by the supplier.

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32 UN Secretary General Ban Ki Moon in an address to a special event held to mark the United Nations International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking on 26 June 2013.
These are extremely interesting experiments in drug policy and an ad hoc Committee will be well placed to assess their chances of success and how best the UK can learn from them as emerging findings from the implementation of these experiments in 2014.

**Developments in Europe**

A number of European countries have developed a more evidence led and health based approach to the control of drugs. These include the Netherlands, Switzerland, the Czech Republic and Portugal. These national approaches are all different but they have the common element that they are all designed to reduce both the harms arising from drug use and the harms arising from a blanket implementation of the prohibition of drugs. These approaches are well established and have made a significant contribution to the debate about ‘what works’ in drug policy. It is understood that they have been looked at as part of the current review of approaches to drug policy being carried out by the Home Office (see below) and form a significant contribution to the evidence base on drug policy which the ad hoc committee can make use of.

**Developments in the UK**

At the end of 2012 and early in 2013 three important reports on drug policy emerged in the UK. These were from the Home Affairs Select Committee, The All Party Parliamentary Group for Drug Policy Reform’s report on New Psychoactive Substances (Towards a Safer Drug Policy) and the report of the British Medical Association—‘Drugs of Dependence’. Although the emphasis within these reports was different their cumulative effect was that the following issues need to be addressed as far as drug policy is concerned.

- Whether sufficient emphasis is given to drug policy as a health issue
- Whether the Home Office (or even any one single agency) is appropriate as a lead for drug policy
- Whether the government response to the proliferation of new psychoactive substances is adequate
- Whether an overall review of national drug policy is necessary

In response to the Home Affairs Committee report the Home Office announced ‘the Minister of State for Crime Prevention, who Chairs the Inter Ministerial Group on Drugs, will lead a review to look at a number of countries that cover a spectrum of approaches to drug policy, and assess their effectiveness in cutting drug use and reducing harm to individuals and communities.’ This work is being completed by the current Home Office Minister, Norman Baker MP and the results should be available later in 2014. The Committee will be well placed to consider and comment on the conclusions from this work.

The Government has wanted to pursue an evidence-led approach to drug policy and considers that there is a built in review of its drug strategy via evaluation. However, although an evaluation framework was scheduled to be in place by March 2012 it has not yet been finalised and made public. An ad hoc committee will be well placed to monitor the progress on evaluation of drugs policy and assist in the process of finalising an evaluative framework.
Complementing other instruments of Parliamentary scrutiny

As the lead within the Government for drug policy is currently the Home Office the lead responsibility for parliamentary scrutiny lies with the Home Affairs Select Committee. Although the Committee is most diligent and extremely effective it is not the best mechanism to enable the range of perspectives from the health, education, housing, employment, licensing, trading standards and so on which are the key components of a comprehensive debate on the drugs issue. An ad hoc Committee has the potential to and can seek to ensure that this range of views is properly represented in order to cover regulatory, health and harm issues.

Appendix - The APPG for Drug Policy Reform

The All-Party Parliamentary Group for Drug Policy Reform (APPGDPR) was formed in January 2011 to reflect a growing concern that the global ‘War on Drugs’ of the past 50 years had been a costly failure with appalling unintended consequences. The Group seeks to foster health focussed approaches to substance use based upon the growing body of evidence.

The Group began its work by organising an international event at the House of Lords in 2011, (supported by Release, the International Drug Policy Consortium and others). The Group has:

- Completed an Inquiry into alternative forms of regulation for new ‘legal highs’ which has attracted substantial media attention and has established the Group as a significant contributor to the drug policy debate.

- Submitted evidence to the UK Home Affairs Select Committee on the UK Drug Strategy and the EU Select Committee on the EU Drug Strategy.

- Contributed to the British Medical Association report on drug policy launched in January 2013. The Chair was a member of the Advisory Board on that report.

- Organised a number of APPG meetings and debates with speakers within the UK parliament on aspects of drug policy.

The Group has an influential and active membership currently standing at over 90 members across all main Political Parties.

14 JANUARY 2014

MEACHER

Letter to the Chairman from Lord Faulkner of Worcester

I’d like to propose the establishment of an ad hoc select committee on prostitution law reform.

Different approaches to reforming the law are being adopted in various countries —e.g., decriminalisation in Australia and New Zealand, criminal sanctions against purchasing sexual services in France and the Scandinavian countries—but the law in Britain has changed little in recent years, with the Policing and Crime Act 2009 and the Sexual Offences Act 2003 being the two pieces of legislation which seek to regulate the “sex industry”.

The BBC website has posted this:

“What is the current law on prostitution?”
The laws around prostitution in England and Wales are far from straight-forward. The act of prostitution is not in itself illegal—but a string of laws criminalises activities around it. Under the Sexual Offences Act 2003, it is an offence to cause or incite prostitution or control it for personal gain.

The 1956 Sexual Offences Act bans running a brothel and it’s against the law to loiter or solicit sex on the street. Kerb-crawling is also banned, providing it can be shown the individual was causing a persistent annoyance.

Adverts placed in phone boxes have been banned since 2001. Human trafficking, a component of modern prostitution, is also covered by the law. There are also general laws on public nuisance and decency which can be used to target the sex trade.”

A new select committee could gather evidence from around the world, review the state of the law in Britain (particularly from the standpoint of the police and local authorities), and perhaps come to a view on what sort of changes were desirable.

Do please ask if you would like anything further from me.

8 JANUARY 2014 FAULKNER OF WORCESTER

Letter to the Chairman from Lord Foulkes of Cumnock

I understand from Lord Campbell-Savours that consideration is currently being given to topics for the second phase of ad hoc Select Committees.

Could you add to the list for consideration the topic “To consider the implications for the rest of the United Kingdom of the paper “Scotland’s Future” produced by the Scottish Government”.

12 DECEMBER 2013 FOULKES OF CUMNOCK

Letter to the Chairman from Lord Forsyth of Drumlean

Further to our conversation today I wonder if a short Select Committee to examine the Scottish Government’s document on Scotland’s Future might be worth considering. It would of course have to report by July but I think this is possible.

17 DECEMBER 2013 FORSYTH OF DRUMLEAN

Letter to the Chairman from Baroness Tyler of Enfield

I. Introduction

Social mobility in the UK is a topical and pressing cross cutting issue that requires the attention of Parliament in 2014. Research suggests that since the end of the so called “golden age” of social mobility sometime in the 1970s, the level of social mobility in British society has stagnated or even declined. Additionally, the UK continues to rank near the bottom of all OECD countries in relations to social mobility.

Specific statistics on the current state of social mobility in the UK are troubling. Although just 7% of pupils are privately educated, they account for 59% of our cabinet ministers, 45% of our senior civil servants, 15 out of 17 of our Supreme Court judges and heads of division and 54% of our country’s leading journalists.
Whilst 1 in 5 children are on free school meals, this can be said of just 1 in 100 Oxbridge entrants.

Prominent members of all three major political parties have recently expressed concern about this alarming trend:

- Secretary of State for Education **Michael Gove** has said that “those who are born poor are more likely to stay poor and those who inherit privilege are more likely to pass on privilege. For those of us who believe in social justice this stratification and segregation are morally indefensible.”

- In a speech given to the Sutton Trust on 21 May 2012, **Ed Miliband** argued that “Despite all the efforts of the last few generations to open Britain up, the doors of opportunity are open much wider for a wealthy and privileged few than they are for the many.”

- In a speech on social mobility given to the Sutton Trust, on 22 May 2012 Deputy Prime Minister **Nick Clegg** stated that “our society is still too closed, too static. A society that still says [that] where you were born, and who you were born to, matters for the rest of your life, where working hard and doing the right thing does not give you a better future.”

- On 13 November 2013, **Alan Milburn, Chair of the Social Mobility and Child Poverty Commission** gave a speech to the Resolution Foundation in which he stated that “stalled life chances for those at the bottom is not a viable social proposition for Britain.” He also highlighted four key areas where policymaking can impact social mobility: early years’ education, closing the attainment gap in schools, fair access to educational and vocational training, and opening more doors to a career in the professions.

- Most notably, the former Prime Minister **Sir John Major** stated in November 2013 that “in every single sphere of British influence, the upper echelons of power in 2013 are held overwhelmingly by the privately educated or the affluent middle class […] to me, from my background, I find that truly shocking.”

Clearly, there is a groundswell of concern over the state of social mobility in Britain. Current Select Committees in both Houses address individual aspects of social mobility, such as early years education, raising school standards, vocational skills, careers advice, HE access, access to the professions etc **but there is currently no Select Committee taking a holistic approach to this pressing problem.** An ad hoc Lords Select Committee on Social Mobility would provide a platform for Peers with expertise in all the relevant fields to examine the evidence in the round and to propose public policy strategies to improve levels of social mobility in the UK.

2. Summary of Proposal

In a nutshell my proposal is that one of the new ad hoc Committees should look into why social mobility has remained stubbornly low in the UK compared to other countries and is currently regressing, and what in public policy terms should be done about it. The essential task would be twofold: identify the key barriers are that are preventing social mobility from increasing; and propose policy responses that would help ensure that people’s life chances were determined by their own efforts and achievement rather than circumstances of their birth.
Such an inquiry would be **very cross cutting**, drawing together the work of many different external agencies and government departments and look across all the different life stages of an individual i.e. early years, school, transition to work and beyond. As well as considering the importance of early years, schools, higher education, vocational education and training, employment practices and career progression, it would include broader issues of family support and external contacts and social networks. These issues are not currently being picked up in a joined up way by the Departmental based Select Committees in the Commons. The Committee would be able to take a **long term perspective (15–20 years)** and draw on international evidence from other countries that enjoy higher rates of social mobility than the UK.

Although a lot has been written on the subject by academics, think tanks and others, it has so far failed to translate through into effective action in the UK context. An analytical inquiry by a cross party Committee would be able to identify both the root causes of the problem as well as pinpoint effective approaches in the UK that could be scaled up (for example London Challenge which is leading to much improved educational attainment and social mobility in London schools) or international experience that was capable of being replicated in this country.

### 3. Recent Parliamentary Work on Social Mobility

Parliamentarians in both Houses have been looking at social mobility for some time; there is already a solid foundation on which a Select Committee could build. The All Party Parliamentary Group on Social Mobility is perhaps the leading example of such work. In 2012, the APPG published a report entitled “Seven Key Truths of Social Mobility.” In February of 2014, the APPG will launch the “Character and Resilience Manifesto,” a document that demonstrates—using a rigorous, evidence-based approach—the connection between certain behavioural traits (such as the ability to deal with adversity) and achievement both in the classroom and the workplace, regardless of an individual’s socio-economic background.

Although the APPG has done some very good work and developed an important knowledge base, a Lords Select Committee on Social Mobility would provide a more prominent and weighty platform for these important discussions to be taken forward and generate a national conversation. Thus the creation of such a Select Committee would encourage more Peers from a wide array of interests and backgrounds to explore issues relating to social mobility and propose solutions.

### 4. Interest to Peers

In the light of the quotes given in the introduction above, it is clear that membership of a Select Committee on Social Mobility would be of interest to Peers across the political spectrum as well as to Cross Benchers who are experts in the relevant fields. Further, the challenge of improving social mobility is inherently multi-disciplinary, and therefore well suited to the wide range of experts currently sitting in the House of Lords. For a Peer whose interests lie in such diverse fields as childhood development, education, economics, workplace profession, the charity sector, health and wellbeing etc, work on improving social mobility would be a highly worthwhile application of their expertise.

In addition to being a cross-party, multi-disciplinary issue, the conversation surrounding social mobility is in places controversial. For example, there are those who believe the skills necessary for social mobility can be developed entirely
through learning and intervention, while others believe innate factors such as IQ play a significant causal role. In addition, the public debate surrounding social mobility includes highly contentious debates such as the role of selective intake schools, the impact of income inequality on social mobility and the role of inherited wealth in the contemporary UK. Clearly these are contested issues which suggests that many Peers would find participation in a Select Committee on Social Mobility—and the search for some cross party consensus on action—particularly stimulating.

5. Conclusion

The extent to which the circumstances of an individual’s birth, rather than merit, determine his or her chances in life remains a deeply troubling feature of British society. As legislators and policymakers, it is our responsibility to make an informed and weighty contribution towards remedying these social ills. A Lords Select Committee on Social Mobility would provide the House and interested Peers with an ideal opportunity to carry out this responsibility.

14 JANUARY 2014                      TYLER OF ENFIELD

Letter to the Chairman from the Earl of Lindsay, Lord Giddens, Lord MacKenzie of Luton and Lord Curry of Kirkharle

We would like to make the following proposal for an ad hoc Select Committee to make a short inquiry into how risk can be better regulated based on robust scientific evidence.

In his 2011 report Reclaiming health and safety for all: an independent review of health and safety legislation, Professor Ragnar Löfstedt said that “I believe there needs to be a shared understanding of risk and how it should be regulated and that a mechanism is needed to bring together Parliament, policy makers, academics, and the public to achieve this. This should be broader than just health and safety and encompass other areas such as health and environmental issues as well”.

He recommended that “the House of Lords be invited to set up a Select Committee on risk or establish a sub-committee of the Science and Technology Committee to examine this issue and consider how to engage society in a discussion about risk”. In parallel, he recommended that “the Government asks the Chief Scientific Adviser to convene an expert group aimed at addressing this challenge. The outcomes of such work need to be disseminated widely across Parliament, policy makers, academics and the public”.

Unfortunately, a number of case studies illustrate what happens when decisions are made based on an assessment of the hazard rather than the risk. Recent examples are attempts by France to ban the use of Bisphenol A in all food contact items, despite lack of evidence that it poses any danger to humans at normal exposure levels, and the two-year EU ban on neonicotinoids to protect bee populations, in the face of disputed science and concerns that the ban will lead to increased use of potentially more widely harmful insecticides.

The Prime Minister, in accepting the recommendations of ‘Cut EU red tape: report from the Business Taskforce’ on 15 October 2013 said “Business people, particularly owners of small firms, are forced to spend too much time complying with pointless, burdensome and costly regulations and that means less time developing a new product, winning contracts or hiring young recruits”.

14 JANUARY 2014                      TYLER OF ENFIELD
We believe that regulation, regardless of its origin, should be risk-based and evidence-based. It is important not only for economic growth but also so that everyone can benefit from technological advances. To achieve this both we in Parliament and policy makers need to do more to engage with society in a debate about the risks and benefits of new technologies and the advantages (and limitations) of a risk-based and science-based approach.

15 JANUARY 2014 LINDSAY, GIDDENS OF SOUTHGATE, MACKENZIE OF LUTON, CURRY OF KIRKHARLE

Letter to the Chairman from Lord Sherbourne of Didsbury

I am writing to suggest that the House of Lords establish a select committee on youth unemployment.

Almost 1 million young people aged 16–24 were recorded as unemployed in October 2013—a fifth of the economically active population; more than a quarter of them had been unemployed for 12 months or more. Getting those young people into work or full-time education is a key priority for all political parties: looking at the most effective means by which to do so is an issue worthy of further investigation in the select committee setting.

There are many avenues that the Committee could explore. It could look at the question of work incentives, to see how best the pathways to work could be structured. It could examine the kind of opportunities available to young people, to see how to widen the availability for apprenticeships, and to ensure that there is fair access to internships. It could also look at how to build up the skills of young people to compete for high-quality skilled jobs in the United Kingdom, including increasing take-up of vocational and technical qualifications, and developing other avenues to increase employability.

Another suitable topic for discussion would be an examination of recruitment practices in the public and private sectors, and to look at how to increase opportunities at firms of all sizes in the UK. It would also be worthwhile to look at the question of underemployment in young people, as well as any differences in the experiences between unemployed young men and women seeking work.

It is this breadth of focus—covering as it does a range of government departments—that makes it particularly suitable for scrutiny by a committee in the House of Lords. The committee could look at how best to join-up the Government’s approach to unemployment, in a way that Commons departmental committees could not. By looking across the field in that way, its recommendations have the best chance of presenting fresh avenues for change and having a significant effect in this area.

At the same time, if it were desirable, the subject’s scope could also be narrowed to enable it to be the subject of a shorter inquiry in the style of the personal services committee that is underway at the moment. A shorter piece of work could focus on a particular topic or set of topics, such as the question of equipping young people with the skills to compete in the job market, within a shorter timeframe.

It is notable that the issues contained within my proposed inquiry have been the subject of recent discussion in the House. Baroness Shephard of Northwold took a party debate on preparing young people for the world of work in July 2013, attracting 11 speakers; and Baroness Wilcox posed a topical Question for Short Debate on apprenticeships for young people in November 2013, which attracted
nine. This shows that there is an appetite for the subject in the House, which could be built upon by the establishment of a select committee.

There are many organisations and bodies able to provide insight into the question, which could allow for a fascinating evidence-gathering process. As well as companies themselves—which should include large employers as well as SMEs, given that both have different concerns—there is considerable interest in the academic and non-profit communities that could be leveraged. The Work Foundation, based in Lancaster University, is undertaking a “Missing Millions” project that focuses specifically on youth unemployment; and elsewhere, the Prince’s Trust have undertaken extensive charitable work in the area. Another important perspective would come from recruitment agencies and others involved in placing young people into work, who could provide further details on the hurdles that young people face and how they can be overcome. Finally, business organisations and trade unions have been active on the question: both would have different but important insights in this area. These witnesses would be on top of the government departments themselves, giving a robust programme of evidence.

The only issue as far as I can see is that the European Union Committee is at present conducting an inquiry into EU action to tackle youth unemployment. I consider, though, that the two inquiries would benefit each other, rather than duplicating efforts. After all, the range of actions that can be taken within the UK, most notably in terms of the education system and work incentives, are very different to the levers that can be pulled in Brussels. As such, I would consider that the two inquiries would cover sufficiently distinct ground in an important area. Were it a continued concern, the Liaison Committee could simply require that any youth unemployment committee was mindful of the need to avoid duplication in the light of the EU Committee’s report, rather than dismissing the idea on that basis.

I really do feel that this is a pressing subject for consideration, where this House could add significant value. I hope that you bear this in mind during your deliberations.

15 JANUARY 2014                SHERBOURNE OF DIDSBURY