



HOUSE OF LORDS

Liaison Committee

2nd Report of Session 2017–19

New ad hoc
Committees in
2018–19

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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.

Membership

The Members of the Liaison Committee are:

Baroness Evans of Bowes Park	Lord Low of Dalston
Lord Foulkes of Cumnock	Lord McFall of Alcluith (Chairman)
Baroness Garden of Frognal	Lord Newby
Baroness Hayter of Kentish Town	Lord Smith of Hindhead
Lord Hope of Craighead	Lord Williams of Elvel
Lord Lang of Monkton	

Declaration of interests

See Appendix 1.

A full list of Members' interests can be found in the Register of Lords' Interests:

<http://www.parliament.uk/mps-lords-and-offices/standards-and-interests/register-of-lords-interests>

Publications

All publications of the Committee are available at:

<http://www.parliament.uk/lords-liaison>

Further information

Further information about the House of Lords and its Committees, including guidance to witnesses, details of current inquiries and forthcoming meetings is available at:

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/lords>

Committee staff

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CONTENTS

	<i>Page</i>
Introduction	3
<i>An ad hoc</i> select committee on Intergenerational Fairness and Provision	4
<i>An ad hoc</i> select committee on Regenerating Seaside Towns and Communities	6
<i>An ad hoc</i> select committee on the Rural Economy	8
<i>An ad hoc</i> select committee on the Bribery Act 2010 (post-legislative scrutiny)	10
Summary of recommendations	12
Appendix 1: List of Members and declarations of interest	13
Appendix 2: Committee proposals from Members of the House	15

New *ad hoc* Committees in 2018–19

INTRODUCTION

1. The increase in *ad hoc* committees, from one to four each session, was a popular development during the 2010–15 Parliament, and its continued popularity amongst members is demonstrated by the large number of members submitting proposals each session. Since 2012 the House of Lords has usually appointed four new *ad hoc* committees each session. At least one of these has been a post-legislative scrutiny committee, such scrutiny being another innovation in the 2010–15 Parliament.
2. The present session of Parliament is scheduled to last for two years. The *ad hoc* Committees which were appointed in Spring 2017 were, however, all ordered to report by 31 March 2018, to allow for new committees to be appointed for the second half of the session. Last autumn the Chairman accordingly invited proposals from members of the House for new *ad hoc* Committees to start in Spring 2018. Once again, we received a large number of proposals, which are included in Appendix 2.
3. We considered all the proposals received in accordance with our published criteria for selection, as follows:
 - Makes best use of the knowledge and experience of Members of the House;
 - Complements the work of House of Commons departmental select committees;
 - Addresses areas of policy that cross departmental boundaries; and
 - The activity proposed should be capable of being confined to one session.
4. Once again we had difficult choices to make, and are grateful to those members who put forward their proposals, in many cases clearly putting a considerable amount of effort into doing so.
5. Despite the popularity of *ad hoc* committees, several members have continued to draw attention to their obvious disadvantage compared to sessional committees, which is that the Committees do not continue once they have reported. There are also no dedicated resources to follow up their work, although the Liaison Committee itself has undertaken limited follow-up activity, supported by briefing notes prepared by Library staff. The question of following up the work of *ad hoc* Committees is being considered by our current major review of House of Lords Committee activity.
6. This report sets out our recommendations to the House as to the subject of the four new *ad hoc* Committees.

AN AD HOC SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTERGENERATIONAL FAIRNESS AND PROVISION

7. Concern for intergenerational fairness is growing as the millennial generation appears to be worse off than the baby boomer generation were at a similar age. The Lords held a debate on intergenerational fairness in Government policy on 26 October 2017.¹ Many Peers identified housing costs, a fall in real average earnings, student debt, and pension schemes as possible sources of intergenerational inequality. Global issues such as climate change were also noted as potential contributors to intergenerational inequality.
8. In the 2012–13 Session, the *ad hoc* committee on Public Service and Demographic Change published its report, “Ready for Ageing?”, which warned that the Government and society were woefully underprepared for ageing. In the 2015–16 Session, the *ad hoc* committee on Social Mobility considered the transition from school to work for the majority of young people. More recently, the House of Commons Work and Pensions Committee published a report on Intergenerational Fairness in the 2016–17 Session.² The Intergenerational Commission, convened by the Resolution Foundation, has also produced a number of publications on intergenerational fairness.³
9. An *ad hoc* committee could consider the issue in the round—assessing, for example, the collective impact on individuals, families, different generations, society at large and the Government. It could also explore whether Government policy fairly reflects the views and wishes of each generation; what the collective impact is of policies emanating from different Government departments; and whether the Government have the right mechanisms, tools and models to approach policy-making in this area holistically.
10. Some of the issues that an *ad hoc* committee might consider could include:
 - What attitudes and perceptions do younger generations have regarding intergenerational fairness? How do these compare to the attitudes of other generations?
 - How can debates around intergenerational fairness be made more inclusive, and less polarised towards one generation or another?
 - What positive steps can be taken to build links between generations? (This might include consideration of initiatives such as those to co-locate nurseries with nursing homes, for example.) How can joined-up policy making across Government facilitate this?
 - In an increasingly uncertain world, what is likely to be passed on to the next generation?
 - Are current policies and practices alienating young people and what could be done to facilitate young people’s engagement in political discourse? For example, given that younger generations are ‘digital natives’, how can Government and Parliament better communicate in this medium?

1 HL Deb, 26 October 2017, [cols 985-1028](#). See also: House of Lords Library, *Intergenerational Fairness and Government Policy*, Library Note, [LLN-2017-0072](#), October 2017

2 House of Commons Work and Pensions Committee, *Intergenerational fairness* (Third Report, Session 2016–17, HC 59)

3 The Intergenerational Commissions’s reports can be viewed online at <https://www.intergencommission.org/publications/>

- The Intergenerational Commission have hypothesised a link between political engagement and home ownership: renters of any age are much less likely to vote than homeowners.⁴ What is the connection between homeownership and stronger community engagement and political participation?
 - What experiences can be learnt from other countries in how to tackle the problems of intergenerational unfairness (either real or perceived)?
11. The inquiry could also be a good opportunity for the House of Lords to increase engagement with young people in an innovative way. Thus, it could experiment with new avenues for engagement, by using communication styles and tools favoured by young people. This might include an increased use of social media, the convening of small focus groups, and committee visits to speak to young people.
 12. **We recommend the establishment of an *ad hoc* committee to consider the long-term implications of Government policy on intergenerational fairness and provision, to report by the end of March 2019.**

4 Resolution Foundation, *Votey McVoteface—Understanding the growing turnout gap between the generations* (September 2016), p 8: <http://www.resolutionfoundation.org/app/uploads/2016/09/Generational-voting.pdf> [accessed 19 March 2018]

AN AD HOC SELECT COMMITTEE ON REGENERATING SEASIDE TOWNS AND COMMUNITIES

13. Many UK seaside towns were developed in the late 19th century to serve an expanding domestic tourism market. Their long-term decline began in the 1970s, when foreign holidays became a more viable option for mass tourism. As a result, many seaside towns have been left with a legacy of semi-redundant accommodation and housing stock, and low housing prices. This in turn has contributed to a transient population, presenting issues for local authorities which are compounded by the need to provide support for vulnerable adults and children placed in coastal towns by other councils. The health-related issues facing seaside towns are illustrated by the fact that Blackpool has the lowest male life expectancy in England and Wales.⁵ Recent studies have also highlighted the prevalence of poor mental health in coastal communities.⁶
14. Historic reliance on the tourist industry presents further challenges, and the economic gap between coastal and non-coastal towns has widened over time. The mean salary level in Scarborough in 2016 was the lowest in Britain and £8,517 below the national average.⁷ The November 2017 report of the Social Mobility Commission concluded that coastal towns such as Scarborough and Hastings were becoming “entrenched social mobility coldspots”, and identified limited employment options and poor educational outcomes as key determinants of this trend. The Commission also noted that many coastal communities suffered from poor transport connectivity.⁸
15. The challenges faced by seaside towns are, therefore, complex and cross-cutting. The policy areas engaged by this inquiry would cut across a number of Government departments, policy and funding initiatives.
16. The key areas that an inquiry might cover include:
 - Issues arising from the nature of the housing stock in seaside towns, including the transience of populations and concentrations of deprivation
 - The demographic challenges of supporting communities with large numbers of people of pensionable age
 - Approaches to economic diversification and the success or otherwise of initiatives to promote economic growth, particularly among the smaller businesses that are typically prevalent in these towns
 - The part that new approaches and technologies might play in overcoming the isolation of communities and stimulating growth and regeneration,

5 Office for National Statistics, *Life expectancy at birth and at age 65 by local areas in England and Wales: 2012 to 2014* (4 November 2015): <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/birthsdeathsandmarriages/lifeexpectancies/bulletins/lifeexpectancyatbirthandage65bylocalareasinenglandandwales/2015-11-04> [accessed 19 March 2018]

6 Exasol, *Antidepressants prescribed far more in English coastal towns* (14 April 2017): <https://www.exasol.com/en/company/newsroom/in-the-press/antidepressants-prescribed-far-more-in-deprived-english-coastal-towns/> [accessed 19 March 2018]

7 ‘Seaside towns among most deprived communities in the UK’, *The Guardian* (4 September 2017): <https://www.theguardian.com/inequality/2017/sep/04/seaside-towns-among-most-deprived-communities-in-uk> [accessed 19 March 2018]

8 Social Mobility Commission, *State of the nation 2017: Social mobility in Great Britain* (November 2017): https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/662744/State_of_the_Nation_2017_-_Social_Mobility_in_Great_Britain.pdf [accessed 19 March 2018]

and the potential for connectivity improvements, including both transport and digital connectivity

- The success or otherwise of initiatives that seek to promote and enhance existing core industries—particularly tourism—in seaside towns
 - The role played by national Government in addressing each of the issues set out above, in partnership with local authorities, Local Enterprise Partnerships and other stakeholders. Consideration could also be given to devolution arrangements and the extent to which they could support innovative or new approaches
 - Schemes to promote community resilience and capacity building in seaside towns
 - Integrated regeneration models that bring together all of the above themes at a local level
17. **We recommend the establishment of an *ad hoc* committee to consider the regeneration of seaside towns and communities, to report by the end of March 2019.**

AN AD HOC SELECT COMMITTEE ON THE RURAL ECONOMY

18. The current rural population of England is 9.4 million (2016 mid-year estimate) and represents 17.0% of the population of England (55.3 million).⁹ In 2016 rural areas of England contributed an estimated £229 billion to England's total economy in terms of gross value added (about a fifth of England's total economic activity).¹⁰ In 2015–16 there were 537,000 businesses registered in rural areas (24% of the England total), employing 3.5 million people.¹¹ The employment rate in 2016 was higher in rural areas compared with urban areas. In 2017, median workplace-based earnings in predominantly urban areas (excluding London) were £22,900 while predominantly rural areas were slightly lower at £21,400. When examining earnings against the affordability of housing, the gap between earnings and house prices is greater in rural areas than urban areas (excluding London).¹²
19. The affordability and availability of transport and internet is another major issue for people in rural areas. In 2015–16 people in rural areas travelled an average of 10,200 miles compared with 6,600 miles in England as a whole.¹³ The average broadband speed for rural areas in 2014 was 13 megabits per second, whereas the average speed across England was 24 megabits per second. The Government's Superfast Broadband Programme is expected to achieve coverage for 95% of UK premises.¹⁴
20. While there have been studies of particular aspects of the rural economy, such as agriculture, fisheries and digital connectivity, an *ad hoc* inquiry could bring these various issues together to consider the rural economy as a whole. An early task for the Committee will be to consider how best to focus their inquiry so that it can be completed by the end of March 2019. We propose that, initially, the Committee could examine the co-ordination between different Government departments, including local government, in addressing issues affecting rural communities. The Committee's priorities could include some of the following topics:
 - Possible sources of new investment and economic activity, such as new industries and universities
 - Skills investment
 - Rural transport and infrastructure

9 Defra, *Statistical Digest of Rural England*, (January 2018) p 6: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/statistical-digest-of-rural-england> [accessed 19 March 2018]

10 House of Lords Library, Library Note [LLN-2016-0020](#), April 2016; Defra, *Business Digest August 2017*: https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/682985/Businesses_February_2018_Digest.pdf. The ONS calculation (combining GVA and productivity) suggests a figure of £246 billion in 2016: https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/676077/Productivity_2016_with_industry_data_-_final.pdf [accessed 19 March 2018]

11 Defra, *Business Digest August 2017*: https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/682985/Businesses_February_2018_Digest.pdf [accessed 19 March 2018]

12 Defra, *Statistical Digest of Rural England*, (January 2018) p 32, 38, 118: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/statistical-digest-of-rural-england> *Statistical Digest of Rural England* [accessed 19 March 2018]

13 Defra, *Statistical Digest of Rural England*, (January 2018) p 85: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/statistical-digest-of-rural-england> *Statistical Digest of Rural England* [accessed 19 March 2018]

14 Defra, *Statistical Digest of Rural England*, (January 2018) p 108: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/statistical-digest-of-rural-england> *Statistical Digest of Rural England* and Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, *Broadband Delivery UK* (March 2018): <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/broadband-delivery-uk> [accessed 19 March 2018]

- Digital connectivity, especially in the context of distance working as an economic driver, and mobile coverage
 - Rural loneliness and isolation (especially affecting those on low incomes, and, of those, particularly the elderly)
 - Social cohesion, including the role of faith groups and especially (because of the parish structure) the Church of England
 - The role of rural areas in achieving the Government’s house-building target, and the availability of affordable homes in rural areas
 - The problems of maintaining viable and vibrant communities in rural areas, particularly in terms of accommodation and employment for younger individuals and families
 - Implications of financial pressures on local authorities
 - Funding issues, and the sparsity factor, affecting police, fire and rescue and the ambulance service
 - Access to local justice in the context of court closures
21. Most of these policy areas are devolved, but an inquiry could usefully make comparisons with policies of the devolved administrations, and examine cross-border issues.
 22. We also consider that the inquiry could lend itself well to taking evidence in rural areas and engaging directly with those involved. It could also provide a useful opportunity for promoting the House’s work to a wider audience across the United Kingdom.
 23. **We recommend the establishment of an *ad hoc* committee to consider the rural economy, to report by the end of March 2019.**

AN AD HOC SELECT COMMITTEE ON THE BRIBERY ACT 2010 (POST-LEGISLATIVE SCRUTINY)

24. Prior to the Bribery Act 2010 the law of bribery had not been substantially changed for nearly a century. The Act created two basic crimes of giving and receiving bribes. The crime of bribery is described in section 1 as occurring when a person offers, gives or promises to give a “financial or other advantage” to another individual in exchange for “improperly” performing a “relevant function or activity”. Section 2 covers the offence of being bribed, which is defined as requesting, accepting or agreeing to accept such an advantage, in exchange for improperly performing such a function or activity. The “relevant function or activity” element is explained in Section 3—it covers “any function of a public nature; any activity connected with a business, trade or profession; any activity performed in the course of a person’s employment; or any activity performed by or on behalf of a body of persons whether corporate or unincorporated”. This encompasses activities performed outside the UK, even activities with no link to this country.
25. Section 6 for the first time constituted the crime of bribery of foreign public officials, in line with the OECD Anti-Bribery Convention. A person will be guilty of this offence if they promise, offer or give a financial or other advantage to a foreign public official, either directly or through a third party, where such an advantage is not legitimately due. Unlike with general bribery offences, there is no requirement to show that the public official acted improperly as a result. The offence under Section 6 only applies to the briber, and not to the official who receives or agrees to receive such a bribe.
26. Section 7 created the broad and innovatory offence of the failure of commercial organisations to prevent bribery on their behalf. This applies to all commercial organisations which have business in the UK. The offence does not apply only to the organisation itself; individuals and employees may also be found guilty.
27. The Act applies to the whole of the UK and has a wider territorial scope, since it also applies to acts of bribery committed overseas by any British citizen or any other person with a close connection to the UK. Similarly, the corporate offence applies to a UK incorporated entity or any overseas entity that carries on business or part of a business in the UK.
28. The Act applies only to conduct after its entry into force on 1 July 2011. Although there are still prosecutions under the earlier legislation for conduct prior to July 2011, nearly all corrupt conduct is now prosecuted under the Bribery Act, and a number of cases have already reached the Court of Appeal. We therefore consider that it is now an opportune time for post-legislative scrutiny.
29. A principal issue for a Committee to consider would be whether the Act has, as intended, led to stricter prosecution of corrupt conduct, a higher conviction rate, and possibly a reduction in such conduct. Prosecutions have to be authorised in person by the Director of Public Prosecutions or the Director of the Serious Fraud Office, who could both be witnesses.
30. The Bribery Act has been described as one of the toughest anti-corruption measures in the world. The CBI and others warned that UK businesses would be at a competitive disadvantage in obtaining foreign contracts because conduct which was lawful under equivalent foreign legislation might be unlawful under the stricter provisions of the Bribery Act. A Committee could take

evidence from the multi-national companies and business groups operating in international markets to see whether these warnings have been borne out.

31. Another area for scrutiny would be awareness of the Act amongst small and medium enterprises (SMEs). In 2013 the House of Lords Select Committee on Small and Medium Sized Enterprises called for post-legislative scrutiny of the Act “at the earliest opportunity” because of “confusion and uncertainty” about its application. In its May 2013 response to the Committee’s report, the Government said that it would be premature then to conduct full post-legislative scrutiny of the Act, but undertook to “solicit more detailed customer feedback on this issue and report back to the Committee.” It did not do so. SMEs could be asked for their views five years on.
32. Another issue, not strictly arising under the Act but closely related to it, is Deferred Prosecution Agreements (DPAs). Introduced by the Crime and Courts Act 2013, a DPA is an agreement reached between a prosecutor and an organisation which could be prosecuted, which allows a prosecution to be suspended for a defined period provided the organisation meets certain specified conditions. They enable a corporate body to make full reparation for criminal behaviour without the collateral damage of a conviction. The agreements are concluded under the supervision of a judge. DPAs are likely to be an increasingly common way of resolving conduct by corporations which would, if prosecuted, be for offences under the Bribery Act. The Committee could consider DPAs as they affect bribery without the need for an express mention in the terms of reference.
33. **We recommend the establishment of an *ad hoc* post-legislative scrutiny committee to consider and report on the Bribery Act 2010, to report by the end of March 2019.**

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

1. We recommend the establishment of an *ad hoc* committee to consider the long-term implications of Government policy on intergenerational fairness and provision, to report by the end of March 2019. (Paragraph 12)
2. We recommend the establishment of an *ad hoc* committee to consider the regeneration of seaside towns and communities, to report by the end of March 2019. (Paragraph 17)
3. We recommend the establishment of an *ad hoc* committee to consider the rural economy, to report by the end of March 2019. (Paragraph 23)
4. We recommend the establishment of an *ad hoc* post-legislative scrutiny committee to consider and report on the Bribery Act 2010, to report by the end of March 2019. (Paragraph 33)

APPENDIX 1: LIST OF MEMBERS AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members

Lord Foulkes of Cumnock
 Baroness Garden of Frognal
 Lord Hope of Craighead
 Lord Lang of Monkton
 Lord Low of Dalston
 Lord McFall of Alcluith (Chairman)
 Lord Newby
 Baroness Smith of Basildon (in place of Baroness Hayter of Kentish Town)
 Lord Smith of Hindhead
 Lord Taylor of Holbeach (in place of Baroness Evans of Bowes Park)
 Lord Williams of Elvel

Declarations of interest

Baroness Evans of Bowes Park
No relevant interests to declare

Lord Foulkes of Cumnock
Chair: Age Scotland

Baroness Garden of Frognal
No relevant interests to declare

Baroness Hayter of Kentish Town
No relevant interests to declare

Lord Hope of Craighead
No relevant interests to declare

Lord Lang of Monkton
Member of Council, The Rugbeian Society

Lord Low of Dalston
No relevant interests to declare

Lord McFall of Alcluith (Chairman)
No relevant interests to declare

Lord Newby
Trustee: The Transformation Trust

Lord Taylor of Holbeach
OA Taylor & Sons Bulbs Ltd (through a non-beneficial share settlement trust)
OA Taylor & Sons Ltd (growing of cereals, crops and vegetables)
The above two companies are also trading together as OA Taylor & Sons
OAT 2012 Ltd (growing of vegetables, cereals and plants)
Agricultural land, farmhouse, warehouses, buildings and greenhouses in the parishes of Holbeach, Whaplode and Fleet, Lincolnshire; owned through family companies, trusts and partnerships, singularly and jointly
President, East of England Agricultural Society

Baroness Smith of Basildon
Ambassador, RVS (formerly WRVS)
President, Youth Build UK
Resident of a Seaside Town

Lord Smith of Hindhead
No relevant interests to declare

Lord Williams of Elvel

No relevant interests to declare

A full list of members' interests can be found in the Register of Lords' Interests:
<http://www.parliament.uk/mps-lords-and-offices/standards-and-interests/register-of-lords-interests/>

APPENDIX 2: COMMITTEE PROPOSALS FROM MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE

Letter from Baroness Tonge

Abortion

What measures should be taken to update the current Abortion Act 1967—with particular reference to the increase in medical abortions in the UK?

Background information:

Please find attached Scotland Order dated October 2017 which remedy the current anomaly re medical abortions in Scotland only!¹⁵

Lesley Regan, President of the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists said at the 20th November 2017 APPG on PDRH Hearings on Abortion in the Developing World and the UK: “Whatever one’s personal views are about abortion, the fact remains that abortion is the most common procedure that women of reproductive age undergo in this country under the age of 45 years! What really strikes me is if somebody in this room came to see me tomorrow morning in that clinic at St Mary’s and the scan diagnosed that their pregnancy had died, I would be giving them the Misoprostol to take home so they could be comfortable and I would probably say, “Why don’t you take it on Friday night so you are going to be at home and it doesn’t interrupt work, et cetera”, and yet if you had come to me requesting a termination of pregnancy at exactly the same gestation, I have to insist - it is the law - that you take the drug in front of me and you then miscarry travelling home. I think that we have got to the point where the old Act is now outdated because in 1967 the only way to obtain an abortion was to bring a woman into hospital, give her a general anaesthetic and do an operation. Now 65% in England and over 80% in Scotland of early medical abortions are performed with drugs.”

TONGE

Letter from Lord Dykes

Brexit

It occurs to me that Brexit would be an ideal subject.

DYKES

Letter from Baroness Randerson

Business Confidence in financial services

Summary:

Business growth, particularly of SMEs, is central to our economy.

In the wake of the financial crisis, many have lost trust in not only the banks but also the regulators.

This limits the entrepreneurialism and innovation that UK prides itself on.

This committee will address these issues in a focused way and identify practical steps so that business confidence in the financial services industry can be justified and restored.

¹⁵ Scottish Government Health and Social Care Directorates, *Abortion: Improvement to existing services : Approval for misoprostol to be taken at home* (October 2017): [http://www.sehd.scot.nhs.uk/cmo/CMO\(2017\)14.pdf](http://www.sehd.scot.nhs.uk/cmo/CMO(2017)14.pdf) [accessed 13 March 2018]

Why?

In the wake of the conduct scandals in financial services and associated industries, business trust in financial institutions is at a record low of 12%.

This is having a direct impact on confidence, growth and productivity, with businesses considering it safer to not borrow in order to invest or grow.

There is associated widespread concern that both statutory and voluntary regulators are not able/willing to provide restitution and remedies for businesses.

These are cross-cutting issues that would complement the work of other departments and committees, including Treasury Select, BEIS, Justice and Home Affairs.

Areas that could form foci for the committee to take evidence and produce recommendations on include:

Effective Regulation: do statutory or voluntary regulatory schemes have the requisite teeth and appetite to enforce and to deter poor conduct?

Access to justice: giving SMEs a voice, taking the high price tag off justice, providing an independent resolution method that has real expertise in the sector.

Protection of whistleblowers: Whistleblowers often have their lives destroyed in the UK—how can calling out bad practice become something that is not frowned upon?

Conflict of Interest: Are there effective measures in place to prevent conflict of interest between banks, solicitors, accountants, surveyors, LPA receivers and insolvency practitioners? This is a very live problem area.

While some of these areas are touched on by current activity in Parliament, this *ad hoc* committee would draw together the diverse strands and make clear the bigger picture of industry-wide issues that restrict the successful co-operation of financial services and business; which in turn discourage business growth.

The committee's output—achievable in 12 months—would both develop wider understanding and identify best practice opportunities.

From discussions around the House I am in no doubt that this committee would have many and very able participants and contributors.

Baroness Kramer supports this proposal.

RANDERSON

Letter from Lord Cromwell

Business confidence in financial services

I am aware of the proposal under this heading submitted and supported by other members of the House.

I am not a proposer of the committee (although I would have a keen interest in it should it be formed) but given:

A) the news today on possible withdrawal of ATMs and wider concerns about the extent of services available to customers and businesses away from major cities; and

B) that I believe the deadline for submissions is today.

I would like to suggest that the following is added to the areas of work:

“Assess the effects on businesses of withdrawal of banking services including branch closures and ATM withdrawal, and make evidence-based recommendations.”

I hope that this is of assistance. As I recall, you discuss in due course the details of committees suggested with the proposers. I will be sure to let them have my comments above so that they might feature in such discussions if deemed appropriate.

CROMWELL

Letter from Baroness Tonge

Child Marriage

What measures should be taken to stop child marriage in the UK?

Background information:

It is important that children are recognised in the law as being children and that they are accorded the full protection of the law. Governments including the UK need to have clear and consistent legislation that establishes 18 as the minimum age of marriage. Adequate safeguards must be in place to ensure that parental consent or other exceptions are not used to force girls into marriage. The existence of laws that set a minimum age for marriage is an important tool that helps those working to dissuade families and communities from marrying off their daughters as children. At present children age between 16 and 18 in the UK can marry if consented.

TONGE

Letter from Lord Bird

Child Poverty

It is proposed that there should be an *ad hoc* Committee in the 2018–19 Session to consider the measures required to tackle the root causes of child poverty in the UK.

Poverty affects one in four children in the UK. It blights childhoods, has long-lasting effects and imposes costs on broader society, estimated to be at least £29 billion per year.

As noted by the Child Poverty Action Group, when children grow up poor, they miss out—but so do the rest of us. Children miss out on the things most other children take for granted: warm clothes, school trips, having friends over for dinner. They do less well at school and earn less as adults.

There were 4 million children living in poverty in 2016, and the Institute For Fiscal Studies forecast that 5.2 million children will be in relative poverty by 2022.

HM Government notes that they are committed to action that tackles the root causes of child poverty via policies aiming to improve children’s long-term outcomes by incentivising employment. However, over two-thirds of children growing up in poverty live in a family where at least one person works.

There is a need to focus on the broader drivers of child poverty, and on efforts by NGOs, charities, social businesses and other organisations to alleviate such causes, in order to identify methods of preventing such causes from (re)occurring in the lives of children and their families in future.

The breadth and depth of expertise of Members of the House on subjects such as children, young people, children’s rights, childcare, nurseries, early years education, literacy, schooling, families, parenting, poverty, social mobility, welfare, work, employment and skills is vast and well-documented.

The topics of child poverty and poverty have been raised on a number of occasions in the House of Lords recently, including debates on poverty and disadvantage (14 December), the role of education in building a flourishing society (8 December), regional and national inequalities (30 November), child poverty (17 November) and poverty (14 July). However, given the recent resignations from the Social Mobility Commission and the closure of the Child Poverty Unit, combined with the increase of child poverty rates since the enactment of the Welfare Reform and Work Act 2016, the issue now demands a renewed and special parliamentary focus in 2018–19.

Tackling the root causes of child poverty requires cross-government action and spans several departments and policy areas, including Education, Work and Pensions, Health, Communities and Local Government and the Cabinet Office; as well as linking to HM Treasury and Justice. The Social Mobility Commission, the Office of the Children’s Commissioner and the Youth Justice Board for England and Wales are also key stakeholders.

The proposed activity is capable of being confined to one year, in so far as identifying the root causes of child poverty (in addition to the ‘Improving Lives: Helping Workless Families’ framework) and then evaluating efforts being made across the country to prevent those causes from occurring or reoccurring, are concerned.

An *ad hoc* Committee on Child Poverty would combine the knowledge and experience of Members of the House—building on the Economic Affairs Committee and Social Mobility Committee—by complementing the work of Commons select committees, including the:

- Treasury Committee inquiry ‘Household finances: income, saving and debt’
- Work and Pensions Committee inquiries, ‘The Taylor Review of modern working practices’, ‘Universal Credit rollout’ and ‘Support for carers’ as well as its recent work on ‘Intergenerational Fairness’
- Justice Committee inquiries on ‘Prison Population’ and ‘Transforming Rehabilitation’
- Education Committee inquiries on ‘Fostering’ and ‘Alternative Provision’
- Public Accounts Committee inquiries on ‘Homeless Households’ and ‘Mental Health in Prisons’
- Communities and Local Government Committee inquiries on ‘Housing Need and the NPPF inquiry’, ‘Private Rented Sector’ and ‘Homelessness Reduction Act’
- Science and Technology Committee inquiry ‘Evidence-based Early-years Intervention’
- Women and Equalities Committee inquiry ‘Fathers and the Workplace’
- Scottish Affairs Committee inquiry ‘Sustainable Employment in Scotland’.

Just prior to the 2017 General Election, the Prime Minister wrote an article in *The Big Issue* in which she stated that ‘*there is only one way that we are ever going to address these enduring social divisions in the long term, [and that is] by putting prevention at the heart of our approach.*’¹⁶

16 ‘Major party leaders back The Big Issue’s poverty prevention plan’, *The Big Issue* (June 2017): <https://www.bigissue.com/news/major-party-leaders-back-big-issues-poverty-prevention-plan/> [accessed 5 January 2018]

Her emphasis on the importance of prevention was echoed by all major party leaders.¹⁷

As HM Government states, making a meaningful difference to the lives of disadvantaged children requires an approach that tackles the root causes of child poverty and disadvantage.

Work is key to alleviating child poverty, but it is far from being ‘the golden bullet’. Getting to the root causes of child poverty – in order to then prevent the drivers of childhood disadvantage, long-term and over the course of future Parliaments – merits a detailed, attentive and thorough exploration by Members of the House.

I commend this proposal to the Chairman and Members of the Liaison Committee, and thank them for their consideration.

BIRD

Letter from Lord Warner

Children Act 1989

Terms of Reference

To review the social changes occurring since the Children Act 1989 that are increasing the risks posed to the wellbeing and safety of the main categories of vulnerable children and to recommend policy (including legislative) changes that could reduce those risks.

Context

The 1989 Children Act was a ground-breaking piece of social legislation that established the welfare of the child as the primary principle in child and family law. However, it was based on the society of the 1970s and early 1980s and the risks identified then. It is now 30 years old and the changes to our social fabric during that time have been considerable—access to the internet, social media, pornography, drugs and alcohol to name some. The risk exposure for many children has never been greater; and many parents have struggled to cope and to protect their children from adverse consequences.

The Children’s Commissioner has recognised that we may face considerable challenges in this area and has begun a major exercise on measuring the number of vulnerable children under four categories: those supported by the State; those whose own actions put their future at risk; those with health-related problems; and those with family-related vulnerabilities. Inevitably, there is some overlap between these categories and the statistics need refinement; but a first cut suggests that about a quarter of our children are vulnerable to serious risks.

On the evidence so far, policy shifts seem inevitable and it would be timely for Parliament to engage with this important public policy issue—our future generations. There is a lot of expertise on this area in the House of Lords as recent debates have shown. This is a policy area that crosses Departmental boundaries. Because the Children’s Commissioner has done a lot of ground work in this area and would be a source of assistance, it would be possible for a Select Committee to make a significant contribution within a year. If the scope was thought to be too large, the focus could be limited to fewer than four categories. I am not aware that the Commons is active in this area.

WARNER

17 ‘Major party leaders back The Big Issue’s poverty prevention plan’, *The Big Issue* (June 2017): <https://www.bigissue.com/news/major-party-leaders-back-big-issues-poverty-prevention-plan/> [accessed 5 January 2018]

Letter from Baroness Scott of Needham Market

Civil Registration

Civil Registration is one of the few services which every citizen will use at some point in their lives. It provides a name and identity, proof of marriage, entitlement to a passport, and right of inheritance.

The current system has remained virtually unchanged since its introduction in 1837. People still have to register events in the area in which they took place, the Registrar uses pen and ink to complete a paper register which then provides a certificate which may be needed under a variety of circumstances.

Society has changed in the last 200 years! Not only does digitisation offer potential benefits in terms of administrative cost and improved service to citizens, but changes in the structures of people's lives, and their expectations of the state have outpaced reform of the civil registration service. There have been two recent private members Bills in this House which reflect this; one to add Mothers names to marriage certificates, and the other to change the way in which stillbirths are recorded.

In 2002, the Government published a White Paper called “ Civil Registration: Vital Change”. It proposed widespread reform, mostly through the use of Regulatory Reform orders, and very little progress was ever made with the bulk of the proposals, despite extensive public consultation. The inquiry would be able to examine the key changes which are needed in the light of those changes which have been made, including the Births, Deaths, Marriages and Civil Partnerships Records Regulations 2016, under which a pilot scheme has now concluded, and the Digital Economy Act 2017, which will allow for electronic verification between public authorities and the General Register Office. The time is now ripe for a Committee inquiry.

The inquiry would focus on England and Wales, although there are interesting lessons to be drawn from the position in Scotland. It would fit within the usual timescale for *ad hoc* Committee inquiries. I am not aware of any proposals for an inquiry into this area by a House of Commons Departmental Select Committee, although there is a useful House of Commons Library briefing paper on one aspect of it (Number 02722, 5 June 2017).

Civil registration issues lie within the remit of the Home Office, but extend far beyond it into the health service, social security and family law. The House of Lords has members who are experts in each of these areas, and in public administration, and is thus well-placed to form a cross-cutting *ad hoc* committee. It is a complex area which would benefit from the in depth consideration which a Committee of this House could bring.

SCOTT OF NEEDHAM MARKET

Letter from Lord Shutt of Greetland

Constitutional, Financial, Taxation and Aid Arrangements between the UK and the Overseas Territories and Crown Dependencies

Recent events, including data breaches, natural disasters and Brexit, have brought the relationship between the United Kingdom and its Overseas Territories (OSTs) and Crown Dependencies into the political foreground. The proposed Committee would focus mainly on the financial arrangements between the two, but also look into aid arrangements, and the wider constitutional implications that the future will bring.

The subjects of tax avoidance, evasion and money laundering have, especially in recent years, become a matter of considerable public concern. The Panama Papers,

and their successor the Paradise Papers, constituted the two largest data breaches in history and gave an insight into the extent of the problem tax avoidance poses not just to the UK Government, but the global financial system as a whole.

While the United Kingdom maintains a considerably good reputation in terms of the steps taken to tackle tax evasion, a common criticism that has been levelled against it is the lack of equal protection in the British Overseas Territories and Crown Dependencies. While steps have been taken to ensure Overseas Territories have registers of beneficial ownership, unlike in the UK these registers are not public, though they are accessible to enforcement authorities. This raises an important question about the duty of the UK to ensure that the Overseas Territories takes appropriate measures to combat evasion and money laundering, and that in turn raises questions about the Government's role in influencing policy in the OST and Crown Dependencies. Indeed, it was suggested after a fact-finding mission by the European Parliament Committee of Inquiry into Money Laundering, Tax Avoidance and Tax Evasion raised the possibility for UK to regulate/ supervise its OSTs and enforce international standards, but it should be considered what the implications for this would be. The scale of money laundering using the financial structures of the OSTs is ginormous, and a committee could consider the steps the UK Government should take to try and combat the problem.

Finally, an important aspect of the relationship between the UK and its OSTs and Crown Dependencies is the Aid Arrangements. It is Government policy that the OSTs are “a first call on the UK's international development budget”, however, this is often not reflected in practice. Indeed, the aid arrangements were raised again recently in light of the devastation caused by such events as the hurricane that hit the British Virgin Islands. It is therefore a fitting time for a committee to inquire into these arrangements.

Questions for an *ad hoc* committee on this subject could include:

1. Are the current relationships between the United Kingdom and the Overseas Territories and Crown Dependencies working sufficiently?
2. To what extent does the lack of transparency of the financial institutions in the Overseas Territories and Crown Dependencies lead to criminal activity?
3. What are the constitutional implications of the UK influencing anti-money laundering and tax evasion policy of the Overseas Territories and Crown Dependencies?
4. Are aid arrangements between the Overseas Territories and Crown Dependencies currently fit for purpose?

The House has a number of members on whose expertise it could draw on, in the financial sector, those with in-depth knowledge of the OSTs and Crown Dependencies, and those whose expertise consists of both.

SHUTT OF GREETLAND

Letter from Lord Hodgson of Astley Abbotts

Demographic Challenge facing Britain

I write to suggest that for the next session the House should establish an *ad hoc* Committee to look into the demographic challenge that the UK faces over the next quarter century.

The numbers are stark. In the short term in the last full year for which full figures are available (year ended 30 June 2016) the population of the United Kingdom

increased by 538,500 equivalent to 1475 people per day—529 from natural increase (excess of births over deaths); 518 from net immigration from within the EU, 537 from net immigration outside the EU; balanced by 137 net departing UK citizens.

To house these people to the same standard as we enjoy (2.3 people per dwelling) we will need to build 641 dwellings per day—equivalent to one every 2 minutes night and day. The latest quarterly immigration figures (to March 2017) show a reduction in net EU migration so that if that trend were to continue we will only have to build 522 houses per day.

Longer term, the recently released ONS mid projection is that our population will rise from 65.6 million in 2016 to 72.9 million in 2041—an increase of 7.3 million. On the above housing metric we will need to build 3.2 million houses together with the additional shops, factories, offices, hospitals, schools etc. which will also be required—roughly equivalent to three cities the size of Manchester—in just over twenty years.

Too often commentators (and governments) see this issue solely through an economic prism—will it increase GDP? If 7 million more people did not increase our GDP that would indeed be a strange outcome! GDP per head must surely be a better measure and there the figures are finely balanced.

But in any case there must also be other potential impacts which should surely be taken into account including the potential ‘crowding out’ of our settled population (of every race, colour and creed), challenges to our social cohesion, impact on our general environment, our countryside, our quality of life etc., etc. All this against the background of a potentially huge reduction in employment opportunities as a result of the spread of robotics and AI.

Demography is not a topic that commands attention in the conventional political arena. First any policy decisions have very ‘long fuses’ with consequences taking 15–20 or more years to have a full impact so there is no immediate political ‘dividend’. Second it can very easily be hijacked to become controversial. So the political reflex is stay away from the whole subject.

There is no evidence that any government has spent any time looking at this issue holistically. Such thinking as takes place seems to be at Departmental level and be constrained by the demands of the five year electoral cycle.

I suggest that this is just the sort of subject that a House of Lords Committee should examine. First, the House has the capacity to take a long term view, second, it contains Members who have expert knowledge about many of the wider aspects that need to be taken into account and thirdly the more reflective style of the House lends itself to the examination of issues which can generate considerable ‘heat’.

Finally, I am not aware that any Commons departmental select committees are examining any aspect of this topic.

I enclose a copy of a pamphlet I recently published on this topic.¹⁸ It is inevitably amateurish constrained by the capacities of a single individual and additionally not an expert! But compiling it convinced me more than ever that it was a subject which demanded and justified some intellectual ‘heavy lifting’.

To conclude, in 2040 when the above changes have come about few, if any, of the existing Members of the House will still be present. But our successors in the House

¹⁸ Lord Hodgson of Astley Abbots, *Britain’s Demographic Challenge : The implications of the UK’s rapidly increasing population* (London: Civitas, 2017) <http://www.civitas.org.uk/content/files/britainsdemographicchallengeweb.pdf> [accessed 5 January 2018]

and succeeding generations in the country as a whole may well then wonder why when these developments were so clearly signposted Parliament did not spend more time considering their longer term implications.

Baroness Barker, Lord Faulks, Lord Lamont of Lerwick, Lord Luce, Lord McConnell of Glenscorrodale and Baroness Neville-Rolfe support this proposal.

HODGSON OF ASTLEY ABBOTS

Letter from Lord Lipsey as Chair of the *Ad Hoc* Select Committee on Political Polling and Digital Media

Digital and social media

The Select Committee on Political Polling and Digital Media has, in the course of its inquiry, discovered that there is a growing concern regarding digital and social media. While we are considering some aspects of this as part of our inquiry, we are closely focussed on those issues which are related to political polling and impact on politics.

Beyond this, there are much wider issues bubbling away which relate to digital and social media. The Committee recognises that this is far too large a topic to be covered in the course of its current inquiry and has therefore asked me, in my role as Chair, to write to the Liaison Committee.

The Committee would like to propose the topic to the Liaison Committee as a prime candidate for selection amongst in next year's topics for *ad hoc* committees.

Specifically the Committee feels that the following areas would benefit from further scrutiny:

- Legal and regulatory structures in relation to digital and social media
- To what extent can media literacy and user knowledge address the issues
- The rise in the use of 'bots' and their potential misuse in the manipulation of social media
- How political advertising can be identified and the sources of funding traced
- The influence of digital, social media and data analytics companies.

LIPSEY (AS CHAIR OF THE *AD HOC* SELECT COMMITTEE ON POLITICAL POLLING AND DIGITAL MEDIA)

Letter from Baroness Corston

Divorce Law

The need for a divorce law that does not rely on proof of fault. As a former divorce lawyer, I saw cases where untrue allegations were made just to avoid having to wait five years.

CORSTON

Letter from Baroness Deech

Family Law (reform)

I am writing to propose a committee on Family Law (reform). It has been in the news recently¹⁹. There has been no substantive family reform for about 30 years, despite

¹⁹ 'Leading legal figures demand end to unjust divorce laws', *The Times* (17 November 2017): <https://www.thetimesbrief.co.uk/users/39175-the-brief-team/posts/22673-leading-legal-figures-demand-end-to-unjust-divorce-laws> [accessed 28 December 2017]

many calls for change, and Law Commission proposals have been implemented only in very small part. The need for reform is urgent because of changes in modern family formation, and because of cuts in legal aid which have left many couples unrepresented in court, ignorant of their rights, and reliant on the judge to assist them in a way which is not the proper role of the judge. Successive governments have been unwilling to carry out reform because of the controversial nature of the topic and because there are sharp divisions of opinion even within Parliament.

The topics that should be included are divorce law, financial provision law, prenuptial contracts, child maintenance, and possibly cohabitation (including invalid Muslim “marriages”.)

A cross party review could usefully call on the expertise in these fields that exists in the House, and assist the government in formulating proposals that attract consensus. There are many members with deep experience of these areas, whether as legal practitioners, judges, philosophers, educators, social policy formers, academics and religious experts.

This committee would complement the work of Commons committees - Health, Justice, Social Mobility and Women and Equality. The topics cross departmental policy boundaries - education, justice, communities, the treasury. It could be confined to one year, by limiting the number of topics included if necessary.

I do hope you will consider this.

DEECH

Letter from Lord Suri

Freedom of Religion or Relief and Foreign Policy

Advancing the Right to Freedom of Religion or belief has been determined as a personal and political priority by Ministers including Lord Ahmad, the FCO Minister of State for the Commonwealth and UN. Despite increased commitments from this Government, violations of Freedom of Religion or Belief have, with ongoing crises in countries including Iraq and Myanmar, increased. This committee could explore how the right to Freedom of Religion or Belief could be made a reality through UK Foreign Policy.

This committee would come at a time when acts of intolerance involving religion or belief are on the rise globally. A climate of intolerance is being fostered in many nations by xenophobic and nativist narratives, which are also de-sensitising the general public to dangerous practices such as stigmatisation and incitement to hostility against those with different beliefs. An alarming trend has also emerged within many States with Governments’ and officials’ politicisation and securitisation of religion or belief, utilising them as a means to promote identity politics and justify restricting the right to freedom of religion or belief.

Violations of freedom of religion or belief are truly global, occurring in most continents and in many different cultures - from the potential crimes against humanity being committed against Rohingya Muslims in Myanmar and genocide against vulnerable Iraqi religious groups such as Yazidis, Shabak, Shi’a Muslims and Christians to the banning of religious groups including Jehovah’s Witnesses. Almost 80% of the world’s population live in countries with “high” or “very high” levels of restrictions and/or hostilities towards certain beliefs. There is no one type of perpetrator or victim. Groups that face persecution in one country may be the persecutors in others. Perpetrators may also be State or non-State actors, and from the latter, mob violence is frequently used to enforce religious or social norms.

The importance of beliefs in forming a central part of who we are, how we interact with others and how religion or beliefs are utilised to promote violence and conflict have not quite fully been understood by us in the ‘secular’ UK. For those living in a secular society where the practice of religion is a minority activity and in which there is no experience of an invader or brutal dictator within living memory, it can be hard to appreciate the scale of religious persecution overseas and the importance of human rights such as the right to freedom of religion or belief. The role of religion in foreign policy, while never absent, has often therefore been side-lined.

Such a committee may wish to explore the space religion occupies in the UK’s foreign policy and global politics, addressing concerns related to conflict resolution, security, sustainable development, human rights, asylum and refugees. It could additionally serve as a forum to discuss the paradox of how nations which violate religious human rights in the name of security, which, in the long-term risks greater destabilisation.

An inquiry of this nature could be confined to a single session.

Makes best use of the knowledge and experience of Members of the House

Many Members of the House have consistently raised issues related to religion and foreign affairs in the House. Article 18 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which relates to freedom of thought, conscience and religion, has been spoken about in a number of House of Lords debates on topics including Calais Refugees, Islamophobia, Freedom of Speech: Hate Crime, EU Court of Justice Ruling: Religious Signs, Korean Peninsula, Nigeria, Islam: Tenets, Arbitration and Mediation Services (Equality), International Development Polices, Conflicts and Violence, Cultural Property: Hague Convention, Iran: Human Rights and Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Furthermore, Lord Ahmad, Foreign Office Minister for the UN and Commonwealth, makes regular reference to the issue of freedom of religion or belief in his contributions.

Complements the work of Commons departmental select committees

The Foreign Affairs, International Development, Joint Committee on Human Rights and Home Affairs committee have all received representations on the role of religion in different policy areas as well as how religious minorities are affected by world events and policies from respective States. This covers a broad range of countries such as Pakistan, Iraq, Syria, Iran, Saudi Arabia and Nigeria.

Addresses areas of policy that cross departmental boundaries

Freedom of Religion and Belief in foreign policy is an area which is relevant to cross departmental bodies including the Foreign & Commonwealth, Department for International Development, the Home Office and the Ministry of Defence. Persecution on the grounds of religion has been a driving factor, for example, for refugees fleeing their homes. Rohingyas, Yazidis and Christians have fled areas of Myanmar, Iraq and Syria as a result of intensive persecution on the basis of their beliefs. This is an issue that has been raised with the Home Office and DfID who are looking for recommendations as to how the UK can provide further support via resettlement and in its international humanitarian assistance to the most vulnerable religious minorities who have suffered as a result of their belief.

Letter from Lord Taylor of Warwick

Future of the British Fashion Industry post Brexit

I would like to suggest an *Ad hoc* Committee Inquiry on The Future of The British Fashion Industry: post Brexit

The areas that I wish to see covered in the Inquiry:

- (1) Funding;
- (2) Education, Training & Skills;
- (3) Immigration: Free Movement of Designers, Manufacturers and Models;
- (4) Diversity;
- (5) International Competitiveness;
- (6) Exports;
- (7) Regulatory Bodies;
- (8) Government Policy.

TAYLOR OF WARWICK

Letter from Lord Taylor of Warwick

Future of the British Film Industry post Brexit

I would like to suggest an *Ad hoc* Committee Inquiry on The Future of The British Film Industry post Brexit.

The areas that I wish to see covered in the Inquiry:

- (1) Funding;
- (2) Education, Training & Skills;
- (3) Immigration: Free Movement of Actors and Production staff;
- (4) Diversity;
- (5) International Competitiveness;
- (6) Distribution & Exports;
- (7) Regulatory Bodies;
- (8) Government Policy.

TAYLOR OF WARWICK

Letter from Lord Morris of Handsworth

Housing and Land Use

Following my recent retirement as chairman of Midland Heart Housing Association I have been reflecting on the Government's recently announced policy to increase the volume of affordable housing being built.

Whilst the announcements were universally supported, the current constraints on land use emerged as the main challenge to the government target.

Given the value of social capital that housing commands it appears to me that this is a subject which merits Cross Party consideration.

Accordingly it is my view that the best parliamentary vehicle to take the debate forward would be a Select Committee of both Houses on Housing and Land use.

Should my proposal find favour with the House Authorities then I feel confident that the National Federation of Housing Associations would be a strong, authoritative and highly respected advocate

I trust therefore that my proposal will receive due consideration.

MORRIS OF HANDSWORTH

Letter from Lord Rooker

Identifiers for children aged 0-16 years.

Identifiers for children aged 0-16 years.

ROOKER

Letter from Baroness Finlay of Llandaff

The Impact of Professional and Lay Use of Chemicals on Biodiversity and Human Health

2011–2020 has been designated the United Nations Decade on Biodiversity (Resolution 65/161 at Nagoya). The aim of the decade is to encourage Governments to mainstream considerations of biodiversity into national policies and planning. This requires awareness of the underlying threats to biodiversity, including production and consumption patterns.

The five strategic goals are: to address the underlying causes of biodiversity loss by mainstreaming biodiversity across government and society; to reduce the direct pressures on biodiversity and promote sustainable use; to improve the status of biodiversity by safeguarding ecosystems, species and genetic diversity; to enhance the benefits to all from biodiversity and ecosystem services; and to enhance implementation through participatory planning, knowledge management and capacity building.

In 2011 the Government white paper *The Natural Choice* highlighted that “over 30% of the services provided by our natural environment are in decline. The Lawton Report, *Making Space for Nature*, found that nature in England is highly fragmented and unable to respond effectively to new pressures such as climate and demographic change”²⁰. This document aimed to grow a green economy, reconnect people and nature, and protect our declining ecosystems. At that time the honeybee population had already declined by 54% over two decades, despite a 38% increase in crop areas requiring pollinators.

In the White Paper the Government proposed a voluntary approach to offsetting developments by conservation activities that deliver measurable biodiversity benefits. But there is little evidence of this happening on a scale significant enough to prevent the ongoing decline in biodiversity.

An ever increasing body of scientific evidence shows that further reduction in biodiversity will ultimately present dire threats to the survival of human life. These threats include:

²⁰ Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, *The Natural Choice: securing the value of nature* (June 2011) p 3: https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/228842/8082.pdf [accessed 5 January 2018]

- Climate change – whilst the climate has always changed, current concerns are about the rapidity of change, which is giving little time for ecosystems to adjust and survive.
- Deforestation – millions of acres of forest are destroyed annually across the world. These are a reservoir for many of the world’s known species of flora and fauna. In the UK ancient woodland with its rich biodiversity is threatened by building on areas previously designated as greenbelt, by planting of uniform coniferous woods replacing mixed planting and the effect of imported species on indigenous species, for example as occurred with the grey squirrel.
- Misuse of the earth’s resources:
 - Current food production methods mean that for every ton of food we eat, an estimated 10 tons of soil will be lost through erosion and with it millions of micro flora and fauna essential to survival.
 - Water resources, crucial both for maintaining life of all species and as habitat for fresh and seawater life, require careful management. Poorly managed water resources results in drought, contaminated water supplies and pollution downstream, as has been seen with chemical and oil spill incidents.
 - Neonicotinoids have been identified as a major threat to pollinators. Despite suspension of neonicotinoids, the expected recovery has not occurred because of long half-life of such chemicals, meaning they persist in the environment.
- Pollution – Excessive use of chemicals poses threats to biodiversity, both immediately and in the long-term through persistence of significant levels of DDT (dichloro-diphenyl-trichloroethane) which degrades to DDE (Dichloro-diphenyl-dichloroethylene), Polychlorinated biphenols, and others.
 - Many of the 40,000 or more chemicals (including agri-chemicals and domestic products) introduced since the 1950’s have not been evaluated in real life situations nor over the longer term. Some known endocrine disruptors are still in use despite being genotoxic to flora and fauna including humans. If bees died out, replacement activities for pollination alone would cost Britain over £400 million per annum, although the threat to the ecosystem would be far wider.
 - The dangers of excessive use of antibiotics in humans and in animal husbandry is known to be creating extensive antibiotic resistance, but the impact on biodiversity may have wider impacts on species biodiversity.
 - Chemical contamination of ground water has an impact on soil microbes and potentially impacting on food production.

In 2013 an evaluation framework was set out for Britain, but the results of any such evaluation remain elusive. However, any such strategy must also include our overseas territories as over 90% of UK biodiversity is in these less developed areas where chemical use is linked to efforts to catch up economically.

In July this year progress against the UN Sustainable Development Goals reported that biodiversity loss continues at an alarming rate, with 41% of amphibians threatened. The focus on threats to biodiversity have to date focused on culling, overfishing, poor agricultural practices, climate change and air pollution from carbon fuels.

The proposal is for an *ad hoc* committee is to focus on the effects of chemical pollution on biodiversity, animal and human health, because this cuts across political policy

particularly in the light of Brexit and the potential changes in regulation frameworks. Problems and potential solutions have implications for a wide range of government departments and for overall national resilience in the long term.

FINLAY OF LLANDAFF

Letter from Baroness Tyler of Enfield

Intergenerational Fairness

Introduction

Intergenerational fairness in the UK is a topical and pressing cross cutting issue that requires the attention of Parliament in 2018. Survey evidence shows that just under half of Britons believe that young people today will have a worse life than their parents, thanks to forces outside of the control of young people. Priced out of the housing market and with wages stagnating, millennials increasingly rely on the lottery of inheritance to fund a decent standard of living. Over a third of first time buyers now rely on the “bank of mum and dad” to get on the property ladder, up from 20% 7 years ago.

Government policies meanwhile are further redistributing towards the elderly, with pensions protected and working age benefits cut. A national conversation is needed about intergenerational fairness which is becoming an increasingly important element of both political debate and public discourse. An *ad hoc* Select Committee is a very timely and appropriate mechanism for exploring this issue and considering the public policy options for addressing it. It would also help to demonstrate that the House of Lords is actively engaged in a matter of high public salience, particularly to the young, and be a vehicle for trying out new mechanics—including through social media—to engage directly with young people in the work of a Lords Select Committee.

Context

Prominent members across the political spectrum have recently expressed concern about the widening gap between old and young:

- On assuming office on 13 July 2016, the Prime Minister Theresa May pledged to tackle the “growing divide between a more prosperous older generation and a struggling younger generation” as part of a “mission to make Britain a country that works for everyone”.
- In a speech in the House of Commons on 16 March 2016 Jeremy Corbyn referred to the “sense of injustice and insecurity that so many young people in this country face and feel every day”.
- Liberal Democrat Leader Vince Cable said in an article published on 6 August 2017 that young people suffer the disadvantage of “prohibitive housing costs, growing job insecurity and limited career progression” and that “the old have comprehensively shafted the young”.
- On 12 December 2017 at a meeting of the APPG on social integration Labour MP Chuka Ummuna said society was “more divided by age today than at any other time in modern history”.
- Finally, Lord Willetts, executive chair of the Resolution Foundation said in a debate on intergenerational fairness, held in the Lords on 26 October 2017, “we have now reached the stage in which by two to one, citizens in this country fear that the future generations will not be better off. Something that should be the promise of a modern, liberal society is not being delivered”.

Clearly, there is a groundswell of concern over the state of intergenerational fairness in Britain. An *ad hoc* Lords Select Committee on Intergenerational Fairness 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 intergenerational fairness in the UK.

Summary of Proposal

In a nutshell my proposal is that one of the new *ad hoc* Committees should look into why the gap between generations has widened dramatically in the UK over recent years, and what in public policy terms could and should be done about it. The essential task would be twofold: identify the key elements and policies, both from current and past governments; and propose policy responses that would help ensure that both young and old feel that everything possible is being done to create a fairer society for all.

Such an inquiry would be **very cross cutting**, drawing together the work of many different external agencies and government departments, as well as incorporating an important international element. It would consider many different aspects of an individual's life, including education; unemployment and earnings; debt accumulation; pensions and pensioner benefits; housing, including supply and tenure, as well as international aspects such as climate issues, forced migration, and development. The Committee would be able to take a longer term perspective (15–20 years) and draw on international evidence from other countries that enjoy a better relationship between the generations than in the UK.

Although a lot has been written on the subject by academics, think tanks and others, it has so far failed to translate 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 or international experience that was capable of being replicated in this country.

Recent Parliamentary Work on intergenerational fairness

The issue of intergenerational fairness has been of interest to Parliamentarians in both Houses for some time, and therefore a Lords *ad hoc* Committee would be able to build on the excellent work that has already been done. Indeed, much has been done on the individual aspects that may contribute to intergenerational fairness, e.g. the House of Lords Economic Affairs Committee's report into housing supply, and so an *ad hoc* Committee could draw together these threads into a comprehensive and cross cutting inquiry.

The House of Commons Work and Pensions Committee produced an excellent report on Intergenerational fairness in the 16–17 Parliamentary session. This report would be an appropriate starting point for a more in depth and longer term inquiry from a Lords *ad hoc* committee. Furthermore, an inquiry from an *ad hoc* committee would be able to consider international elements that the report from the Work and Pensions Committee was not able to, as well as solutions that have eased the generational gap in countries outside of the UK. Therefore, a Lords *ad hoc* committee would be an excellent tool to advance the policy responses that are much needed to solve the issue of intergenerational fairness.

Interest to Peers

In the light of the quotes given above, it is clear that membership of a Select Committee on Intergenerational Fairness would be of interest to Peers across the political spectrum as well as to Cross Benchers who are experts in so many of the relevant fields. Furthermore, the challenge of improving intergenerational fairness

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 housing, education, economics, pensions, health and wellbeing, climate change etc, work on improving intergenerational fairness would be a highly worthwhile application of their expertise.

Indeed, this interest from Peers was tangibly felt in the excellent debate on Intergenerational Fairness in Government Policy, which took place on 26 October 2017. There was agreement from across the House that this was an issue that needed further consideration by Parliament. It was suggested on a number of occasions during the debate that a Lords *ad hoc* committee would be an excellent vehicle to continue this conversation, and to consider it in much greater detail.

Conclusion

The gap between the generations is a concern that is acutely felt by young people across the UK, and is only going to get worse unless effective government policy is put into place to combat it. This is likely to be at the forefront of all political parties' thinking going forwards, not least given the impact the young can potentially have on the outcome of elections, as demonstrated in the 2017 General Election. Ultimately we have a responsibility as legislators and policy makers to leave behind a world that is better than the one we inherited, and a Lords *ad hoc* committee would allow us to make an informed and weighty contribution to this vital debate.

TYLER OF ENFIELD

Letter from Lord Horam

Land and Housing

In recent years, housing has been gaining traction in British political and policy debate, with increasing acceptance that the supply of housing in this country is in crisis. The Government's 2017 Housing White Paper starkly declared that the housing market in this country is broken, and the Prime Minister has said she will devote her Premiership to fixing it.

There has been considerable recent activity to begin to address the crisis of supply. However, to deliver more homes of all tenures, particularly much-needed affordable housing, we must now address a final, crucial, part of the puzzle. This is a once in a generation opportunity for a cross-departmental review of land: its role in increasing the supply of housing and in building vibrant, sustainable communities.

To deliver a step-change in new supply; to ensure that the right houses are being built in the right locations; to improve the lived experience of those living, in particular, in social housing; to tackle questions of intergenerational unfairness; and to ensure that infrastructure supports housing development, it is imperative that we interrogate the question of land. This *ad hoc* committee proposal calls for a timely debate around accessing land to build great places. There is no shortage of land in this country, but we need to investigate why it is that we have made it so difficult to release it for the building of new homes. The recent House of Commons Library briefing paper (November 2017) sets out the main issues in greater detail.

An *ad hoc* committee inquiry examining this topic would be able to follow up the work of the *ad hoc* Committee on the Built Environment in 2015–16 and the Economic Affairs Committee, and could consider questions under the following themes:

1. *How can public sector land better support the delivery of affordable housing?*

- (a) to include consideration of different options for enabling and encouraging affordable housing delivery on public sector land;
- (b) to consider aligning priorities around disposal of land by Government Departments and other public sector bodies with affordable house building targets.

2. *Could land market reform support the provision of more infrastructure and housing?*

- (a) to include consideration of housing development along transport corridors and station hubs;
- (b) to consider the infrastructure – both physical and social – that is required to deliver successful housing development;
- (c) and how land supply and land value capture can support the development of new garden towns and villages.

3. *Could privately-owned land deliver more affordable housing?*

- (a) to include consideration of the role, function and utility of viability assessments;
- (b) how CPO reform and alternative mechanisms to capture land value uplift could better support the delivery of affordable housing and infrastructure;
- (c) and how greater transparency over planning permissions, land ownership and options agreements can accelerate house building.

4. *How do we value and classify land?*

- (a) to include consideration of how we could move away from sale of land always at the highest price and instead capture the impact of added social or environmental value through development;
- (b) having a pragmatic discussion about the role of the Green Belt in the delivery of new homes, to consider such options as grading;
- (c) finding the right incentives and other measures to maximise the use of brownfield sites.

5. *What lessons can be learnt from the relevant experience in this area of Scotland and Northern Ireland?*

Such an inquiry would make good use of the knowledge and experience of Members of the House, which includes experts in housing, public policy and social structures. It would also complement the work of the House of Commons Communities and Local Government Committee, which in November 2017 examined proposed changes to the way the need for new homes is calculated for each local authority in a one-off evidence session with the Housing Minister. A House of Lords inquiry would be able to examine the topic in much greater depth. Whilst it is a broad topic, and one which crosses departmental boundaries, it is also capable of being confined to one year.

Lord Best, Lord Kirkwood of Kirkhope, Lord Porter of Spalding CBE, Lord Taylor of Goss Moor and Baroness Warwick of Undercliffe support this proposal.

HORAM

Letter from Baroness Rawlings

London Road Management

Areas of importance.

- Grid Lock. Environment. Pollution. Mental stress. Planning. Building, road works.
- Empty buses. Bicycle lanes.
- Total lack of co-ordination.
- Business losses. Security risk. Health risk Ambulances blocked.
- Political pass the parcel.

I hope this is helpful.

RAWLINGS

Letter from Baroness Thornton

Long-term Decision Making

A frequent criticism of the political process in the UK and beyond is that it is too preoccupied with short-term considerations to the detriment of the long-term and the interests of future generations. This is causing problems across a whole range of policy areas, including infrastructure planning, social care, climate change, and anticipating potential impacts from major technological change.

The proposal is for an *ad hoc* committee to consider the question of how political decision making in the UK could incorporate long-term considerations and the interests of future generations more effectively. It would analyse the causes of short-termism and how these affect the workings of different parts of the political system, including the operation of government, parliament and the civil service. It would review international good practice on how to bring a long-term perspective and consideration of future generations into the political decision making process and recommend action that could be taken by government and parliament.

The problem of excessive short-termism applies across departmental boundaries and is not being addressed by any Commons select committee. The proposed committee would take advantage of the degree of autonomy the House of Lords has from day-to-day political pressures, as well as the expertise of many of its members. It would be particularly timely as 2018 marks 5 years since the publication of the Oxford Martin Commission report *Now for the Long Term*,²¹ which included three members of the Lords.

THORNTON

Letter from Baroness D'Souza

Mental Health provision for young people

There has been a growing focus on catering for mental health issues in the community and in the work place. The Government has recently announced new funds to provide additional mental health services within the school environment. This is to be welcomed, but the statistics on mental health breakdown, particularly in the teenage population, are very disturbing and show little sign of improving year on year. There is evidence to suggest that provision for children and teenagers

21 Oxford Martin Commission, *Now for the long term* (October 2013): https://www.oxfordmartin.ox.ac.uk/downloads/commission/Oxford_Martin_Now_for_the_Long_Term.pdf [accessed 5 January 2018]

is particularly poor. There are many different approaches in Europe and the USA which are proving useful and the aim would be to investigate these diverse therapies.

The exact nature of mental health issues in children and teenagers, the existing provisions, the short, medium and longer term outcomes of such interventions are all pressing concerns and would benefit from a thorough enquiry. It is expected that the Committee, if successful in its bid, would produce a set of doable recommendations for the short and medium term.

The House of Lords has many distinguished practitioners in this field and it is now a topic of urgent concern. For these reasons we would like to submit a request of an *Ad Hoc* Committee in the next Session.

Lord Boateng, Lord Chadlington, Baroness Kidron, Earl Listowel, Baroness McIntosh of Hudnall, Lord Ouseley, Lord Porter of Spalding, Lord Stevenson of Coddendam, Lord Vaux of Harrowden and Baroness Wyld support this proposal.

D'SOUZA

Letter from Lord Campbell-Savours

National Identity Cards

Can I suggest a liaison committee enquiry into the introduction/use of national identity cards?

The areas I would like to see covered would include

1. Their use as entitlement cards in accessing public services
2. The use of the cards in combatting fraud
3. The use of the cards in providing identity on request
4. The benefit of the cards post Brexit
5. The experience of other European States in their use
6. The use of technology biometrics on the card
7. The use of the card and benefits to the taxpayer arising out of their use.

And more!

Lord Blair of Boughton, Lord Blunkett, Lord Clark of Windermere, Baroness Corston, Lord Forsyth of Drumlean, Lord Grocott, Lord Hain, Lord Hunt of Chesterton, Lord Morris of Aberavon, Lord Rooker, Baroness Taylor of Bolton, Lord Tebbit and Lord West of Spithead support this proposal.

CAMPBELL-SAVOURS

Letter from Lord Tomlinson

National Identity Cards

I would like to propose, for consideration by the Liaison Committee an *ad hoc* Select Committee to look at the introduction of identity cards.

Its terms of reference should be quite widely drawn to allow proper consideration of whether such cards should be compulsory, how they should be financed and their role from a number of perspectives such as control of immigration, measures of counter terrorism and as entitlement card for a wide range of benefits.

I hope you can bring this to the attention of the Liaison Committee.

TOMLINSON

Letter from Baroness Kidron

Parliament in a ‘Digital-First’ Society

It is proposed that there should be an *ad hoc* select committee in the 2018–19 Session to consider “Parliament in a ‘Digital-First’ Society: Is Parliament Fit For the Digital Revolution”?

The digital revolution has had a seismic effect on society. From finance to manufacturing; communications to education; healthcare to defence; science to agriculture, all sectors are being transformed by the introduction of digital technologies.

Some see this as a road to a dystopian future, others to a more equitable and manageable world, but all agree that this ‘brave new world’ requires new thinking, new processes and possibly, new tools of governance and government.

“New platforms for all of Government have to be designed and architected thoughtfully, and probably not by the same people who are fixated, rightly, on in-year policy delivery and massive change to existing service provision”²².

Mike Bracken, former CEO, Government Digital Service

Inherent in the application of new technologies is the potential for social and economic change. Tech can be harnessed to drive improvements in economic productivity. It can also facilitate development and delivery of services and products right across public and private sectors, and communities. The pace of development is extraordinarily rapid and many parliamentarians have expressed their concern that we are not well-placed to deal with the pace of change.

“We do not have the skills and understanding of the digital world at the top of our corporate, public and political life. This leads to a lack of high-quality decisions about our future - a future where so much will inevitably revolve around technology²³.”

Lady Lane-Fox, Founder, Lastminute.com and Go ON UK

Into this broad context of rapid change, comes the question of governance and government. Parliament must be able to carry out its role in legislating for, responding to, and managing an ever-changing global landscape of the ‘digital-first’ world.

The *ad hoc* committee, Parliament in a ‘Digital-First’ Society, would seek to answer questions under three main subject areas:

What skills, expertise and infrastructure does Parliament need to respond to the digital revolution?

Parliamentarians, officers and support staff need knowledge and understanding of the digital world in order to anticipate the impact of changes that are happening at such speed and scale. What are those skills? How might they be gained? What new roles and skills might need to be developed?

22 Bryan Glick, ‘Interview: Government digital chief Mike Bracken: why I quit’, *Computerweekly.com* (13 August 2015): <http://www.computerweekly.com/news/4500251662/Interview-Government-digital-chief-Mike-Bracken-why-I-quit> [accessed 5 January 2018]

23 HL Deb, 16 January 2014, [cols 393–396](#)

Former Prime Minister, Tony Blair, in a recent report²⁴ suggested the creation of a new Government department entirely devoted to technology and an independent ‘Office for Policy Simulation’. What would these bring to Government?

Taking legislation through Parliament is time-consuming and analogue in our processes. What do digital technologies have to offer that process?

During the passage of the Data Protection Bill, there have been repeated calls for an Ethics Council. Several peers felt data ethics and ethics around digital life require an independent body that could take a long view. Is that necessary, and what might it look like?

Many firms are undergoing digital transformation programmes. What would a digital transformation of Parliament mean to the everyday workings of both houses?

How do we make sure that legislation is fit for the digital environment?

Much of our legislation predates the impact of digital technologies. How does that change its intentions and efficacy, and might we need a ‘Harmonisation Bill’?

The UK’s legislative, regulatory and policy response to the digital environment is intricately tied to the EU. Which of these European structures and expertise do we need to reproduce in the UK?

How does Parliament ensure that it routinely considers digital when scrutinising legislation? Do we need a pool of the ‘digitally competent’ to answer questions that come up in other bills—in the style of the Constitution Committee or Delegated Powers Committee?

Universality, jurisdiction and enforcement are perennial problems. What bodies, resources and actions do we need to take in order to work with the global community?

Does Government have sufficient digital knowledge and infrastructure to govern in a digital age?

Large scale IT projects, such as Universal Credit and NHS patient information consolidation, have overrun on time and cost, yet more large—scale transformation will be needed. What additional procurement, management and technical skills are necessary? Is there anything to be learnt from the introduction of the Government Digital Service?

Data has the capacity to create security risks for governments. The Data Protection Bill tries to anticipate them, but do we need a more 21st Century approach to data? What risks do different departments have? What are other parliaments doing?

How do we govern for all UK citizens, including those with limited access, disabilities, vulnerabilities and limited capacity, as we move to ‘digital-first’ public services and Government departments?

An *ad hoc* committee is an ideal vehicle to ask these questions and to gather the expertise to consider the digital needs of parliamentarians, Parliament and Government.

The House of Lords has undertaken some excellent inquiries into particular policy areas of digital life, including the Communications Committee’s report ‘Growing Up with the Internet’, the recent ‘Future of Work’ debate, and the ongoing work of the Artificial Intelligence Committee. But there is a growing consensus that we need

24 Tony Blair Institute for Global Change, ‘Technology for the Many: A Public Policy Platform for a Better, Fairer Future’ (11 November 2017): <https://institute.global/insight/renewing-centre/technology-many-public-policy-platform-better-fairer-future> [accessed 5 January 2018]

a more holistic approach to understanding and governing the digital environment, and the outcomes of new technology.

The House of Lords is well-served with knowledge in this area and can call upon peers with expertise in how digital has changed education, harms, childhood, entrepreneurship, business and security.

I would envisage an inquiry lasting a year, with perhaps some twenty oral evidence hearings, one or two visits to ensure national and devolved interests are fully explored, and a call for evidence that will look at one or two international initiatives that may impact on the issues in front of us. All in all, allowing in-depth consideration of the range of issues presented by the topic.

KIDRON

Letter from Lord Black of Brentwood

Pets and Society

Pets and society: ensuring the highest standards of pet welfare and delivering the benefits of pet ownership for human wellbeing.

Summary

This is a proposal for an inquiry to examine how responsible pet ownership and compliance with the five welfare needs of animals, as set out in the Animal Welfare Act 2006, England and Wales and in other relevant interlocking legislation, can be ensured so that our standards of pet welfare are amongst the highest worldwide and an exemplar to other countries; to assess current knowledge and misconceptions amongst pet owners about pet welfare; to analyse trends in pet ownership including new popular extreme and exotic breeds; to explore pet purchasing practices, particularly online; to examine best practice education and information initiatives for current and future pet owners and identify opportunities for mainstreaming those initiatives; to review research into the benefits of pets to health, wellbeing and social isolation; and to make a set of recommendations for a modern and strategic approach to pet welfare and role of pets in society.

This issue covers a number of policy areas, and different Government departments, including Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs (Defra), the Department for Education, the Department of Health, the Department for Communities and Local Government and the Home Office. In light of the scale of pet ownership in the UK (over half of UK households²⁵) the Select Committee findings would impact on, and be relevant to, a significant proportion of the public and to a range of public, industry, professional and voluntary organisations working with people and pets.

The enquiry would involve a significant number of members of the House of Lords with interests in these areas. Although there are a wide range of cross-departmental issues to address, a report detailing a strategic approach to ensuring pet welfare and detailing the various societal and individual benefits pets can provide could be completed in one session.

Background—an issue with wide reach and interest

The UK is known as a nation of animal lovers and pets are enormously popular. The Government has clearly stated, in the context of the UK leaving the European Union, that it sees this as an opportunity to show its commitment to raising animal welfare

25 PDSA, *PDSA Animal Wellbeing (PAW) Report* (2017): https://www.pdsa.org.uk/media/3290/pdsa-paw-report-2017_online-3.pdf [accessed 5 January 2018]

standards and to ensuring enhanced protection for animals. Environment Secretary Michael Gove has said “As we leave the EU we will deliver a Green Brexit, not only maintaining but enhancing animal welfare standards²⁶.” He has stated “Animals are sentient beings who feel pain and suffering, so we are writing that principle into law and ensuring that we protect their welfare”. This Government commitment to ensuring welfare makes it especially timely to consider how the welfare of the nation’s pets can be ensured through enhanced awareness and application of the existing duty of care set out in the Animal Welfare Act 2006 for a pet owner to meet an animal’s five welfare needs. This enquiry, with its focus on pet animals, would complement the Government’s planned legislative programme of action to protect all animals.

The most recent PDSA report on the welfare of the UK’s pets (cats, dogs and rabbits)²⁷ shows that 51% of UK households own a pet. This equates to 10.3 million cats, 9.3 million dogs, and 1.1 million rabbits. 25% of the UK population has a pet cat and similarly 25% has a dog, many have both. The report ‘One Click Away’, which looked specifically at exotic animals, estimated that between 1.3 and 7 million reptiles and amphibians are kept as pets²⁸. The welfare of pets is therefore an important issue for a significant proportion of the public.

For owners the benefits of having a companion animal are very clear. 93% of owners believe their pet makes them happy, 88% believe owning a pet improves their life and 80% believe that a pet makes them mentally healthier. This suggests that demand for pets is unlikely to decrease. Furthermore, the internet has made pet purchasing much more accessible to many.

There are those that would like to have a pet but come across obstacles to ownership. With the existence of what is commonly referred to as “generation rent” animal welfare charities report relinquishments of pets due to private and social landlords having a “no pets policy”. Charities like Cats Protection²⁹, Dogs Trust³⁰ and RSPCA³¹ are working with letting agencies and landlords to encourage responsible pet policies that allow pets but also require owners to take steps to ensure pet welfare, such as neutering or limiting the number of pets per household.

With an ageing population there is also an increasing problem of pet owners going into care or sheltered accommodation and having to give up their much loved pets. Blue Cross research shows that 40% of care homes claim to be “pet friendly” but what this means is not clear or consistent and can mean residents have to give up their pets. The same survey found two thirds of UK older pet owners said they would be ‘devastated’ if they had to give up their pet to go into care and a quarter describing their pet as “family”³².

The Animal Welfare Act 2006 introduced a legal ‘duty of care’ for all pet owners to meet the welfare needs of their pets (Section 9). These requirements were split into five areas, which act as a simple framework:

26 Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, Press Release: *Environment Secretary publishes bill to strengthen animal welfare* (12 December 2017): <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/environment-secretary-publishes-bill-to-strengthen-animal-welfare> [accessed 5 January 2018]

27 PDSA, *PDSA Animal Wellbeing (PAW) Report* (2017): <https://www.pdsa.org.uk/media/3290/pdsa-paw-report-2017-online-3.pdf> [accessed 5 January 2018]

28 Blue Cross/Born Free, *One Click Away* (2015): <https://www.bluecross.org.uk/sites/default/files/downloads/one-click-away-full-report.pdf> [accessed 5 January 2018]

29 Cats Protection, *Purrfect Landlords*: www.cats.org.uk/purrfectlandlords [accessed 5 January 2018]

30 Lets with Pets: <http://www.letswithpets.org.uk/> [accessed 5 January 2018]

31 RSPCA Animal, ‘CAWF Awards’: <http://politicalanimal.org.uk/england/cawf-awards/> [accessed 5 January 2018]

32 Blue Cross, ‘Care home pet policies’: <https://www.bluecross.org.uk/carehomes> [accessed 5 January 2018]

- **Environment**—the need for a suitable environment
- **Diet**—the need for a suitable diet
- **Behaviour**—the need to be able to express normal behaviour
- **Companionship**—the need to live with, or apart from, other animals
- **Health**—the need to be protected from pain, suffering, injury and disease
- Codes of Practice provide owners and animal keepers with information on how to meet the animal welfare needs of their animals, as required under the Animal Welfare Acts 2006 (and 2011 in Northern Ireland).

George Eustice, Minister of State at the Defra has recently confirmed that there will be new statutory welfare codes for cats, dogs and horses laid in both Houses shortly³³.

Specific information initiatives do exist such as PDSA and Blue Cross' schemes offering specific advice to a pet owner with reference to the five welfare needs. PDSA's "PetWise MOTs" work with the owner to develop a traffic light scale and an action plan to improve the wellbeing of the pet. The Veterinary Animal Welfare Coalition³⁴ launched in November 2016 has been developing innovative materials and using social media (hashtag #WeWishYouKnew") to raise awareness of the five welfare needs. However, with only 39% of the population aware of the Animal Welfare Acts there is more to be done if we are to see a significant improvement in public awareness.

In December 2017 the Secretary of State for Defra announced publication of a draft Animal Welfare Bill (sentencing and recognition of sentience)³⁵ that will increase the maximum penalty for animal welfare offences under the Animal Welfare Act 2006 from six months to five years' imprisonment for those that commit serious crimes against animals. The Bill also sets out that the government "must have regard to the welfare needs of animals as sentient beings in formulating and implementing government policy".

In a written Ministerial Statement³⁶ to the House of Commons the Secretary of State said "The Government is committed to raising animal welfare standards, and to ensuring animals will not lose any recognitions or protections once we leave the EU' with the intention of setting a 'gold standard for animal welfare as we leave the EU". Ensuring that legislation and policy development respects the principle of animals, including pets, being sentient and maximising opportunities for the UK to lead the way on animal welfare are objectives consistent with the proposed scope of this inquiry.

The risk is that without an integrated, sustainable and strategic approach to raising public awareness of the five welfare needs and acknowledging that pets are sentient, the welfare of pets will be continually compromised. A new approach must encompass a wide range of stakeholders including (not an exhaustive list) children, teachers, parents, housing providers, health and care professionals, animal welfare charities, pet industry representatives, local government, enforcement agencies,

33 Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Sub-Committee, *Animal Welfare: domestic pets inquiry*: <https://www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/commons-select/environment-food-and-rural-affairs-committee/environment-food-and-rural-affairs-sub-committee/inquiries/parliament-2015/animal-welfare-domestic-15-16/> [accessed 5 January 2018]

34 British Veterinary Association (BVA), British Veterinary Nursing Association (BVNA), British Small Animal Veterinary Association, British Veterinary Zoological Society, RSPCA, PDSA and Blue Cross

35 Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, Press Release: *Environment Secretary publishes bill to strengthen animal welfare* (12 December 2017): <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/environment-secretary-publishes-bill-to-strengthen-animal-welfare> [accessed 5 January 2018]

36 HC Deb 12 December 2017, [cols 13–14WS](#)

public communication experts and veterinary professionals. In the absence of any such strategy the majority of the pet owning public may well remain ignorant of the new statutory welfare codes.

The problem

PDSA's latest research shows that only 39% of pet owners are familiar with the Animal Welfare Acts and the five welfare needs³⁷. Much more needs to be done to increase owner awareness of their legal obligation towards pets. Informing owners before they get a pet is crucial. 2016 PDSA statistics³⁸ show that over 5.2 million pet owners did no research at all before choosing their pet and only 5% of owners went to a veterinary practice for advice. This is undoubtedly leading to the diverse range of pet welfare issues witnessed by veterinary professionals and animal welfare charities. 2017 statistics include:

- 93,000 dogs are never walked at all
- almost 1.8 million dogs (19%) are left alone for 5 hours or more on a typical weekday
- around 40% of cats are thought to be overweight or to have obesity. Cats Protection cite various disorders and complications for which obesity is a risk factor including diabetes, breathing problems, heart problems, joint disease and osteoarthritis³⁹
- 3.6 million cats (35%) have not had a primary vaccination course when young.
- 34% of cat owners do not have any cat beds or any scratching posts for their cats.
- 56% of rabbit owners report that their rabbit lives alone, despite rabbits being highly social animals and best practice being to always keep rabbits with other neutered rabbits
- 35% of rabbits live in inadequate housing and 33% are not being fed the correct amount of hay, leading to serious and preventable dental and digestive problems
- Animal welfare charities see ongoing problems of pets being abandoned or given over to their care because the owner can't cope with the animal and/or its offspring.

Animals unsuitable as pets: some animals that are kept as pets may not be suited to a domesticated environment due to their complex welfare needs and requirements. Wild cat hybrids (a hybrid or cross breed of a domestic cat with exotic cats of a different species) are becoming more popular and available, particularly online. Hybrids such as Bengals, Savannah and Cheetah may be large, exotically marked and attractive but their temperament and behaviours can make them unsuitable household pets. Confinement to the house (to protect other cats and wildlife) may well be detrimental to the cat's wellbeing.

Keeping pets as primates raises specific welfare issues. There are an estimated 5,000 primates currently being kept as pets in the UK. Rescue groups such as the RSPCA and Wild Futures receive approximately one call a week relating to the welfare of a monkey. These incidents are on the rise. In sixty percent of the cases the RSPCA investigated, primates were being kept on their own and RSPCA confirm primates

37 PDSA, *PDSA Animal Wellbeing (PAW) Report* (2017): <https://www.pdsa.org.uk/media/3290/pdsa-paw-report-2017-online-3.pdf> [accessed 5 January 2018]

38 PDSA, *PDSA Animal Wellbeing (PAW) Report* (2016): <https://www.pdsa.org.uk/media/2628/pdsa-paw-report-2016-view-online.pdf> [accessed 5 January 2018]

39 Welfare Guide: Cats Protection (2017) National Cat Centre, Sussex

can suffer terribly in a domestic environment⁴⁰. Whilst there is recent survey evidence to show that “75% of brits” support a ban on keeping primates as pets there are no current Government plans to do so. In the absence of a ban, consumer advice pre-purchase about the welfare risks to primates kept as pets is essential.

Pets bred for their extreme characteristics: specific welfare concerns arise from dogs and cats bred with extreme characteristics (termed exaggerated conformations) such as flat faced (brachycephalic), short limbs (dwarfism), curled or folded ears (resulting in cartilage deformity), or without hair. Some of these breeds are becoming especially popular due to celebrity ownership such as the Scottish Fold cat (owned by Ed Sheeran). I recently raised this issue for debate in the Lords where the need for increased consumer awareness was acknowledged by the responsible Minister and speakers⁴¹.

Popular brachycephalic breeds of dog include pugs, French bulldogs, Boston terriers and English bulldogs. Many of these are now being smuggled in and sold to consumers who have little knowledge of the breed or how to care for it⁴². A survey by the Royal Veterinary College found that 58 % of short-nosed dog owners did not recognise the signs that their brachycephalic dog was struggling to breathe⁴³. The welfare issues with brachycephalic cats such as some Persians include breathing difficulties, tear duct abnormalities and tear overflow. Other extreme cat breeds have welfare issues such as hairless Sphynx (sunburn) and short limbed Munchkin cats (reduced mobility, difficulty jumping)⁴⁴. Cat breeding, unlike dog breeding is unregulated meaning that the safeguards that a licensing regime and associated inspection provide for the welfare of cats are not there. A consumer cannot seek out a licensed cat breeder, only a licensed commercial seller.

Advice to pet “consumers”: It is clear many pet owners have a poor awareness of a pet’s welfare needs and that a key factor is low levels of pre-purchase research. Over 5.2 million pet owners did no research at all before choosing their pet and only 5% of owners went to a veterinary practice for advice⁴⁵. A lot depends on where a pet is obtained. All the major animal welfare charities offer those adopting pets from them a wealth of veterinary approved advice and take great care to match the right pet to an owner’s circumstances. However, advice to the consumer from private sellers, particularly online, is of variable quality or non-existent. The Pet Advertising Advisory Group (PAAG)⁴⁶ comprised of charities, Government and industry stakeholders has been working on promoting responsible pet advertising which includes online provision of consumer advice. However, only a limited number of classified sites engage with PAAG. Consumers get pets from a variety of sources including community sites such as Facebook and direct from unscrupulous breeders or unlicensed pet sellers often operating with poor welfare and motivated more by money⁴⁷.

40 RSPCA, *Overwhelming support to end pet monkey trade with Westminster petition hand-in* (1 October 2017): <https://media.rspca.org.uk/media/pressreleases/details/-/articleName/PressOverwhelmingSupportToEndPetMonkeyTrade17Oct17> [accessed 5 January 2018]

41 HL Deb 13 September 2017, cols 2449–2452

42 Dogs Trust, ‘MPs unite with Dogs Trust in the fight against Puppy smuggling’ (6 December 2017): <https://www.dogstrust.org.uk/news-events/news/mps-unite-with-dogs-trust-in-the-fight-against-puppy-smuggling> [accessed on 5 January 2018]. As part of this campaign those looking for a puppy are urged to consider adoption from a charity where they will get a vet checked animal and receive pet care advice.

43 Blue Cross, ‘Things to think about before buying a flat-faced (brachycephalic) dog’: <https://www.bluecross.org.uk/pet-advice/things-think-about-buying-flat-faced-dog> [accessed 5 January 2018]

44 Welfare Guide (pages 84–88): Cats Protection (2017) National Cat Centre, Sussex

45 PDSA, *PDSA Animal Wellbeing (PAW) Report* (2016): <https://www.pdsa.org.uk/media/2628/pdsa-paw-report-2016-view-online.pdf> [accessed 5 January 2018]

46 Pet Advertising Advisory Group: www.paag.org.uk [accessed 5 January 2018]

47 Battersea Dogs & Cats Home, ‘End backstreet breeding’: <https://www.battersea.org.uk/support-us/campaigns/end-backstreet-breeding> [accessed 5 January 2018]

Crucially, the Government has just reviewed the licensing of Animal Establishments and this review, which is due to result in Regulations being laid during the 2018–2019 session, includes a review of regulations governing pet vending⁴⁸. Relevant to this inquiry Defra announced in its ‘Next Steps’ document that there will be a new mandatory licence condition requiring those who sell pets to provide the buyer with “information to cover the five freedoms in the Animal Welfare Act 2006⁴⁹”.

“Many pet sellers already supply such information, which is often freely available to download from welfare and industry groups. A number of sector groups have agreed to refine and develop such information where it needs updating or is not available” (Defra 2017).

An inquiry would explore with pet industry representatives and veterinary and animal welfare professionals how consumers can be better directed towards sources of consistent and accurate consumer information about a pet’s five welfare needs.

Pet owners of the future: Pets share our homes, and it’s essential that children also understand how to care for and respect animals in order to become responsible citizens and responsible pet owners when they grow up. An enquiry by the EFRA Committee into the welfare of domestic pets in 2016, recommended that the Government “examine how animal welfare can be incorporated into citizenship as part of the school curriculum”⁵⁰. The Government responded stating that “welfare issues can be already incorporated within school classes”. An enquiry would provide the opportunity to explore this further with teaching professionals and the many animal welfare charities that run educational programmes for children and community groups.

Pets helping with societal issues: an issue that is sadly a feature of modern society is that of loneliness and the fact that over 9 million adults are often or always lonely⁵¹. Loneliness is experienced across society from young people to parents, carers and older people. Pets can bring joy and companionship to people. In a PDSA survey (2016)⁵² the top five reasons stated why a pet makes a person happy include: more companionship than expected, helped me through a difficult situation/time in my life and has improved/increased family relationships. Research by Cats Protection and the Mental Health Foundation⁵³ found that 87% of people who owned a cat felt it had a positive impact on their wellbeing, while 76% said they could cope with everyday life much better due to the companionship of their cat.

I raised the issue of pets being an essential element of wellbeing in the context of the Care Act 2014 when it was a Bill passing through the Lords in 2013. The then Minister Earl Howe confirmed “A pet might be so important to an individual that their emotional well-being would depend in some way on their pet. If that is the case, a local authority will have to take it into consideration”⁵⁴. With over 3 years of

48 Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, *Animal welfare: reviewing animal establishments licensing in England* (20 December 2015): <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/animal-welfare-reviewing-animal-establishments-licensing-in-england> [accessed 5 January 2018]

49 Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, *Animal welfare: reviewing animal establishments licensing in England* (20 December 2015): <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/animal-welfare-reviewing-animal-establishments-licensing-in-england> [accessed 5 January 2018]

50 Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Committee, *Animal welfare in England: domestic pets* (Third Report, Session 2016–17, HC 117)

51 Jo Cox Loneliness, *Combating loneliness one conversation at a time: A call to action*: https://www.jocoxloneliness.org/pdf/a_call_to_action.pdf [accessed 5 January 2018]

52 PDSA, *PDSA Animal Wellbeing (PAW) Report* (2016): <https://www.pdsa.org.uk/media/2628/pdsa-paw-report-2016-view-online.pdf> [accessed 5 January 2018]

53 Cats Protection/Mental Health Foundation (2011) based on a sample size of 621 with data which was collected between July and August 2011 via Mental Health Foundation’s website/social networking sites. Cats Protection, Haywards Heath.

54 HL Deb, 3 July 2013, [cols 1227-1249](#)

implementation it would be timely to enquire of health and social care professionals how those with care needs are being helped to retain and care for their pets and ensure their pet's welfare.

The case for an inquiry, why now?

The duty of care towards pets as set out in the Animal Welfare Act 2006 has now passed its tenth anniversary. The Act was reviewed as part of a post-legislative assessment in December 2010. The assessment reflected that more needed to be done not only to educate the public on their responsibilities in terms of their duty of care, but also to raise awareness of the existence of the legislative requirements among pet owners. With only 39% of pet owners saying they are familiar with the Animal Welfare Acts and 27% stating they have never heard of them⁵⁵ much more needs to be done to increase owner awareness of their legal responsibilities towards pets.⁵⁶

An enquiry into how the welfare needs of our pets can be better met along with how pets can, if cared for correctly, provide societal benefits is timely. New pet welfare codes of practice under the Animal Welfare Act 2006 are expected in 2018. Next year will also see planned new Regulation on animal establishment licensing that will require information to be provided to pet purchasers. It is also timely to follow up the 2016 Efra enquiry report into the welfare of domestic pets and specifically its recommendation that “Government develop an ongoing partnership with animal welfare charities to educate the public in England about the 2006 Act”⁵⁷. Whilst good working partnerships undoubtedly exist between Government and the animal welfare sector a concern is that the provisions of the forthcoming new pet welfare codes and the five welfare needs will remain unknown to most of the pet owning public unless significantly more is done to raise public awareness. An important context for an enquiry into pet ownership and pet welfare is the Government commitment to enhancing animal welfare as we move towards leaving the European Union and the recent recognition by the Secretary of State that animals are sentient within the published Animal Welfare Bill.

Societal trends such as increasing numbers of people experiencing social isolation, an ageing population and a generation of home renters are all set to continue. This provides the opportunity to look at how those seeking or wanting to simply take their pets with them when they move, can be helped to do so. There is also scope to look in detail at how the benefits pets provide to individual and family health and wellbeing can be maximised in order to deliver policy objectives across Government for health, wellbeing and social isolation

Summary

This inquiry would:

- examine and clarify the individual and collective role of organisations involved in animal welfare, including Central and local Government, veterinary professionals, trade organisations, animal welfare charities, education providers, enforcement bodies, and identify areas needing more effective

55 PDSA, *PDSA Animal Wellbeing (PAW) Report* (2016): <https://www.pdsa.org.uk/media/2628/pdsa-paw-report-2016-view-online.pdf> [accessed 5 January 2018]

56 PDSA, *PDSA Animal Wellbeing (PAW) Report* (2017): <https://www.pdsa.org.uk/media/3290/pdsa-paw-report-2017-online-3.pdf> [accessed 5 January 2018]

57 Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Sub-Committee, *Animal Welfare: domestic pets inquiry*: <https://www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/commons-select/environment-food-and-rural-affairs-committee/environment-food-and-rural-affairs-sub-committee/inquiries/parliament-2015/animal-welfare-domestic-15-16/> [accessed 5 January 2018]

collaboration to significantly improve public awareness of responsible pet ownership

- identify measures needed to raise public education about, and understanding of, the welfare needs of pets, encourage responsible pet ownership, prevent poor pet welfare and assess the impact of existing initiatives and identify good practice for mainstreaming into wider policy delivery
- research the welfare issues linked to pets bred specifically for their extreme characteristics, including consideration of genetic defects and inherited disease and explore ways of informing and educating those seeking to purchase such a breed
- examine the welfare issues surrounding the keeping of animals that might be unsuitable to be kept as pets and the case for a ban
- assess opportunities for the five welfare needs to be incorporated within school classes and adult education and the case for including animal welfare specifically in the national curriculum
- assess the contribution pets can make to promoting individual wellbeing and health including helping to tackle societal issues such as social isolation
- research the extent to which people seeking to own a pet are deprived of the experience for reasons linked to housing tenure (private and social housing including care homes and sheltered accommodation)

Other core areas to cover could include:

- identifying commonly held mistaken beliefs or widely held myths that lead to pet welfare issues and looking at how best to combat them
- reviewing consumer motivations (popular breeds, affordable prices) and how this mitigates against them being receptive to welfare information at the point of sale
- exploring welfare issues specific to the breeding of cats given cat breeding is not regulated and whether current legislation provides adequate welfare protection/scope for consumer information
- identifying how evidence-based, educational material for pet purchasers can best be disseminated using a wide range of modes including printed and digital channels
- reviewing the role of community learning and informal education initiatives in encouraging an understanding of the welfare needs of pets.

This inquiry would involve consideration of various policy areas and Departments including Defra (Animal Welfare), Home Office (imported pets), Department of Health (wellbeing and health benefits), Department of Communities and Local Government (social services/housing and pets, licensing) Department for Education (children and adult education). It would therefore draw on a range of expertise across the House, for example those with experience of schools and education policy, animal welfare and behaviour, veterinary standards, consumer motivations and behaviours, housing provision and pet policies, individual wellbeing, social isolation and the role of animal welfare charities in society.

A wide ranging inquiry in the Lords encompassing the full range of pet species would allow these issues to be examined more closely.

BLACK OF BRENTWOOD

Letter from the Earl of Sandwich

Prescribed Drug Dependence and Withdrawal

Prescribed drugs like opiates, painkillers, benzodiazepines and Z-drugs, while of undoubted benefit to people with the relevant conditions, are easily over-subscribed and lead to dependence and withdrawal. Such drugs – Valium is a very common example – are legally prescribed for 4–6 weeks, on average, but some doctors are more tolerant or persuadable than others and some patients are able to obtain drugs for an almost indefinite period. Once addicted, a person will need to withdraw from these drugs through tapering and this can be a long and very painful experience.

It is hard to believe that there are virtually no government or NHS services for these patients. In a very few areas like Bristol and parts of Lancashire there are small voluntary organisations that try to cope, often staffed by those who have had the experience themselves. Very occasionally it has been possible to find expertise in the NHS or a local primary care trust at an individual level. But while addiction to illegal drugs like heroin receives a lot of attention and funding, prescribed drug addiction gets almost nothing.

For some years I have been a member of the All Party Group on this subject, having had a personal interest as described below. I have introduced questions and debates over several years and we have had some success in discussions with three successive health ministers, though in every meeting it seems as though the Department of Health may be about to respond positively, but nothing happens. The current hope is that the DoH may support a national Helpline. This would be a minimal response since it would come out of current budgets, bearing in mind that any illness will be a cost to society.

Responding to your criteria directly, I do believe that this committee would make use of the knowledge and experience of Members of the House.

Lord Patel, Lady Masham, Lady Hollins, Lord Luce and I are just some of the members who attend the APPG regularly alongside a handful of MPs. The committee would also complement the work of the Health select committee because that committee did report on this subject some years ago. The subject does cross departmental boundaries, namely health and social services. The activity proposed would certainly be capable of being confined to one session but by doing that would make a huge contribution to the wider debate.

Declaring my personal interest, a member of my family was put on successive benzodiazepines and one of his doctors encouraged him to withdraw abruptly and without tapering. He was then so ill that for several years he was almost confined to his room and had to give up his job, finding it extremely hard to live a normal family life and to take his children to school. However, he has since recovered and he and a group of psychiatrists, drawing partly on material from the US, have put together a huge body of evidence on the effects of prescribed drugs that would be available to the committee. There are publications, i.e. by Dr James Davies, and the media have also published case studies from time to time that would be useful.

I very much hope that the Liaison Committee will give this proposal a fair wind.

SANDWICH

Letter from Lord Alton of Liverpool

Prosecution of those responsible for genocide and crimes of humanity

An inquiry to examine: how determinations of genocide and crimes against humanity are made; what obligations the UK has under the Convention on the Prevention

of Genocide; the role of the Security Council and International Criminal Court bringing to justice those responsible.

Context

The current policy of the UK Government is to refrain from expressing an opinion as to whether or not a genocide has occurred, insisting instead that this determination is a matter for international judicial bodies. The International Criminal Court relies on the United Nations Security Council to instruct action. At present, no regional or *ad hoc* tribunals exist, contributing to a cycle of inertia. The government is collecting evidence of crimes committed by Daesh but has no mechanism for moving prosecutions forward for crimes committed by members of Daesh, the Assad Regime, their allies, and others.

The Government has repeatedly promised action against those who commit genocide and crimes against humanity. Before taking office, the Foreign Secretary published his opinion that the actions of Daesh constitute genocide. Since his appointment, Mr Johnson has urged the UN ‘to begin the vital gathering and the preserving, of evidence of Daesh’s crimes.’ The Foreign Secretary has assured Parliament that the Government is ‘assembling the evidence ... most suited to bringing these people to justice’.

The Foreign and Commonwealth Office promises that ‘People seeking to travel to engage in terrorist activity in Syria or Iraq should be in no doubt that the UK will take the strongest possible action to protect national security, including prosecuting those who break the law.’ Despite these statements, no suspected perpetrators of genocide or crimes against humanity in Iraq and Syria have been prosecuted by the UK Government.

Key events

On 21 December 2015, 75 members of both Houses wrote to the Prime Minister urging action in support of religious and ethnic minorities in the Middle East.

On 18th January 2016, senior jurists, including the former Chancellor, wrote to the Prime Minister lamenting the inability of a judicial mechanism with which the UK could declare that it believed the legal threshold for genocide to be met.

Throughout 2016 numerous international bodies have declared the actions of Daesh to be genocide, including, the US Congress, the European Parliament, the Parliamentary Council of Europe, Iraqi Parliament, Australian House of Representatives, and the Commission on International Religious Freedom.

On the 17th March 2016, US Secretary of State John Kerry declared the actions of Daesh to be genocide.

On the 18th March 2016 the International Association of Genocide Scholars, the world’s largest organisation of experts on genocide, called upon the United Nations and all its member states to declare that the crimes committed by Daesh genocide.

On the 20th March 2016, the House of Commons voted unanimously to declare the actions of Daesh genocide.

On the 21st March 2016, in resisting an amendment which sought to create a judicial mechanism for the determination of genocide, it was suggested by the Minister that a Motion for debate should be tabled. The Motion appeared as an “Other Motion” the following day, and has been on the Order Paper every sitting day since. The Government has not allocated time to debate the motion.

On 19 September 2016, the UK government (together with the Belgian and Iraqi governments) announced its plan to bring the Daesh perpetrators to justice.

In July 2017 the House debated the abuse of human rights in North Korea and heard calls for charges to be laid against those responsible.

In September 2017 the UN Security Council passed a Resolution (proposed by the UK) that we begin collecting evidence about genocide against minorities in Iraq and Syria.

In October 2017 the House debated the plight of Rohingyas subjected to Crimes against humanity – with many peers calling for a referral of those responsible.

“Makes best use of the knowledge and experience of Members of the House”

Colleagues with particular expertise which have spoken recently on these issues include:

Baroness Butler-Sloss Q.C., Lord Carlile Q.C., Lord Brennan Q.C., Lord Pannick Q.C., Lord Mackay of Clashfern Q.C., Baroness Nicholson of Winterbourne, Baroness Kennedy of The Shaws Q.C. Baroness Cox of Queensbury, Lord Forsyth, and Lord Marlesford, Lord Campbell of Pitternween, Baroness Helic.

Other expert colleagues capable of making extremely valuable contributions include:

Lord Hope of Craighead, former Deputy President of the Supreme Court of the United Kingdom.

Lord Stirrup, former Chief of Defence Staff, has a detailed knowledge of Iraq.

Baroness Symons of Vernham Dean, former junior Foreign Office Minister, former Minister of State for the Middle East. Member EU External Affairs Sub-Committee.

Lord Judge, former Lord Chief Justice of England and Wales.

Lord Trimble, as former First Minister for Northern Ireland professor of law and barrister. Experience as an observer to the Israeli special independent public Turkel Commission of Inquiry into the Gaza flotilla raid. Member of the Human Rights Joint Committee and the National Security Strategy Joint Committee.

Lord Woolf, as former Lord Chief Justice of England and Wales and as a member of the Privy Council he conducted a review of the working methods of the European Court of Human Rights.

Lord Hannay of Chiswick, member of the All Party Parliamentary Group on the United Nations, International Relations Committee, Intergovernmental Organisations Committee, vast experience as former ambassador to the UN. Lord Hannay is a member of UN Secretary-General’s High-Level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change.

Lord Wood of Anfield, chair of the United Nations Association, UK and member of the All Party Parliamentary Group on the United Nations, emeritus fellow of Politics at Magdalen College Oxford, and Fellow of Practice at the Blavatnik School of Government in Oxford.

Baroness Kinnock of Holyhead, former Shadow Spokesperson for International Development, former Minister of State for Africa and UN and former Minister of State for Europe. Member of the All Party Parliamentary Group on Genocide Prevention. Baroness Kinnock is also Council Member of the European Council on Foreign Relations.

Lord Evans of Weardale, was Director-General of the British Security Service, the United Kingdom’s domestic security and counter-intelligence service.

Complement the work of Commons Departmental Select Committees

The proposed Committee would compliment but not replicate the current work of numerous House Committees.

Open inquiries undertaken by the Foreign Affairs Committee include, Human Rights: Annual review of the work of the FCO, The fight against ISIL, UK policy on Libya and UK policy on Syria.

The Home Affairs Committee is running an inquiry on Countering Extremism.

There is also scope for crossover with the International Development Committee and the Justice Committee.

Address areas of policy that cross departmental boundaries

It is envisaged that officials would be invited to submit evidence in a focused session. Witnesses could be drawn from some of the following departments, and submissions sought from others.

Ministerial Departments	Non-Ministerial Departments
Foreign and Commonwealth Office	Crown Prosecution Service
Ministry of Justice	Government Legal Department
Ministry of Defence	National Counter Terrorism Security Office
Home Office	The Security Service
Attorney General’s Office	

Be capable of being confined to one session

On April 20th, 2016, the House of Commons voted to recognise genocide of ethnic and religious minorities in Iraq and Syria. Since then, the Government has reverted to its position that determination of genocide must be a matter for the international judicial system. It has also failed to act on the UN Commission of Inquiry which called on the Security Council to refer the North Korean regime to the ICC for crimes against humanity and no judicial remedies have been sought for those responsible for the Rohingya and other refugee crises.

The international judicial system is ill-equipped to approach the matter in the absence of political pressure from constituent governments, which itself depends upon having legal mechanisms providing a platform for action.

Creative thinking is needed to find a way out of this catch-22. This inquiry would not seek to reach a global diplomatic consensus on approached to suspected genocide and crimes against humanity, but to examine technical ways that the U.K. may move forward. With the concentration of expertise in the House of Lords and narrow nature of the brief, the necessary ground could be covered in a single, well-managed session divided into evidence-taking and problem-solving sections.

ALTON OF LIVERPOOL

Letter from the Countess of Mar

Provision of Health and Social Care, Social Security Benefits and private insurance for people who suffer medically unexplained symptoms (MUS)

1. There are a number of medical conditions with symptoms that are believed to be beyond standard medical diagnosis. These include myalgic encephalomyelitis/chronic fatigue syndrome (ME/CFS), fibromyalgia, irritable bowel syndrome, chronic Lyme disease and Gulf War Illnesses.
2. Patients with one or more of these conditions frequently find themselves sidelined and not believed by medical and social professionals – indeed they can be so badly denigrated that they become demoralised.
3. Because there are few, if any, effective treatments, their contact with the medical profession becomes rare and, as a result, because medical evidence is required for the benefits of social security, private insurance and social care their applications are refused.
4. There is growing evidence that there are very real biological explanations for these conditions, but the establishment are very slow to accept it and continue to recommend psychological therapies which at best do not provide recovery and, at worst, can exacerbate symptoms.
5. Once a patient has a MUS diagnosis co-morbidities which are treatable are ignored.
6. As many as 40% of patients attending two chronic fatigue clinics were found not to have ME/CFS but did have conditions for which chronic fatigue is a symptom—conditions which were eminently treatable, so there is a problem with the initial diagnosis.
7. Whilst public funding for research into these conditions is improving, it is still a drop in the ocean compared with that for all other medical conditions and has, for many years, concentrated on psychosocial/behavioural aspects rather than biomedical ones.
8. NICE has acknowledged that the current CFS/ME Guideline is no longer fit for purpose and are in the process of rewriting it, but it will not be ready for publication until 2020.
9. There are too many (in the case of ME/CFS about 260,000) patients enduring pain, misery, rejection and poverty because of our failure to believe them. I believe that an in-depth, cross departmental study might help to alleviate their suffering.

MAR

Letter from Baroness Valentine

Regenerating seaside towns

The challenges facing seaside towns are attracting increasing policy and media attention. A recent SMF study found that in 85% of Britain's coastal communities, people earned below the average in 2016, with employees in seaside communities paid about £3,600 less; and that the gap with non-coastal communities is growing.

Headline income numbers are symptomatic of complex and interrelated challenges, including: the decline of seaside tourism; oversupply of cheap, poor quality housing; high levels of population transience; poor physical and mental health; poor transport

and infrastructure; above average levels of substance abuse; low life expectancy and poor educational attainment.

Various policy initiatives over the last twenty years, often focussed on the physical regeneration of seaside towns, have failed to turn the picture around.

An *ad-hoc* inquiry would draw on the skills and experience of Peers across the wide variety of challenges faced by seaside towns and would specifically examine integrated regeneration models, where economic development, physical infrastructure and community capacity building are addressed together. By analysing the challenges facing seaside towns and examining evidence of successful integrated regeneration schemes addressing similar challenges here and abroad, the *ad hoc* inquiry will make evidence-based policy recommendations for coastal towns that cut across departmental and administrative boundaries to rebuild healthy communities in our seaside.

VALENTINE

Letter from Lord Lisvane

Rural Economy

“Rural economy” is a convenient shorthand for a wide range of issues on which a Lords Select Committee could make a real difference, especially in the co-ordination of Government policy, which at the moment is far from joined-up.

The sector is highly significant economically: in 2016 rural areas of England contributed an estimated £229 billion to England’s total economy in terms of gross value added (about a fifth of England’s total economic activity)⁵⁸. Although aspects of the British rural economy are devolved, there is much scope for assessing different policy approaches as well as cross-border co-ordination.

The following (by no means exhaustive) list of some key issues in the rural economy and rural society indicate the possible scope and reach of a Select Committee on this topic:

- Prospects for agriculture, fisheries, forestry, rural industry and the rural service sector after Brexit
- Possibilities of regional devolution (especially in the context of repatriation of powers)
- Funding issues, and the sparsity factor, affecting police, fire and rescue and the ambulance service
- Effectiveness of the NHS in rural areas (including cross-border issues)
- The role of rural areas in achieving the Government’s house-building target, and the availability of affordable homes in rural areas
- The problems of maintaining viable and vibrant communities in rural areas, particularly in terms of accommodation and employment for younger individuals and families
- Digital connectivity, especially in the context of distance working as an economic driver, and mobile coverage
- Rural transport and infrastructure

⁵⁸ House of Lord Library, *Rural Economy: Key Statistics and Recent Developments*, Library Note, [LLN-2016-0020](#), April 2016. Non-metropolitan areas account for 56% of England’s economic output: see Local Government Association briefing for debate on 2 November 2017.

- Rural loneliness and isolation (especially affecting those on low incomes, and, of those, particularly the elderly)
- Social cohesion, including the role of faith groups and especially (because of the parish structure) the Church of England
- Flooding and measures to alleviate it
- Possible sources of new investment and economic activity, such as new industries and universities
- Skills investment
- Implications of financial pressures on local authorities

Turning to the criteria for selection set out in the Senior Deputy Speaker’s email request for suggestions:

Makes best use of the knowledge and experience of Members of the House

The variety of experience and expertise among Members would be ideally suited to this subject, which has attracted considerable interest in the House: see, for recent examples: QSD on the state of the rural economy (27 April 2016); debates on the UK rural economy (8 July 2016) the rural economy (2 November 2017); post-Brexit opportunities for agriculture and fisheries (3 November 2017); Question on rural poverty (5 December 2017).

Moreover, a Select Committee on this subject would demonstrate a country-wide reach and concern on the part of the House, which is often represented in the media as being too focused in its membership and interest upon London and the South-East.

Complements the work of Commons Departmental Select Committees

The cross-cutting nature of such a Committee (see below) would be an ideal complement to the Departmental focus of the Commons Select Committee system.

Addresses areas of policy that cross Departmental boundaries

This would be a key characteristic of a Select Committee on the Rural Economy. A failure to join up the work of individual Government Departments (and local government), and to co-ordinate policy, continues to be a major problem for the rural economy, and misses opportunities for more effective approaches.

The activity proposed should be capable of being confined to one year

A well-planned and disciplined inquiry should certainly be capable of being carried out in one year.

LISVANE

Letter from Lord Faulkner of Worcester

Scrap Metal Dealers Act

Background

The 2013 Act was passed following massive public concern about the incidence of metal theft, and the ease with which stolen items could be “fenced”, often with cash sales and no questions asked.

Initially, following the passage of the Act, the number of metal theft incidents plummeted. There were a number of contributory factors, such as continued, dedicated enforcement, overseen by a new task metal task force, prohibition on the

use of cash, and a decline in the global price of metal. The role of the British Transport Police, as lead enforcement authority, was particularly important.

Confident, therefore, that the Act was working, the Government withdrew funding for the metal theft taskforce. It now appears that this may have been short-sighted, as the incidence of metal theft is again increasing (as metal prices have risen again). Examples reported to me include All Saints Church in Dunton Bassett, Leicestershire, which has been targeted three times; railway lines in Abergavenny and Deeside have both suffered disruption due to cable theft; a war memorial on Victoria Embankment in Nottingham saw lead ripped off a statue; and, thieves stole metal statues from cemeteries in Hoddesdon and Cheshunt in Hertfordshire. More recently I have heard that some of the old metal theft targets, such as storm drain covers and statues in cemeteries are being taken again, and in the last month the Cast Metals Federation say that two of their members had ingot and other metals stolen from their sites. This supports my view that the situation is worsening at a far greater rate than the Office for National Statistics data (quoted by the Home Office) suggests.

Moreover, I am also hearing that whilst in the past thefts were seemingly opportunistic and involved small quantities, now 50m² of lead or 2km of cable is being stolen at once. Worryingly, these larger crimes are now more likely to be the work of organised crime gangs, and may lead to the stolen items being sent overseas in secure containers.

I believe that metal theft is on the increase, in part, because the criminal element knows that there is no longer a dedicated metal taskforce and that metal theft is often seen as a ‘victimless’ crime. But the impact of metal theft goes far beyond the cost of replacing the metal. In some cases, the theft of lead from churches was not noticed immediately leading to more damage. It took rail operators three days to get back to normal following the cable theft near Abergavenny, which affected not just the operator but also the network users.

The perception that there is little danger of detection is having another consequence too. We are seeing an increasing number of operators choosing openly to break the law and pay cash for scrap metal. Not only does this create an uneven playing field for the legal operators but, assuming that operators willing to act illegally by paying cash are more likely to do so in other ways, it creates an easy means for thieves to dispose of stolen metal.

A post-legislative enquiry

I submit that there is more than enough material to justify a select committee enquiry, particularly in the light of the conflicting statistics. It would look at whether the scrap metal task force should be reconstituted, whether the ambiguities contained in the 2013 Act relating to enforcement – such as the anomaly that whilst the Act says it is illegal to pay cash for scrap, but not to receive cash for scrap – need to be tidied up, whether sufficient priority is being given by police forces and enforcement bodies such as the Environment Agency to tackling this crime, and whether the 2013 Act needs to be strengthened to deal with these matters.

There would be a wide range of interesting—and interested—witnesses, such as the British Metals Recycling Association, legitimate traders, the Cast Metals Federation, the British Transport Police and other civilian police bodies, local authority associations, the Church of England, Network Rail, electricity and telecommunications companies, the War Memorials Trust, and of course, the Home Office.

In terms of the Liaison Committee’s criteria for selection, an inquiry would make good use of the range of knowledge and experience in the House of Lords, cutting across as it does administrative, legal and stakeholder interests. In terms of post-legislative scrutiny the timing is good too, as five years will have elapsed since the passage of the Act – enough to see what is, and what is not, working in practice. Lastly, I believe that such an inquiry, whilst broad, should be easily manageable within the nine months or so which in practice are available to *ad hoc* committees for their inquiry.

FAULKNER OF WORCESTER

Letter from the Earl of Caithness

Soil

Soil has been a neglected subject. Life on our planet depends on air, water and soil. As I said in the House on Thursday

“In comparison to air and water, nothing has been done about that other fundamental asset—soil. We know that 95% of food production relies on healthy soil, antibiotics come from soil as does a quarter of the world’s biodiversity. The red warning light is blazing at us. Loss of topsoil and agricultural land is a problem across the world especially at a time of rising populations.

Over the last 200 years we have lost 84% of our fertile topsoil in East Anglia. It is estimated that what remains could be eradicated in the next 30–60 years. In the lives of our children and grandchildren the bread basket of the UK could become an infertile wasteland, with few farms and very limited biodiversity. On average, soil degradation costs the economy of England and Wales £1.2 billion every year and that will rise.”

A short report on this subject would be very useful for any government. There are bits of work on this subject but they have not been drawn together and the evidence might guide us as to where future research could be most beneficial.

We have the interest and expertise in the House; the work would complement the work of both House’s committees on the environment and farming; it addresses areas of policy that cross departmental boundaries and will certainly affect planning and development policy throughout the country’ it is capable of being confined to one session.

CAITHNESS

Letter from Baroness Campbell of Surbiton

Support for working age disabled people to live independently and participate in wider society as equal citizens

I wish to propose that an *Ad Hoc* Committee is established:

To examine the degree to which public resources can be better invested to support working age disabled people to live independently and participate in wider society as equal citizens.

The Committee will investigate:

- The most effective ways to invest public resources to support and enable working age disabled people to live independently and to participate fully in the economy and wider society.

- What steps may need to be taken by the government to ensure that it and future governments can meet the UK's obligations to protect, promote and ensure disabled people's right to live independently and to be included in the community

Rationale

- The Government has recently announced that it will launch a Green Paper on the funding of social Care for older people by Spring 2018. A separate parallel (non-Green Paper) process, was then announced to explore the long-term funding of support for working age disabled people. Disabled people under retirement age currently utilise 50 per cent of the social care budget, therefore require parity of scrutiny and reform to meet the demands of 21st-century society. This proposed inquiry, will inform this crucial debate and help ensure that sustainable social support for working-age disabled people is given equal attention to that of older people.
- In order to live independently and participate in society and the economy, many disabled people require financial or practical support. This includes people with learning disabilities, people with mental health conditions and people with physical impairments. Ensuring adequate community-based supports are available lies at the heart of achieving the Government's ambitions of seeing one million more disabled people in employment; of significantly reducing levels of mental health detention and of enabling people with learning disabilities to return from institutional settings to their families and communities.
- The Government has said 'Our vision for care must also incorporate the wider networks of support and services which help older people to live independently, including the crucial role of housing and the interaction with other public services'. Likewise, my vision for independent living for working age disabled people must look beyond health and social care. The contribution of support in education and employment, supported housing, community and peer support networks, and general participation in community life, all play a significant part in making independent living possible for disabled people.
- Currently, numerous obstacles prevent this adequate and effective support reaching those who require it, despite the good intentions of policy and legislation. The level of available funding is a significant issue, although it is not, (by far), the sole factor. Asking how well existing public resources are being invested, across the spectrum of services and benefits, to enable and support independent living, is as important as ensuring that the overall financial envelope is sufficient to meet current and future requirements.
- In addition to inform the Government's thinking on the future of support for working age disabled people, this proposed inquiry will review progress made on implementing the recommendations of the 2012 Joint Parliamentary Committee on Human Rights Inquiry into implementation of disabled people's right to live independent living.

I envisage the following outcomes of the Committee's deliberations:

- Identify how effectively resources from publicly funded support services are at delivering independent living.
- Seek out alternative ideas where independent living support is organised and delivered differently, with better outcomes for disabled people, government and wider society

- Propose ways to develop an efficient and effective integrated support system, whereby young and working age disabled people, are able to live in the community and participate as equal citizens.
- Explore possible benefits of alternative legislative frameworks, to advance working age disabled people's right to live independently and to participate in the community.

CAMPBELL OF SURBITON

Letter from Lord Blencathra

What will the Lords do after Brexit to use our incredible expertise currently working on EU Scrutiny

At the moment we have The European Union Committee and six sub-committees all doing incredibly worthy work but with the frustration that we cannot change one comma of any EU regulation. I served on one and we would slap the Minister's wrist for being late with a memorandum or failing to take a negotiation line we suggested but otherwise we were powerless to change anything.

The special reports our six sub committees do are exemplary in their analysis and conclusions but cannot change anything either. They are superb pieces of Parliamentary material but they require Commons backing or a lot of public and media support for them to influence or change government policy.

We all know that these Committees work hard and occupy the time of a great many able peers.

Of course they are all exceptionally busy just now in Brexit reporting but at some point after 29th March 2019 we will have absolutely nothing to do.

It is possible, indeed likely as the EUW Bill foresees, that some sections of our business will leave at dates later than 29 March 2019 so there may continue to be some scrutiny but the fundamental change is that there will no longer be any EU Directives or Regulations to scrutinise.

That is a tremendous challenge and an opportunity.

The challenge for the Government will be that whereas most EU secondary legislation at the moment, made under the 1972 Act, is protected from Judicial Review on the basis that it is not a UK government Minister exercising his discretion but merely enacting exactly what the EU demands, that will all change. Every new S.I. made after the 29 March 2019 will be made under powers in the EUW Bill, retained EU legislation (which is then UK Legislation) or other current Acts of Parliament or new ones such as a Fishing Act and Farming Act and others we may pass before we leave. Inevitably the whole JR industry will gear up to challenge everything and the Government might find it convenient to have the defence of proper Parliamentary scrutiny as a defence.

The opportunity is that it gives the Commons and the Lords a real opportunity to participate properly in the formulation of secondary legislation. We could simply continue rubber stamping affirmatives and negatives but both Houses, but the Lords in particular, will have ample opportunity to look at secondary legislation and recommend changes. Indeed we could be involved at the formative stages and see the regs in draft, hold very quick public consultations on them, recommend improved versions etc. Of course the Government must have the right to put through what it considers to be important or urgent S.I.s but if we develop a helping working relationship with the Government then we could be seen as part of the solution. I

am not suggesting being a Government stooge and we will still have the right to slam the Government if we think that they have got it wrong.

We rightly boast that we are “a revising chamber” and we do a superb job revising primary legislation. I am suggesting that we could do a similar job revising secondary legislation as well, within defined parameters, of course, so that the Government could still get its business. I think that the Commons Procedure Committee has also identified that once we are no longer making “non judicially reviewable” EU regulations but our own home grown ones then there will be an explosion of JR and it would help the Government if SI s were “tagged” as having had Parliamentary scrutiny. I strongly believe that when we get our country back and our law making powers back then Parliament should be involved. I equally strongly believe in keeping money making lawyers out of ministerial and Parliamentary decision making.

We could also do a lot of post S.I. Scrutiny and like a Consolidation Committee recommend S.I.s for amalgamation, revision or repeal.

Of course we may still need one EU Committee which monitors what is happening in Brussels but we will have the opportunity to utilise the considerable knowledge skills of peers to make sure that all future S.I.s are fit for purpose.

We can make a real difference.

Otherwise I come back to the point—if we do not do this—what on earth will we do after March 2019?

BLENCATHRA

Letter from Baroness Hollins

Working age adults living with a Learning Disability and the provision of comprehensive and integrated services

“Learning disability” means a disability which includes the presence of a significantly reduced ability to understand new or complex information or to learn new skills, with a reduced ability to cope independently, and which started before adulthood, with a lasting effect on development.

According to Public Health England there are 1,118,179 adults with a learning disability in the UK. Despite this being a sizeable portion of the population, services have struggled to address stubborn inequalities in health and employment as well as community inclusion.

A failure to identify people with learning disabilities early in life and provide intensive interventions for problems arising from co-morbid autism and other neurodevelopmental conditions can lead to communication and behavioural difficulties which may then persist throughout life.

The majority of people living with learning disabilities are adults who have received inadequate education, care and support in childhood and often experienced more trauma and loss than other adults. This *ad hoc* committee would examine different aspects of the lives that adults with learning disabilities currently experience and address factors that could be expected to improve their quality of life.

This scope would span a number of different departments and draw on skills and knowledge from Members across the House. The Committee would also complement the work of the Public Accounts Committee and their Inquiry ‘Care for people with learning disabilities’ the report of which was published in April 2017. It would further build on the work of the Post Legislative Scrutiny Committee on the Mental Capacity Act, which reported in 2014, and the 2016 Lords Committee which looked

at the Equality Act, and its impact on disability discrimination. Its work would draw on the findings of the consultation on the Improving lives: work, health and disability green paper, and inform the development of forthcoming policy on adult social care.

An *ad hoc* committee inquiry examining this topic could consider questions under the following themes:

Public services and the extent to which people are able to access:

- (a) Further and adult education;
- (b) Employment services, and in particular, access to—
 - (i) Work experience,
 - (ii) Tailored career advice, and
 - (iii) Apprenticeships;
- (c) Housing and supported housing services and, in particular, the option to live independently close to family with appropriate support;
- (d) Recreational services and, in particular, whether reasonable adjustments are being made to encourage participation;
- (e) Public transportation services, and whether free provision could improve access to education, employment and recreational activities and support maintaining family and personal relationships;
- (f) Financial services to avoid financial exclusion.

Education, Health and Care and:

- (a) How well education, health and care (EHC) needs assessments and plans are working in practice as provided for in the Children and Families Act 2014, and whether these should continue after young persons in receipt of an EHC plan reach the age of 25;
- (b) Whether local authorities are meeting their general responsibilities under sections 1 to 9 of the Care Act 2014, and if not, how this should be addressed;
- (c) Whether it would be feasible for local authorities to collect and publish data comparing health outcomes for adults with learning disabilities with the general population in their area; and
- (d) Whether the Secretary of State should, in exercising his or her powers under section 100 of the Care Act 2014 (objectives, priorities and outcomes), include as an objective for Health Education England the provision of specialist training for delivering all health services to adults with learning disabilities.

Mental and physical healthcare services— seeking to find out the extent to which—

- (a) Local authorities and NHS bodies are meeting the public sector equality duty under section 1 of the Equality Act 2010 (public sector duty regarding socio-economic inequalities) and providing specialist training on delivering services to adults with learning disabilities;
- (b) A named key worker or service broker with power to engage necessary multidisciplinary assessment and support is provided;

- (c) Local authorities and NHS bodies have introduced measures to address the social and economic determinants of health and are cooperating with the National LD Mortality Review;
- (d) Sustainability and Transformation Partnerships have led to NHS bodies and local authorities working together in the provision of services; and
- (e) Joint cross agency financial incentives have replaced splintered financial mechanisms to improve early intervention, full community inclusion and participation.

HOLLINS

Letter from Baroness Meacher

UK Drug Policy

Proposed terms of reference: To consider the 1971 Misuse of Drugs Act in the light of the new United Nations commitment to evidence based, public health drug policies, and to make recommendations.

Explanation:

- The United Nations held a Special Session of their General Assembly on Drug Policy (UNGASS) in April 2016. During that Session the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime made clear that in future drug policy should be based upon evidence and the objective of promoting public health. It is now for individual Member States to consider their drug policies in the light of available evidence of efficacy, and to make adjustments.
- UK Drug Policy continues to be based upon the Misuse of Drugs Act of 1971, which in turn is based upon the 1961 UN Drugs Convention. Both the UK legislation and the UN Convention are driven by a moral judgement about drugs rather than upon clear objectives (reduced addiction levels; and reduced crime) or the evidence of the efficacy of national policy in achieving those objectives. Drug addiction and drug related crime are both exceptionally high in the UK. The UN now accepts that the 1961 Convention needs to be interpreted in the light of evidence which has been developed during the past half century.
- An *ad hoc* Committee would be of interest to Peers across the House. It would consider the 2016 position of the United Nations, and the available evidence of effective drug policies.

For information.

- The proposed *ad hoc* committee would make best use of the range of experience on all sides of the House on issues such prisons, mental health, general health, crime rates, poverty and deprivation.
- This committee would complement the earlier work of the Commons Home Affairs Committee but would have a wider remit (to cover health and poverty issues).
- The Committee would address areas of policy across departmental boundaries, in particular the Home Office, Ministry of Justice, Department of Health and DCLG.
- The work could be completed in one session.

MEACHER

Letter from Baroness Jay of Paddington

UK/US Special Relationship

After one year of the Trump Presidency and as the UK begins to develop a post BREXIT international policy it is time to reassess the so called ‘special relationship’ between this country and the United States of America.

Is the Special Relationship Dead?

The trans-Atlantic partnership has always been seen as a central pillar of the UK’s global policy, built, in its present form, on pragmatic strategies following the ‘Second World War’. There is no doubt that the ‘special relationship’ has usually been more highly prized by our Prime Ministers than by Presidents in Washington but, since President Obama’s tilt towards the Pacific rim and now President Trump’s aggressive assertion of America first, the post war certainties often seemed out dated.

2017 has seen some unprecedented developments. The year began with a customarily early, and cordial visit by Prime Minister May to the new installed President, but since then the two leaders have openly criticised each other and appeared to disagree both politically and personally. A reciprocal invitation for Mr Trump to visit the UK has been opposed by an enormous on line petition of British voters, while the President has made successful trips to both Germany and France in the last few months. The UK used to call itself “America’s Bridge to Europe” but now we are leaving the EU we can no longer pretend to this role.

Atlanticists insist that many of the recent apparent rifts are only transitory and superficial, that the real, continuing strength of the alliance lies in the primary importance of defence and security links. They also point to President Trump’s claim that a new trade agreement with post BREXIT Britain can be easily agreed as evidence of our continued importance in American eyes.

In 2018 all of these issues need to be openly tested and examined outside the niceties of diplomatic protocol. They may seem topics to be dealt with by existing Standing Committees but, in my view, the present state of the special relationship is something which goes well beyond the conventional boundaries of foreign affairs and trade policy. An *ad hoc* committee would be able to take evidence about cultural, educational and scientific trans-Atlantic links, where, recent changes have also been noticed with concern. One example is the cuts Washington is proposing in the long established and world renowned Fulbright programme for educational exchange. This programme, founded in 1948, has given thousands of research grants to students on both sides of the Atlantic but the Trump administration now intends to reduce its budget by nearly 50%.

An *ad hoc* Committee of the House of Lords would be able to draw on the broadly based expertise of Peers and have the authority to question a wide variety of witnesses to examine what will be a crucial question for this country in the next decade.

JAY OF PADDINGTON

Declarations of interest

Lord Alton of Liverpool

Serves in a pro bono capacity on the Board of the charity Aid to the Church in Need, which supports victims of genocide.

Co-chair of the All Party Parliamentary Group on North Korea

Vice Chair of the APPG on Burma

Officer of the APPG on Sudan and South Sudan,

All three APPGs track countries where genocide and crimes against humanity have occurred.

Lord Black of Brentwood

Patron of the “Black Cat Society”, which is one of the fundraising arms of the charity Cats Protection and a Patron of International Cat Care.

Long term interest in animal welfare issues, and have led debates and asked questions on the issue regularly in the House of Lords

Lord Blencathra

No relevant interests to declare

Lord Bird

Vice-Chair of the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Poverty

Earl of Caithness

No relevant interests to declare

Baroness Campbell of Surbiton

In receipt of a Personal Health Budget from the NHS and Disability Living Allowance

Lord Campbell-Savours

No interests declared

Baroness Corston

Barrister (non-practising)

Lord Cromwell

Divisional Director, Brewin Dolphin plc (private client investment management) (from 1 January 2017)

Shareholder of HSBC Holdings plc

Shareholder of Prudential plc

Baroness Deech

A former lecturer in family law at Oxford University;

A sponsor of a private member’s Bill to reform the law of financial provision on divorce;

A member of the International Society on Family Law (academics)

Baroness D’Souza

Trained as a psychotherapist at the Tavistock Clinic

Spent a year working with Autistic children at the Marlborough Day Hospital

Familial experience of mental health provision for young people

Lord Dykes

No interests declared

Baroness Finlay of Llandaff

No relevant interests to declare

Lord Faulkner of Worcester

No interests declared

Lord Hodgson of Astley Abbotts

No interests declared

Baroness Hollins

A patron of a mental health charity for people with learning disabilities called RESPOND

Emeritus Professor of the Psychiatry of Disability at St George’s University of London

Chair of a community interest company which includes amongst its aims to empower people with learning disabilities and promote community inclusion

Son has a learning disability and Baroness Hollins is the appointee for his benefits

Lord Horam

No relevant interests to declare

Baroness Jay of Paddington

No relevant interests to declare

Baroness Kidron

Founder of 5Rights,

Board member of Freeformers

Family member in the Civil Service Digital Fast Stream

Lord Lipsey

Chair of the ad hoc Select Committee on Political Polling and Social Media

Earl Listowel

Trustee of the Brent Centre for Young People, a mental health service for adolescents

Board Member and trustee, Child and Family Practice Charitable Foundation (mental health of children and young people charity)

Lord Lisvane

A house in Herefordshire from which rental income is received as a holiday let

A Founder of the New Model in Technology and Engineering (a new University to be established in Herefordshire)

Membership of the Countryside Alliance

Churchwarden and Parochial Church Council Member, St. Leonard's, Blakemere, Herefordshire

My wife is a non-stipendiary Church of England priest in a rural group of parishes; she is also (until 13th April 2018) the High Sheriff of Herefordshire.

Deputy Lieutenant for the County.

Countess of Mar

Chairman of Forward-ME (forward-me.org.uk)

Patron of several ME charities.

Association with groups representing patients with diagnoses of myalgic encephalomyelitis/chronic fatigue syndrome (ME/CFS), fibromyalgia, irritable bowel syndrome, chronic Lyme disease and Gulf War Illnesses

Baroness Meacher

Co-chair the APPG for drug policy reform

Lord Morris of Handsworth

Former chairman of Midland Heart Housing Association

Lord Porter of Spalding

Chairman of the Local Government Association

Leader of South Holland District Council.

Director, South Holland Homes (community interest company)

Director, Local Government Information House Ltd

Director, Improvement and Development Agency for Local Government

Residential property in South Holland, Lincolnshire

Baroness Randerson

No relevant interests to declare

Baroness Rawlings

Uses London's road network

Lord Rooker

Involved in policy when at the Home Office in 2001

Earl of Sandwich

Co-chair of the All Party Group on Prescribed Drug Dependence

A family member was put on successive benzodiazepines and one of their doctors encouraged them to withdraw abruptly and without tapering

Baroness Scott of Needham Market

No relevant interests to declare

Lord Shutt of Greetland

Member of the Isle of Man APPG

Member of the St. Helena APPG

Member of the APPG for Overseas Territories

Spoken in the House of Lords in regards to St Helena and Ascension

Lead a group of five CPA delegates to run a seminar on governance in St. Helena in August 2013

Lord Suri

No interests declared

Lord Taylor of Warwick

Previous Vice President of the British Board of Film Classification

Previous Chancellor of Bournemouth University which is a Centre of Excellence for Film Studies

A member of The British Film Institute

A member of The All Party Parliamentary Film Group

A member of Media Fellowship International, a Charity which aims to support performers and production personnel in the film and television industry

A keynote speaker at MFI conferences, in Los Angeles and Washington DC

Invited to present the Inspirational Film Awards at The CAMIE Motion Picture Awards in Hollywood

Invited in 2016 to Hollywood by Media Fellowship International, to speak on the future of the film industry

A Member of the APPG on Fashion.

Co-hosted and spoke on “Fashion and Politics” at the Fashion Industry event in Parliament, during London Fashion Week a couple years ago.

Asked to participate in a project organised by The London School of Fashion, looking at Diversity in the Fashion industry. This is part of the University of The Arts London BA Honours Fashion Journalism Degree course.

Personal interest in fashion, having four daughters who model.

Attended a number of Fashion industry events in London, Paris and New York.

Was the subject of a Channel Four Television series about Fashion and was featured in a Sunday magazine about Fashion and the workplace

Baroness Thornton

No relevant interests to declare

Lord Tomlinson

No interests declared

Baroness Tonge

Chair UK All Party Parliamentary Group on Population, Development & Reproductive Health

Vice President, Family Planning Association

Baroness Tyler of Enfield

No interests declared

Baroness Valentine

Agreed with business in the community to spend part of every week seeing what I can do to regenerate Blackpool

Lord Warner

No relevant interests to declare