



Environmental Audit Committee

Oral evidence: [Sustainability in the Home Office](#), HC 1049

Wednesday 30 April 2014

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Written evidence from witnesses:

- [Professor Ken Pease](#)
- [WWF-UK](#)

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Members present [Joan Walley (Chair), Peter Aldous, Neil Carmichael, Martin Caton, Zac Goldsmith, Mike Kane, Mark Lazarowicz, Caroline Lucas, Caroline Nokes, Dr Matthew Offord, Mrs Caroline Spelman, Dr Alan Whitehead, Simon Wright.

Questions 1–109

Witnesses: **Professor Ken Pease**, Professor of Crime Science, University College London, and **Sarah Goddard**, Species Policy Adviser, WWF-UK gave evidence.

Q1 Chair: It is a great pleasure to welcome both of you, Professor Pease and Ms Goddard, to the Environmental Audit Select Committee this afternoon. As you are probably aware, the work that we do, as well as our inquiries, is looking at and tracking what different departments of government are doing. For reasons that are not altogether clear, we have chosen to perhaps zoom in a little bit on the Home Office. We wanted you to come along and share some of your thoughts as a preliminary, if you like, as a starter, before we interview officials from the Home Office. With that in mind, we have a fairly full agenda this afternoon of the subsequent panel to yours, so this is just a very brief taster of what is to come.

I wonder if, Professor Pease, I could start with you. I know that you have been looking at crime prevention and carbon impacts of crime. I just wonder if you could share with us the benefits of the conclusions that your work has reached and how that could be applied to Home Office thinking on sustainability issues and, I suppose, link that to the prevention of crime and, in a way, what the conclusions of your research have to say to those considering sustainability in the Home Office.

Professor Pease: Right. I have been a Green Party member for 30 years and a forensic psychologist criminologist for about the same time. In about 2005 I realised that the two things did not have any kind of nexus. If you Google climate change, then crime does not tend to come up, and if you Google crime then climate change does not come up. I thought it would be nice just to change the vocabulary of crime costs so as to include carbon costs and wrote a pretty basic and crude—because I am not an economist—costing of crime in the hope that people will take up the battle as Helen Skudder, who is here today, has taken it up.

The key point is not what the precise numbers are. I think the numbers will always be massive understatements because of the way in which people's lifestyles are changed by crime; for example, people leaving home or people transporting their kids around when public transport is deemed to be too unsafe, and so on. The costs are bound to be only a fraction of the actual costs, both present and anticipated costs.

The first point is at least to have the notion of crime and the notion of carbon costs in the same lens, as it were, in the same framework. That is the first thing to say. Once that has been done, then all kinds of things become possible. There is no point in carbon costing unless you can do something about the thing that costs. My crime science background says there are huge amounts of change that you can make quite simply that will reduce crime risks; for example, in housing design, in street layout. Chair, you have been long interested in the effect of lighting on crime, I know, and that is another aspect of the whole thing. If you can make substantial changes in crime, as you can, then you will produce a commensurate reduction in costs.

The big problem and the reason why looking at it department by department is problematic is that the Home Office does not generate crime. It is elsewhere that generates the crime. For example, if I may ride a hobby horse particularly, DCLG, if the housing standards review is acted upon, will be generating burglary over the lifetime of the new homes that are about to be designed. Of course, the private sector generates crime by the way in which it designs products and services.

If I may take 30 seconds of your time to say how I got into crime reduction in the first place, I used to be a proper forensic psychologist doing tests and whatever. I was at Wetherby borstal in the mid-1980s and two items on the six o'clock news were next to each other on my way back across the M62. The two items were, first, that new detention centres were being opened at New Hall and Send and the second item was that the Ford Motor Company had made record profits. I nearly left the motorway because of the link between those two things. At that stage, the most popular car for car thieves was the Ford Cortina and the Ford Cortina could be opened one chance in two by any Ford Cortina key if it was not absolutely brand new. The notion was that the costs were being visited by Ford on the Home Office and the Ministry of Justice—same thing then—with the consequence of having to open the New Hall and Send facilities.

Now, there is a whole plethora, and I beg your pardon, I will not take any more of your time saying it. There is a massive possibility of reducing crime by simply changing the circumstances in which crime occurs: building design, layout design, vehicle design, place design, lighting, lighting variations. It seems to me that the fact of lighting has been established but the way in which it can be abused to manipulate people across a space has not been.

Q2 Chair: Okay. If there was one thing that you would say the Home Office could have regard to arising out of the conclusions that you have reached, given that some of that implementation would not be down to the Home Office, it would be down to other departments, what recommendations would you say should be in the Home Office business plan?

Professor Pease: The first thing I would say is that this Committee should be looking in emphasis across departments rather than at specific departments, so the balance between individual department investigation and total government investigation should be moved towards total government. That is, if you like, for you guys.

For the Home Office, I would say that the immediate and important thing is to ensure that new homes, much needed new homes, are built to standards of security that have been shown to be effective in reducing local crime. That is totally important because the crime risks of new homes will last for their duration or have to be retrofitted and the dynamic by which people leave crime-ridden homes is well understood so that certain areas are ghettoised as people who can afford to move, move out. I know it is a bad source, but the Abbey National are doing more research to establish it and I am sure it is true. The Abbey National suggests that crime and disorder is the greatest single reason why people move out of homes and areas.

The answer to your question is: one, for the Committee, think across government because it is other government departments who are generating the risks that the Home Office has to pick up in crime terms.

Q3 Chair: So government departments are the one of the causes of crime?

Professor Pease: Well, yes, and, of course, the private sector as well. I do not want to pick on the DCLG but it is important; the Department for Transport in terms of the way in which they record a DVLA vehicle crime, and the way in which ANPR vehicles are deployed and the data sets that exist in that. The scope is enormous from a variety of different government departments.

Q4 Chair: Finally from me, police commissioners: do you have any message for them? Have they made a difference?

Professor Pease: Not perceptibly to me and I worry about what will happen towards the end of their five-year term, at which point the only way in which I can see their public profile being enhanced is by making life difficult for chief constables. Also, when I have visited police and crime commissioners I am impressed by the plushness of the places that they now inhabit, so I am slightly worried in cost terms as well. Nice people, very much more political than I anticipated they would be. I have not seen them take up any cudgels that I particularly would like them to yet.

Chair: Okay. I will just ask my fellow Committee members if there are any questions they wish to direct to you very briefly before we move on to Ms Goddard. No? In that case I will turn to Caroline Spelman.

Q5 Mrs Spelman: I have some questions for Sarah and the World Wildlife Fund. The Home Office recently was involved in organising a very large conference on wildlife

crime, which you described as a strong declaration. How significant do you think the conference will turn out to be and what will its main impact be, do you think?

Sarah Goddard: Of course, as you say, WWF-UK and TRAFFIC welcomed the London conference on illegal wildlife trade and the work that the Government did to organise it, and also to secure high-level Government participation from such a wide range of countries and the commitment of those participants to decisive and urgent action on combating the illegal wildlife trade. The cross-government approach to the organisation of the conference has been very welcome indeed. That was very good to see, including the establishment of a taskforce on wildlife trafficking across all departments. We would like to see this continue and this group continue to encourage and co-ordinate interdepartmental and interministerial co-operation and develop a cross-government action plan and be accountable for the delivery of that action plan. We would like to see that as one outcome.

Also, considering the success of that London conference, it would make sense for the UK to continue to lead the way in combating the illegal wildlife trade by implementing firm measures nationally. We are glad to see, of course, a new lead for wildlife and rural crime appointed within the Association of Chief Police Officers and their support for tackling wildlife crime issues. We welcome the continued work of the Border Force and particularly the CITES team based at Heathrow. However, obviously further actions need to be taken in the area of appropriate penalties being handed out and the strengthening of recording of wildlife crime and the formation of a comprehensive database. This will allow us to identify within the UK emerging trends and hopefully efficiently target our resources with greater accuracy.

As a global logistics hub, a transit country and a consumer country for wildlife products, it makes sense for the UK to become an exemplar model for the rest of the EU and globally for combating illegal wildlife trade. We would like national approaches to also be taken as well as the global commitments undertaken at the London conference.

Q6 Mrs Spelman: You touched on resources and your own submission points to the need to commit to long-term funding in order to secure the wildlife crime unit and to attract and retain the best staff. What is your view about the present level of funding?

Sarah Goddard: Well, we welcome the new commitment to two years' funding, which is an improvement on the year-on-year basis decision for funding. However, in our eyes two years is not a long-term commitment to funding and it is impossible in that timeline to succeed in combating wildlife crime issues. The National Wildlife Crime Unit, as we say, plays an important domestic role in tackling wildlife crime, so we would like to see further commitment to long-term funding of this. We would like to see the funding maintained and increased along the lines of inflation. Currently, they also have fixed-term funding from DEFRA for an internet investigation officer. We would like to see that funding maintained alongside the funding that is given to the crime unit so that it becomes an additional full-time post. This is obviously especially important considering the now increasing role that the internet has to play in facilitating trade today.

Q7 Mrs Spelman: Okay. Those are some specifics. Obviously, the juncture where we are in the parliamentary cycle probably means that you will be wanting to ask about the future—whatever one's view of the future is.

I want to ask specifically about the coding of wildlife crimes. We see this as a little bit of a small victory. It would be very interesting to see what impact you think this is going to have. Your submission suggests that a comprehensive crime database is needed, so what further steps would you like to see the Home Office take?

Sarah Goddard: Obviously, we welcome the new coding that the Home Office has announced for wildlife crime. However, it is probably not sufficiently detailed and comprehensive enough and we need detailed coding in order to be able to monitor what is going on with wildlife crime in detail. Making wildlife crime recordable to that level of detail is one way of monitoring the situation.

We know, however, when wildlife crimes are recordable there is also a need to collate this information somewhere that is both accessible and easily found. The current systems in place do not seem to be adequate for this and seemingly TRAFFIC do not seem to be able to pull together the details and information on prosecutions for wildlife crimes that we need to monitor the situation, especially under COTES and CEMA. I think COTES is under the new coding system but not necessarily in sufficient detail, and I do not think CEMA is covered. Yes, in order to monitor the situation further details are required and a database that is easily accessible to all so that we can understand the importance of the UK in the illegal wildlife trade.

Mrs Spelman: Thank you very much.

Q8 Chair: Do any members wish to add further questions? I would not expect you to be biased because you are before the Committee, but we are really interested in objective feedback as to the value of the recommendations in our previous wildlife report. I just wondered whether or not you feel that there is any scrutiny that we have focused on in the past that has helped to spotlight issues and has been effective or helpful in terms of encouraging the Home Office to do likewise. What I am asking you is: what could we do better as a Committee?

Sarah Goddard: Yes, as we put in our evidence, obviously there have been various numbers of things that have been raised in previous inquiries that unfortunately are still ongoing. I would encourage persistence—

Q9 Chair: Would you list those briefly?

Sarah Goddard: When it comes to prosecutions of wildlife crime and the CPS, we still do not feel that there are sufficient penalties being handed out in all cases. It is a bit hit and miss. Across the board, we would like to see sentencing guidelines produced for magistrates, additional training where necessary, and wildlife crime to be further up the priority list. I think raising awareness in terms of wildlife crime in relation to other crimes and the fact that it is being seen now as a serious crime and, therefore, should be seen so in the courts when it comes to prosecuting such cases.

Chair: That is very helpful. Well, we did say that we just have a quick 20 minutes introduction, so can I thank both of you very much indeed for coming along and hopefully influencing the course of our inquiry? Thanks to both of you.

Examination of Witnesses

Witnesses: **Mike Parsons**, Chief Operating Officer, Home Office, **Mary Calam**, Director General, Crime and Policing Group, Home Office, **John Fernau**, Director, Commercial, Home Office, and **Grant Miller**, Border Force Senior Officer, Home Office, gave evidence.

Q10 Chair: Can I welcome each of the four of you to our Select Committee this afternoon? I think you were all here when I said at the very outset we were asked by DEFRA to cast a spotlight on works of individual departments. We have chosen for various reasons the Home Office at the moment, so we very much hope that this will be a fruitful mutual exchange and opportunity to better understand what your working commitments are as far as sustainability is concerned.

With that in mind, can I start off, first of all, with the budget? It is reducing by around 25%, 2010-2011, 2014-15. I really want to understand how at a time of budget cuts of this magnitude you are targeting your activities to ensure that sustainability is mainstreamed and we get good value for money for it and whether or not there are actions that you are taking right now to embed sustainability or ones where perhaps you have changed the way you go about doing this because of the budget cuts that there are. I do not know if it is in Mr Parsons' purview to reply.

Mike Parsons: Maybe I might make a start. Certainly, the Home Office in the spending review did have a budget reduction of 25% or so with further reductions as part of the 2013 spending review, I think bringing the total reductions up to around 30%. Clearly, the Home Office's main contribution to sustainability is about keeping the streets safe and the borders secure through cutting crime, securing the borders, reducing migration and preventing terrorism. Those are the Home Office's priorities and it is through those priorities that we make the most significant contribution to social justice, community cohesion and economic growth. That together with our work around the environment and protection of endangered species is the contribution the Home Office makes to sustainability.

In terms of managing the budget reductions, we have been looking across the Home Office as a whole and sustainability is embedded or mainstreamed in all of those objectives. We have not looked at the budget reductions just through the lens of sustainability.

Chair: You have not?

Mike Parsons: We have considered all of the Home Office's priorities across crime, migration and terrorism.

Q11 Chair: If you have not looked at the sustainability aspects of it, how would you be making best use of what you have if you have possibly excluded that from your consideration?

Mike Parsons: It is not about excluding it. It is one of the considerations. In terms of the policy, we follow the Treasury guidance, make sure we follow the Green Book guidance, and make sure that the impact assessments consider sustainability as one of a range of factors that are considered when we are developing policy, whether that be policy around new areas of legislation or our approach to coping with reduced budgets. It is through the impact assessment process that we are picking up sustainability alongside other issues.

Q12 Chair: Interestingly, when we had BIS come before our Committee for a similar session, they for various reasons no longer had a sustainability champion. I understand from your evidence that you no longer have one either.

Mike Parsons: Well, we do now.

Chair: Oh, you do?

Mike Parsons: This is his second week so he delegated upwards. As the Home Office's Chief Operating Officer I am in front of you, but the sustainability champion is our new finance and estates director, who is the director responsible for the sustainability team that the Home Office has. He will be taking up the responsibility as the Home Office sustainability champion and I shall shortly be agreeing with him his objectives for the year, which would include—

Q13 Chair: What training has he had for this?

Mike Parsons: He has done a number of pieces of work in the MOJ and the court service around environmental sustainability and management of the estates. We will be making sure he has a full induction from the sustainability team as part of taking up his new role. It seemed a little unfair for him to attend the Committee today in advance of that induction.

Q14 Chair: Do I take it that what you have done is you have asked somebody who is already in post to take on extra responsibility? Or did you advertise the post?

Mike Parsons: The previous sustainability champion left and we have just appointed a new director who will pick up this role as a key part of his corporate responsibilities.

Q15 Chair: Is there a very clear job specification on the sustainability issues for that post?

Mike Parsons: It is one of the accountabilities alongside—

Chair: I think it would be very helpful if you could let the Committee have a job specification, given that it is a new post, for those new duties to be linked in with the finance ones.

Mike Parsons: We will certainly be finalising his accountabilities as part of the performance—

Q16 Chair: You have appointed him without finalising his accountabilities?

Mike Parsons: The principal accountabilities are around being director of finance and estates, which include—

Chair: But not sustainability?

Mike Parsons: Well, he is the responsible director for the sustainability team and sustainability champion. That is a key part of his role as director of finance and estates. I was meaning more in terms of his annual performance review. We will be agreeing his objectives for the coming year in the next month.

Q17 Peter Aldous: Did the job specification include certain sustainability requirements of the job?

Mike Parsons: It includes managing the sustainability team, which is part of the directorate.

Q18 Peter Aldous: That was included in the specification and was raised at the interviews?

Mike Parsons: We did not raise that explicitly in interviews because the interviews were competency based. We picked up the various competencies but we did not specifically talk about sustainability to my knowledge in the interviews.

Q19 Peter Aldous: You were happy looking at CVs and the like that the successful applicant has the expertise or the ability to gain the expertise to take on this role?

Mike Parsons: It was not one of the essential—previous knowledge in this area—

Chair: Sorry, did you just say it was not one of the essential requirements?

Mike Parsons: Previous knowledge was not one of the essential requirements for the director of finance role, but it is absolutely part of the role. As part of his induction, we will be making sure that he is fully briefed and up to speed in this important area.

Q20 Chair: That job description that perhaps has not been finalised yet, if I can put it that way: will it include the sustainability report? What guidance is there as to how this person will develop the role of sustainability champion?

Mike Parsons: That is the conversation I will be having with him as part of agreeing his objectives for the year. Yes, it does include the sustainability report, obviously the annual report and accounts, chairing the sustainability group, driving forward the business plan commitments around the Greening Government commitments, and overseeing the other commitments that are around ensuring that sustainability is embedded in policy making and the SME agenda and achieving our targets in that agenda.

Q21 Caroline Lucas: Thank you, Chair. I wanted to carry on your own line of questioning, just to take it one step further and put it to you that the fact that the job description of your sustainability champion does not require as essential some previous experience of sustainability suggests that it is not being taken terribly seriously.

Mike Parsons: I take issue with that. At some point in the structures there are people whose whole job is sustainability, so the head of the sustainability team who is sat behind me, and then further up the management chain people have broader jobs that involve other responsibilities. Managing the sustainability team is a core part of the director of finance and estates' job, but there are other aspects, including acting as the department's finance director.

Q22 Caroline Lucas: I understand that. I suppose it is just in the term of a "sustainability champion" it suggests that this is a fairly serious role rather than just one strand of many. Therefore, some experience directly might have been—

Mike Parsons: I agree it is a serious role and we wanted the role to be undertaken by one of the department's directors so that they are able to give this agenda the profile and emphasis that it needs, supported by a team whose specialism is sustainability. We feel it does need the profile of having a director acting as the champion in order to drive the process of the mainstreaming of it across the Home Office.

Q23 Chair: Finally from me, I am sure that you will have been gratified by the NAO assessment of your sustainability report, presumably done under the previous champion, as having been thorough and transparent. I just wondered what plans you have in place for the next report. When is it going to be published? What work is in hand? What resources are there to do this? Or are you looking to develop it in a different way?

Mike Parsons: We are certainly going to publish a second report and to try to—

Q24 Chair: When?

Mike Parsons: We published the last report in the summer so we will aim to do the same. Obviously, there is a sustainability chapter in the Home Office's annual report and accounts, which will be published well before that. The fuller sustainability report we will aim to publish in the summer. We are looking at how we can improve and expand that. Yes, we were pleased with the NAO's comments on the first report, but we think we can put more in it. We can put more in around our agenda for reducing travel—use of video conferencing—but we can put more in around how we are using impact assessments in policy and more around the crime area that Mary Calam will be talking about later. I think we can develop it.

Q25 Peter Aldous: There are a number of staff within the Home Office with responsibility for sustainability and there is the sustainable development team.

Mike Parsons: Yes.

Peter Aldous: What are the main activities that the sustainable development team are currently working on?

Mike Parsons: They work right across the sustainability agenda. They have a particular focus around the Greening Government commitments, but they have the overview of the work on sustainability across the Home Office. They will be working on, in a sense, the whole agenda. I guess at the moment they will probably be particularly getting ready for the second sustainability report and the report in the accounts.

Q26 Peter Aldous: Are there any specific items of concern or work streams at the moment?

Mike Parsons: Against the vast majority of the Greening Government commitments we are making very good progress. We are making less progress on travel, so there is a particular focus on travel, but just because we are making good progress against water, paper, waste, we are not stopping work on those. There is activity running across the whole of the commitments. We are looking to make further progress over the coming year to build on the achievements to date.

Q27 Peter Aldous: The sustainability implementation group is a cross-departmental committee that has representatives from business areas from right across the department, including the Border Force. Which parts of the Home Office would you say are most engaged with the sustainability agenda?

Mike Parsons: I think all parts of the Home Office are engaged. You will hear hopefully as part of the evidence the work we are doing around procurement, crime, and endangered species. The sustainability implementation group is chaired by the sustainability champion and, as you say, it does include representatives right across the piece. It includes a representative who has a lead responsibility for working with the policy functions of the Home Office to particularly champion effective use of impact assessments as part of

policy appraisals. The Home Office is engaged right across policy, operations and corporate services.

Q28 Peter Aldous: Are there any parts of the Home Office that have found the sustainability agenda difficult to grasp, perhaps because they feel it might be in conflict or not particularly compatible with some of their other objectives, whether that be national security, public safety or accessibility to justice?

Mike Parsons: I do not think there are areas that do not see the relevance of the sustainability agenda. The sustainability implementation group did start off with a real focus around Greening Government, so the environmental sustainability aspects, but has extended and grown its remit as it spent a lot of time looking at procurement issues and more recently, as I say, with the appointment of a policy lead has been championing the use of impact assessments. It has been across Government but it has moved, perhaps, from early days of a focus on the environmental side.

Q29 Peter Aldous: I think I am right in saying that both Lord Taylor and Norman Baker are on the Greening Government Cabinet subcommittee.

Mike Parsons: Yes.

Q30 Peter Aldous: Why is this, two Ministers from the Home Office on that committee?

Mike Parsons: Norman Baker is, I think, co-chair of the committee and has particular responsibilities around crime reduction. Lord Taylor is a sustainability champion in the Home Office and attends that committee.

Q31 Peter Aldous: One perhaps might have felt that it might mean that the Home Office was more engaged with sustainability than other departments, perhaps?

Mike Parsons: I cannot comment on other departments but, as was mentioned earlier, I think the NAO report was positive about the governance arrangements and the profile of sustainability in the Home Office. Certainly, the Ministers have been very supportive and took part in things like climate change week and things.

Q32 Peter Aldous: Taking into account that we will say you are sustainability champions, what steps are you taking to share the department's learning on sustainability with other departments in Government?

Mike Parsons: The head of the sustainability unit and his colleagues do take part in a number of cross-government fora acting as either chair or members of cross-government committees. I think the Home Office does play an appropriate part in contributing to the cross-government agenda and, as I say, a number of committees are chaired by the head of unit and his team.

Q33 Caroline Lucas: I want to go back to the staff issues. The Home Office says that it has embedded sustainability throughout the department. I wonder if you think staff as a whole have the information and skills needed to make sustainable decisions or decisions on sustainability.

Mike Parsons: We use the civil service competency framework for setting staff objectives and I think six out of the 10 competency areas include reference to sustainability. The competency framework is used as part of recruitment, performance management and development. That is one aspect.

We also have quite a lot of information on the Home Office's intranet, so general information about sustainability but also when there are particular things like climate change week, for example. We are also working with DEFRA on an e-learning course, which I think is intended to launch fairly soon. When that does launch, we intend to promote that to our staff as part of increasing awareness and understanding of the sustainability agenda.

Q34 Caroline Lucas: Reading through the NAO briefing, the part where it said that only 72 staff out of 30,000, which is less than 1%, have undertaken the training course on sustainability that exists so far and, looking further back, it is a 45-minute voluntary online training, which does not sound particularly substantial, how does that square with a commitment to sustainability?

Mike Parsons: I think you are right, the existing course has not been heavily promoted or used. It has been perhaps mainly a focus on people with a particular sustainability aspect in their role. The reason we have been working with DEFRA on the new e-learning course that they hope to launch soon is that that is aimed to be of more relevance to staff more generally and, therefore, once that is ready and launched—and we have been working closely to try to support them—then we will be looking to promote that and encourage take-up.

Q35 Caroline Lucas: Can you say how you will be promoting that in a way that is qualitatively different from the way that the existing training course has been promoted, if it has at all? Presumably, it is still voluntary?

Mike Parsons: That is something we could explore as to whether to make it mandatory. There are a number of courses that we do have that are mandatory for staff, so recently the new Government security classifications, and there are other courses that are mandatory around information management, anti-fraud and anti-corruption, I think I am right in saying. It is something we could consider, but we certainly want to promote it through the intranet, the newsletters, all the communications. We run a series of viewpoint events with staff where members of the management team meet groups of staff around the country. There are lots of mechanisms we have to promote the course and once it is ready and launched that is something we can give some consideration to as to what might be the appropriate way of getting it out there and people making use of it.

Q36 Caroline Lucas: It would seem to me that, yes, a strong consideration to making it mandatory at the very least would be important given that the existing training has been accessed by fewer than 1% of staff. There is obviously a big step change to make. I do not know what other people on the Committee feel, but to me if we are trying to get sustainability properly embedded in the Home Office, then it would seem to me that making that course a mandatory one rather than a voluntary one would be important.

My last question was in terms of the work that has been done so far around embedding sustainability into staff competencies. Have you had time to observe any differences in behaviour or outcomes as a result of having done that?

Mike Parsons: In terms of behaviours more generally?

Caroline Lucas: Within the department. Have you been able to see a cause and effect, do you think, through having had a greater focus on embedding sustainability?

Mike Parsons: We are making good progress right across the commitments in the business plan. We are reducing the water, paper, so there is lots of evidence of staff responding to the agenda. As part of the policymaking, people are using the guidance and working on increasing the impact assessments. I think there is ample evidence of the staff in the Home Office working with this agenda.

Q37 Caroline Lucas: I suppose finally, Chair, in terms of the new training that is being worked on with DEFRA, will you have any criteria to be able to measure the success of that intervention in particular? Obviously, you have a range of different things that you are doing to promote sustainability within the Home Office. If you wanted to look at what difference staff training makes, do you have any plans as to how you will measure that?

Mike Parsons: I think that is something we need to look at. That is alongside looking at considering whether it should be mandatory or optional and how we promote it. It is obviously really important we understand how we are going to evaluate the success of that intervention.

Q38 Caroline Lucas: When does that decision get made, just remind me?

Mike Parsons: I am not sure the latest timetable for when the e-learning course is going to be completed.

Chair: It would be useful if you could let the Committee have it.

Mike Parsons: Yes.

Chair: Thank you. We must move on.

Q39 Mike Kane: I was reading a Secured by Design report that said that a conservative estimate of the carbon cost of crime would be around about 6 million tonnes per annum. I suppose my question is: carbon costing of crime, is it in the zeitgeist of crime reduction agencies?

Mary Calam: Would you like me to take that?

Chair: Please do.

Mary Calam: Perhaps it would be helpful if I just pointed to the Home Office, alongside Secured by Design, we are sponsoring a research project around the carbon cost of crime, which began in April last year. This is quite a difficult issue. How far do you take the parameters when you are trying to calculate the carbon cost? We think that piece of research is really important and when it reaches its conclusions I would very much expect us to use those findings and those judgments to inform future impact assessment.

Q40 Mike Kane: Okay. In terms of crime itself, I think what they are getting at in the carbon cost of particular crimes is that murder is by far the top of the list, serious wounding second. Serious wounding there is a lot more of so it generates a much bigger carbon footprint. Do you think we will ever get to the day, for instance, where police response times will be analysed not just on the physical and emotional nature of the crime but the carbon nature of the crime? What I am thinking is that the analysis showed that the carbon footprint of crime by non-dwelling is higher than crime by dwelling itself. Do you think we would ever make crime in a non-dwelling a higher response?

Mary Calam: Clearly, the response to reported crime must be an operational judgment for the police. They will want to draw on all the information available to them and all their

previous knowledge. As I was trying to say in relation to our research project, collectively we probably do not understand the carbon cost of crime as well as we could. If that research enables us to develop a better methodology, then I think going forward overall we ought to use that to inform our policy making. Whether that will ever take us to a place where for specific crimes you could make judgments in relation to carbon cost I would be surprised, frankly, if I have understood the question correctly.

Q41 Mike Kane: The final scrutiny question is: when will that research be done and concluded and its reports released?

Mary Calam: It began in April last year and it is scheduled to run for four years.

Q42 Chair: Okay. Just before we move on, I think you were here for the previous session with Dr Pease.

Mary Calam: Yes.

Chair: The point that he was making about other departments like DCLG, what is the system inside the Home Office for that liaison with other departments where you are looking to them to, if you like, spend their budgets on budgeting out crime in that sense? Is it through the green Ministers? Would it be at that level? Do you have some mechanism for that kind of cross-departmental approach towards this?

Mary Calam: Yes. Well, I think there is a broader point here that goes much beyond sustainability questions. Certainly, my officials I would expect when developing policy to think very carefully about: what are the wider implications; what other government departments do they need to engage with; do they need to talk to the voluntary sector? I would expect that kind of engagement at working level all to be a key part of policy formulation and, indeed, that does happen. In developing policy on crime we consult with a range of stakeholders, so I would hope it was not left to Ministers to have those conversations.

Q43 Chair: Would you include the code for sustainable homes in that thinking and policy development?

Mary Calam: Well, Home Office officials have certainly been working with DCLG on their review of building regulations, including the question of design for security.

Q44 Chair: But there is a difference between working with and working successfully with, isn't there, given the changes that there are to the code for sustainable homes?

Mary Calam: Well, as I understand it, the DCLG housing standards review is ongoing and the review sets out options for security standards. The review is looking at how best to deliver security standards through building regulations. My understanding is that has not yet been concluded.

Chair: Okay, thank you. We will move on to Dr Offord and to CITES.

Q45 Dr Offord: What actions have been taken by the department for the detection of wildlife crime, particularly to ensure that there are successful prosecutions in that area?

Mary Calam: I might look to my colleague for help on some of this, but in policy terms, as was talked about earlier, we have committed funding to the National Wildlife Crime Unit, which is a police organisation. We are funding that for the next two years jointly with DEFRA.

A couple of other points to make: I think it was touched on earlier that some of wildlife crime at least is serious organised crime. The Government has, of course, established the NCA, the National Crime Agency, so it too has a part to play in tackling those serious organised crime groups that may be involved in wildlife crime. The witness from the WWF spoke also about the public commitments that we have made and the major national conference and so on earlier this year.

Q46 Dr Offord: Okay. The most recent figures from the National Audit Office show that in the first nine months of 2013-2014 the number of seizures has dropped. Are you in a position to be able to tell the Committee whether the amount of offences has increased or decreased in light of those figures?

Grant Miller: Yes. The number of seizures dropped probably in the region of 180 and that was directly attributable to the decisions taken at the Conference of the Parties for CITES in Thailand in March, where the trade in agarwood, the heartwood of *Gyrinops* and *Aquilaria*, was basically if the goods were imported packaged for retail sale then you no longer required permits. A large percentage, probably in the region of 220, seizures were made the year previous, so that drop was directly attributable to what had been an illegal trade being legalised.

Q47 Dr Offord: Okay, I think that is pretty comprehensive. We have recently received a letter from Norman Baker explaining that the way of recording wildlife crime will be different in the future. What impact do you think that will have upon offences?

Grant Miller: For me, I think information is power and any analysis of that will be good. One of the big challenges for me, being the team that have to provide an awful lot of these statistics, is that I have multiple conductors all asking for different information at different times. That is quite a substantial cost to the resource that forms part of the CITES team. From the European Commission down to the royal customs organisation to the Home Office itself, there are probably in the region of six to seven different individuals who require stats information at different times and in different formats. I am more than happy to make information that we have available to people, but I would ask if it would be possible for the powers to come together and find a smart way for me to report them.

Dr Offord: Okay, just—

Chair: Sorry, just before, I think Zac Goldsmith on that very issue wanted to come in.

Q48 Zac Goldsmith: Thank you, yes. It is more or less on that issue. I just wanted to ask Mr Miller. There was a report yesterday. It was picked up by a couple of newspapers—only short reports and I have not seen the basis for it—describing a big move made in China to ramp up the sentencing guidelines around wildlife crime generally. This is regarded by the Chinese authorities as a major step. I am just interested to know from you whether or not you are aware of these announcements that have been made, how real they are, and what impact they might have in terms of depressing or inhibiting demand.

Grant Miller: I can only speak on the contact that I have had with the Chinese delegate who most recently was at the European Commission wildlife trafficking forum. I find that they speak with honesty and integrity and they acknowledge the problems that they do have. I think if you look at the seizures that they do make from their customs authority, they do make significant seizures. Yes, it is not the end of the story and culturally and within the communities I think there is some way to go, but I certainly found them engaging and honest in any discussions.

Q49 Zac Goldsmith: That presumably feeds into your first answer. Is that one of the reasons why you find yourself where there were fewer seizures in the first nine months?

Grant Miller: Our seizures are purely down to the change in agarwood, one particular product. We are still seeing ivory traffic. We are still seizing rhino horn. The reptile trade continues touching on the UK, most recently with the iguanas that were seized coming out of the Caribbean, a particularly significant seizure for the Border Force.

Q50 Zac Goldsmith: Can I ask one last question? Following the high-level summit, which was not that long ago admittedly, have you noticed any change at all in terms of the demand for illegal products? Have you noticed the market shifting at all on the back of the summit?

Grant Miller: I cannot say I have seen the market change, but what I have seen is the activity at minor grassroots level change. I have seen DEFRA fund EU-TWIX, which is a critical communication tool for wildlife enforcers and scientists tackling the illegal wildlife trade. That is now secured for a year to 18 months and that will be a critical bonus. Brunel University won the funding to go into Madagascar and do research on the ploughshare tortoise, which Border Force are supporting, and we will be putting two of our international trainers in to build capacity with Madagascan customs to assist them in their enforcement efforts.

Chair: Okay. We will return to Dr Offord.

Q51 Dr Offord: That is very interesting and I thank Mr Goldsmith for his comments as well. You said that knowledge is power and this has been very useful. Are there any other changes or powers that you would like to be introduced yourself?

Grant Miller: For Border Force, no. I am quite comfortable that seven years and an unlimited fine are fairly robust sanctions against anyone who is involved in illegal wildlife trafficking. I am not competent to talk about police offences in the wildlife area.

Q52 Dr Offord: Okay, thank you. I am certainly aware of the work of the World Wildlife Fund and I have attended some of their receptions, I remember, leading up to the mayoral elections about funding of the wildlife crime unit. There has always been some concern about the continued funding with that. In the longer term finance is needed and that will obviously have an impact upon success as well. What plans does your organisation have to continue this and will you be seeking additional resources?

Chair: Ms Calam?

Dr Offord: Sorry, it is unfair to ask Mr Miller that question, isn't it?

Mary Calam: As I said just now, we have committed to funding for the next two years. It would be inappropriate for us to commit to funding beyond that because of a future spending round. Clearly, we would want to understand Ministers' funding priorities after 2015-2016 and then make decisions on that basis.

Dr Offord: Thank you. That is very helpful for me.

Q53 Chair: On the whole issue about coding, accessible public database, is that going to be part and parcel of the new arrangements?

Mary Calam: One of the complexities of all this, of course, is the number of wildlife offences that there are. The current changes will brigade together a number of wildlife

offences that appear already in the counting rules but are scattered around. This will make for a better and much clearer picture of recorded wildlife crime.

There are probably two other points worth mentioning on this point. First, the Government has asked the Law Commission to look precisely at that point about the number and range of offences and to see what scope there is for reform and consolidation. Clearly, depending on the outcome of that, that may make some of this easier to track. Secondly, of course, this is not just about recording data. It is about capturing intelligence and understanding the threat. The National Wildlife Crime Unit has just made public, I think for the first time, their most recent strategic assessment and that is available on their website.

Chair: Okay. We must temporarily suspend our sitting to go and vote in the Commons. We will return straight away unless there are two votes, for the benefit of the Committee members.

Sitting suspended for a Division in the House.

On resuming-

Q54 Chair: I think we are quorate and we do have a lot of ground to cover, so I propose that we press on. Just before we leave the line of questioning that Dr Offord was pursuing, I think you may have been aware of evidence that was submitted by WWF relating again to the issue of databases. Can I just press you on whether or not, despite having made the welcome changes that the Home Office has already made, there are any plans to introduce a central database along the lines of what WWF suggested? I am thinking particularly about information on COTES and Geneva prosecutions as well.

Mary Calam: Unless my colleagues are going to correct me, there are no plans that I am aware of in the Home Office. I would say I cannot speak though for the Wildlife Crime Unit, which is of course a police unit. I am not aware of any, but I just wanted to make that caveat.

Q55 Chair: At risk of putting two different Home Office people together, is it the case that if it were to be done, it would be done by the Wildlife Crime Unit, or is there scope for the Home Office to perhaps take some leadership and initiative in developing this?

Grant Miller: With regard to Border Force affairs it would fall to the National Crime Agency, Border Force no longer prosecutes or investigates its own work. We would take a case up to a point and refer it to the National Crime Agency to then take it to the Crown Prosecution Service and prosecute on our behalf. If any database was to be created, it would be for the National Crime Agency to populate on behalf of Border Force. The National Wildlife Crime Unit is predominantly an intelligence unit and it would be a decision for ACPO as to where any input to any database sat.

Q56 Chair: It just seems a little bit complex. You have the Home Office, you have the Wildlife Crime Unit and you have just introduced ACPO. If there is going to be a database that is genuinely going to work, how could you make it work within the terms of reference of your sustainability objectives, which is really what we are trying to bear down on? I do not know, Mr Parsons, do you want to answer that?

Mike Parsons: I think we would have to write and take time.

Mary Calam: Yes, to take that away and reflect on it. The distinctions that you have identified, Chair, are of course a reflection that we hold the policy responsibility and then there are different parts of the operational responsibility with each of those agencies having a distinct role, so I think between us, we need to think carefully about what we were trying to achieve and how best to go about it.

Chair: Can I just check whether any of the members of the Committee wish to pursue the issues relating to the database before we move on? No, okay. Dr Whitehead.

Q57 Dr Whitehead: You have reduced carbon emissions within the Home Office by 18% since 2009/10, I believe. You have done that partly by reducing your estate by 10%, but within that reduced estate, then you are gaining, I think, real time information on the carbon viewer arrangement. How is that working in terms of enabling you to see real time carbon use on your sites?

Mike Parsons: As you say, we have made significant savings in terms of CO₂ emissions from the estate, probably about half from estate rationalisation, from a fairly extensive rationalisation programme, and probably half by reducing our energy use by working with our facilities or FM providers, including payment by results mechanisms to install new equipment, improve the controls, look at how we manage the building, so it is a combination of this sort of estate rationalisation and the improvement of management of the estate. We do have the real time monitoring, not just in the visitor areas, but also online so that staff can monitor not just our main building but a number of our other buildings as well, so that information is all online, yes.

Q58 Dr Whitehead: The information that is online, that is buildings that have been included in the *Sustainability Report*? You included, I see, 97 premises in the *Sustainability Report*.

Mike Parsons: Yes, so it is a *Sustainability Report* including the buildings that we have control of, as opposed to the Home Office which has staff in a wide range of buildings, obviously including our ports, which are under the control of port operations. The *Sustainability Report* included those buildings that we have control of, and then as a subset of that we have the online reporting, so I think it is about 10 of our buildings we have the online reporting for, and staff can see comparisons between different buildings. But those are our main buildings: the QMS headquarters, Croydon, Sheffield and Liverpool are where the main concentrations of our staff are.

Q59 Dr Whitehead: Within that, you have some enormous variations in CO₂ emissions per occupant, haven't you? For example, I am looking at the carbon viewer, and one particular property had seven times the emissions of the rest.

Mike Parsons: It is quite a mixed estate, ranging from modern headquarters in Marsham Street to a range of buildings, so there is bound to be some significant variation in terms of the age and utilisation of the building, the age of the equipment, whether buildings are airconditioned or not, so there is quite a variety. But we are looking at it building by building and trying to understand what we can do to reduce the emissions on a building basis and different solutions may be relevant in different buildings. We are trying to focus efforts as appropriate in each of the buildings.

Q60 Dr Whitehead: I think you have been using payment by results management arrangements, haven't you?

Mike Parsons: Yes.

Q61 Dr Whitehead: How has that worked?

Mike Parsons: It is about incentivising the facilities management providers to drive down emissions through replacing equipment or changing, renewing control mechanisms, but also around the behaviours of the staff in running the buildings on our behalf, so there is a gain to the Home Office but also an incentive for the providers. As I say, about half of the improvements probably in our building emissions arise from that, and about half from the actual estate rationalisation.

Q62 Dr Whitehead: Presumably those arrangements in principle could cover the 97 buildings that you have?

Mike Parsons: Yes, so we are working with a range of FM providers, not just the facilities management providers for the Marsham Street headquarters, but those that are providing the services in other buildings, and we are particularly looking at the buildings that have the poorer sort of energy performance at the moment, so trying to focus some attention on to those.

Q63 Dr Whitehead: What proportion of your buildings would you say have poor energy performance?

Mike Parsons: There is quite a high percentage.

Dr Whitehead: We can find out by F&G, facilities—

Mike Parsons: Yes. I was looking at this, there is just over 40% are in F&G.

Q64 Dr Whitehead: That is quite high.

Mike Parsons: Yes. As I say, there is a range of buildings in the estate and although obviously as part of the estate rationalisation we are trying to consolidate into buildings that are more efficient, both for running the business but also in terms of sustainability, there is still a number of buildings that are less efficient and so we need to continue. As I say, despite the good progress, we think the year-end position for this year will be down 23% against the baseline, so further improvements from last year. There is still considerably more scope for improvement.

Q65 Dr Whitehead: The other 220 buildings that the department has presence in, but which you certainly say in the *Sustainability Report* you do not have direct and final energy control over, are those buildings just written off or does the Home Office have an active role in looking at their energy efficiency and how they work?

Mike Parsons: I think we would have a different role, depending on the nature of the occupation arrangements, so clearly we have staff in ports, maybe small numbers of staff in buildings in other areas, perhaps we might be renting part of the space from another Government department, so there will be a range of lease and occupation regimes. I think we would have to look at that on a specific property by property basis, the scope that we had to engage with landlords on that front, but the vast majority of our staff are in the buildings that we are talking about in the report and that we have focused on.

Q66 Dr Whitehead: Yes, I understand, but I just wonder, for example, where you mention that you may be leasing part of a building that is run by another department, does that department then regard that building as escaping its attention because you are leasing part of it as far as the energy efficiency is concerned?

Mike Parsons: I think that would fall within their responsibilities, as they would have control over the emissions for that building.

Q67 Dr Whitehead: So everything is caught by somebody?

Mike Parsons: Everything should be caught by somebody, but clearly even if we do not have control, then there can be conversations with landlords and owners, other occupiers of buildings.

Q68 Chair: Okay, just on this issue about estate consolidation, and obviously you are looking to reduce the budget and there will be decisions about which premises and so on to use. I am just interested, just following on from Dr Whitehead's questions, as to how that links in with the point that Professor Pease was making at the outset about what implications that might have, say, for inner city areas where you might find the likelihood of less efficient office or buildings of one kind or another rather than new build, and the implications that there is there for, if you like, inequalities that might be building up, and how much on this issue of consolidation of buildings that is linked into the commercial procurement kind of operations.

Mike Parsons: Obviously in terms of looking at where we locate the consolidated staff, then we need to reflect on where people work and where we need the staff, so it will not just be a consideration around environmental sustainability of the building, although that will clearly be a consideration, but clearly it would not be sustainable to have a building that is a very long way away from where our staff are traditionally based, so if we are consolidating a group of buildings in the Manchester area, we would need to be looking for an efficient building in that area, for example. I guess it would be part of the considerations in terms of what might be the most effective way of achieving estate consolidation.

Q69 Mark Lazarowicz: Yes, just on a couple of specific areas of the department's performance in terms of reducing emissions, dealing very specifically first of all with flights, what analysis have you done as to the reason why the Home Office staff should take more flights than other Government departments? I understand there is a big issue about getting to Northern Ireland, which obviously will affect the Home Office probably more than other departments, but more generally, what reason do we see this relatively high use of flights by the Home Office than other departments?

Mike Parsons: The Home Office has staff, as you know, throughout the country, including Border Force staff at ports and there are some areas like Northern Ireland where flying is essential. If staff are taking flights, then that needs to be because that is the most effective way of them doing the job that they need to do. Flights have to be booked using our online travel booking system and that shows the flight against the alternative train fares and enables people to see the carbon emissions and there is a sort of carbon emission calculator as part of that. The guidance is very much that flights should only be considered where other options are poorer value for money or do not meet the business needs. So we have discontinued the ability of people to book flights outside the booking system using purchase cards. People have to book through the online travel booking system and so they

get that comparison, but there will always be situations where it is most appropriate for people to fly.

Q70 Mark Lazarowicz: Have you set a target for reduction in flights?

Mike Parsons: We have a target for the overall reduction in carbon emissions, and that, as I say, we are making good progress on. The big reduction we made is in building emissions. The emissions from travel have increased from the baseline, but that is offset by very significant savings in emissions on buildings.

Q71 Mark Lazarowicz: Although they have increased, that is obviously concerning, so what steps are you taking to try to ensure that the increase is reversed?

Mike Parsons: We have invested in teleconferencing, video-conferencing facilities in 72 of the Home Office's sites and we have begun monitoring the usage of video-conferencing facilities. We will be continuing to push and promote those as alternatives to travel more generally, and as I say, we have restricted people's ability to book flights, apart from through the online travel booking system, where the alternatives are very clear. We are also in the process of reissuing some of the travel policy guidance that underlines the point that the flights should only be used where other options are poorer value for money and do not meet the business needs, so we are trying a number of angles to drive home the message and encourage people to consider alternatives, but given the nature of the Home Office work, there will always be a requirement for some flights.

Q72 Mark Lazarowicz: That is understood, but at what point do you expect to be able to make an assessment of the success of the video-conferencing facilities in terms of reducing travel or indeed other factors as well?

Mike Parsons: I was asked a question earlier about one of the enhancements we thought we could make in the sustainability report that we published, and that is something we want to start publishing in this second report, in future reports, so we can see the success of that initiative.

Chair: I shall look forward to it.

Q73 Mark Lazarowicz: Okay. If we can turn very briefly to the question of paper and waste, I understand you are looking at what can be called a circular model, using closed loop facilities for paper where paper is recycled and reused. The *Sustainability Report* indicates this approach has been taken in Marsham Street. Are there any plans to expand this to other sites? Is it something that is possible to expand to other sites?

Mike Parsons: I am not sure whether we have plans to expand that, but that is certainly something I can look at and advise the Committee.

Q74 Mark Lazarowicz: Finally, in terms of the possible spoilage or contamination of recycling compostable waste collected from your sites, are you able to monitor to ensure that, as far as possible, the waste is put into the right containers so it can be recycled and composted? Is that something that you are able to monitor?

Mike Parsons: I understand our recovery rates in terms of waste are over 70%, so I think the quality of the separation is reasonably good, but again, it is something I could check and confirm to you.

Q75 Mark Lazarowicz: Obviously you have a system effectively for monitoring that particular issue, obviously it is checked every day, but is there some system of trying to ensure that that is complied with?

Mike Parsons: That is something that our facilities management people would do for us, but again, I can find out the details and let you know.

Q76 Simon Wright: I have a couple of questions about the Government commitments beyond 2015. I understand that the Home Office is involved with DEFRA and the Cabinet Office in developing the post-2015 programme. I wonder if you could tell us a bit about what your thoughts are on how this should develop, based on the Home Office's experience to date?

Mike Parsons: As I said, we are focusing on the current commitments, which do run to 2015, and we are putting our energies in to continue to improve on those, even where on things such as wastewater and paper we have already achieved the targets. It will be a matter for Ministers to decide what replaces the *Greening Government Commitments* beyond 2015.

Q77 Simon Wright: So you have not yet started any work as a department on that, because your *Sustainability Report* does say that you are involved in developing that programme beyond 2015?

Mike Parsons: Officials have been working with officials across Government, but it is a matter for the lead department, DEFRA, and Ministers to make decisions on what will replace the current *Greening Government Commitments*. I can only really talk about what the Home Office is doing against the current commitment as set out in our business plan.

Q78 Simon Wright: So you have not, for example, given any thought about the issue that when you are looking at achieving a percentage reduction, it is against a starting baseline and whether perhaps you could look at absolute performance rather than changes against a baseline, for example, a sort of per person or per unit approach, you have not given any thought to that?

Mike Parsons: I think the officials have been looking at different ways of measuring and targeting, but any decisions around what mechanism might replace the current commitments, as I say, is a matter for DEFRA as the department and decisions of Ministers. Our focus is on progressing the priorities that are in the agreed Home Office business plan, so I think I need to restrict my comments to that.

Chair: Fine. I think we will move on to Peter Aldous and there may be a chance for Mr Fernau to contribute a little bit.

Q79 Peter Aldous: You appear to be performing well against the green ICT strategy. I think you scored 3.1 on the Cabinet Office's green ICT maturity model. What would you put this down to?

Mike Parsons: I was looking forward to handing over to you. I am just looking at the different areas, the different categories for ICT in my briefing. The areas where we have made most progress on I think are around the sort of strategy and replacing desktops with thin clients and replacing equipment that was a heavy user of energy with more modern thin client machines on the desktop. We have also started to include sustainability issues in our IT investment business cases, so there is a number of areas where we have made progress on and I think we are going to be reporting further progress this year. I think we reported 3.1 last year and we are estimating it will be 3.4 this year.

Q80 Peter Aldous: As a matter of interest, as one moves on, and as you said, you have replaced desktops with the thin client devices. Does it become more difficult to increase your score to improve your performance, do you think?

Mike Parsons: There is still a way to go, because we are replacing equipment as it becomes end of life, so there are still a lot of older desktops that we need to replace, but there are also other opportunities. As we move more to sort of cloud-based services, where we are paying based on consumption rather than having servers that are not being heavily utilised, then there is further opportunities open up as we replace some of our current contracts with dedicated data centres and start to move to more cloud-based services, so I think there is still considerable savings that we can make as part of our technology journey.

Q81 Peter Aldous: I think you have probably just answered my next question. The decision to replace the desktop devices with the—

Chair: Client ones.

Peter Aldous: —client-based one—sorry, madam Chairman, I have new bifocals in today that are not as good as they should be.

Was that just regular replacement of equipment or was it driven by the actual sustainability objectives?

Mike Parsons: The equipment was coming to the end of life and therefore a welcome opportunity to replace the equipment.

Q82 Peter Aldous: So it was more fortuitous rather than by design?

Mike Parsons: Well, the decision to replace them with thin client rather than like for like was because that was much more sustainable and energy efficient. We are also expanding the use of laptops, which enable staff to work more flexibly, which might reduce travel costs, rather than having to return to an office base, but also should enable us to make further reductions in paper, as people do not have to print out papers to go to meetings and take laptops. So there is a number of things we are doing as part of replacing the old desktops, both with thin client machines, which have power-saving features, which the old machines did not, and expanding the use of laptops to enable more flexible working. So I think yes, it is fortuitous that the current equipment is coming to the end of the life, but there is a very definite plan as to why we are replacing things the way we are.

Q83 Peter Aldous: Finally, the green ICT strategy is managed separately from the *Greening Government Commitments*, and it covers a wide range of emissions such as emissions with third-party providers of service, which they themselves are not covered by the *Greening Government Commitments*. Do you think there are lessons to be learned here for future Government targets?

Mike Parsons: It may well be an area for consideration in terms of future arrangements, but we thought it was really important that we looked at the broader issues and not just the elements that are captured in the Greening Government targets, which is why the business plan targets for the Home Office includes the *Greening Government Commitments* and progressing on the Government green IT strategy so that we are looking at the issues such as third-party data centres and opportunities for making savings there as well. As you say, there may in the future be opportunities to bring those together into one more coherent—

Q84 Mrs Spelman: We received evidence as a Select Committee that was favourable of your policy on sustainable procurement and that had at its heart—maybe Mr

Fernau is going to get it in a moment, he has been waiting, so I will tee it up nicely—and singled out this CAESER tool that you have developed. I wonder if you would like to tell us a little bit about that, how you feel it works and whether or not you feel it has wider application across other Government departments. This is your moment.

John Fernau: Thank you very much. Thank you. CAESER is an online reporting tool. In contract terms and performance terms, you get what you measure, so this is a tool for measuring sustainability performance across carbon waste, equality and diversity and social and economic measures such as SME, which is important to me, as I am the department's SME champion. So this is, in a sense, an online questionnaire. It is designed to be quite simple and lightweight for the business to complete and do. It is not intended to be red tape or a burden on business. We have been running it for about five years and over that time have been refining the way that we ask questions to get better response rates and so on.

We do this on an annual basis. The markets respond and they respond quite well as new suppliers have come on board and they have become more used to it; they complete the questionnaire, we get a sort of 80%, 90% response rate. The tool then analyses their responses and produces a general report for us, which I will come to in a sec, but it also gives specific reports for each supplier, so probably for the supplier's benefit, it is identifying where they can make improvements in these areas, and really for the supplier's CSR agenda, we are setting out the roadmap for them to move forward, so it is almost a sort of free consultancy for them, if you like.

At the same time that it is generating that support to the supplier, it is also sent to our contract manager, so the contract manager is also being alerted to what issues have been found in that supplier, are there any key risks that we need to address and that is then the follow-up from our side. At my level, I am then seeing a higher-level report on what are key risks that are being identified. Some of them are things that you might expect that we can then get the contract management to address, like not using sustainable timber. Some of them are things that you would not expect: we saw one last time that said one supplier uses corporal punishment in their workforce, which we then immediately thought, "This is unusual" and investigated it, and it turned out they had clicked the wrong button, because it is quite a simple system, but it is flagging those sorts of things to our attention.

Then I think the actual implementation of it, so some firms will pick it up and take it forward themselves, they want to improve their CSR performance and they see this as a very valuable tool, it is setting out the tasks for them to take forward. It is circulated among our contract managers and they are made aware of it. There is probably more that we can do in following up and pushing forward the actions.

Q85 Mrs Spelman: I am so glad it went without corporal punishment, especially your department, it is good to hear. But this point about across other Government departments, so wider application, I have seen in your evidence there is hard evidence that among suppliers, you have moved in terms of, for example, timber sustainability and compliance, but what about other departments?

John Fernau: There is potential for several other departments to use CAESER. HMRC springs to mind and I think there is another one too, DEFRA, I would have thought. I would think there is potential for other departments to also use the tool. They are just about to start using the same sort of underlying infrastructure, which is called Sid4Gov, so at that stage the Crown Commercial Service have just let the contract to do this, so it will

go to the top 500 Government suppliers for them to identify—partly it is for them to fill in all their PQQ procurement information once, not to do it hundreds of times, so it is reducing the burden for them.

There is also a sort of light version of CAESER within it, which will then be collated across all the Government suppliers. Clearly there is potential for that to be pushed further and use the full CAESER. I cannot comment on other departments, but I would think the question would be if you are collating the information, there has to be a point in what you do with it.

Mrs Spelman: Yes, absolutely. Thank you very much, Mr Fernau.

Q86 Chair: Can I just pursue that a little bit more, because it is one thing to say, “Other Government departments can be taking it up, but effectively that is a matter for them” and then we are into that kind of silo thinking. Given the Green Business Group that there is, the fact that you have two Ministers, as we heard at the outset, on that group, surely if you have some example of good practice in the Home Office that could be providing leverage and a greater influence from Government with a greater take-up of the CAESER programme, somebody somewhere should be converting that best practice, if you like, and saying, “Why aren’t the Government departments taking it up?” In a way, going back to the sustainability champion, how does that then fit within their remit if this specification has not yet been drawn up?

John Fernau: I think in terms of what we can do, in terms of our leadership, we can demonstrate what can be done and what can be done relatively painlessly without a great deal of overhead or bureaucracy. I think if we were considering wider Government approaches, the model that I think does work quite well is the SME champion model, where the Crown Commercial Service has an SME champion. They are monitoring a very simple performance measure across all departments, which is the proportion of their external spend that is with SMEs. If we had a central Government sustainability champion that was setting out, say, five key measures—

Q87 Chair: That you have a Home Office sustainability champion?

John Fernau: We do for the Home Office, but I think the consideration is how that can be developed across Government. Certainly we can demonstrate to other Government departments what can be done.

Chair: Great, okay. We must move on. Martin Caton.

Q88 Martin Caton: Thank you, Chair. The NAO briefing tells us that you have not adapted your climate adaptation plan since 2011. Are there any lessons from the severe weather that we experienced at the turn of the year and were any of your sites affected?

Mike Parsons: I am not aware any of our sites were affected, and you are right, we have not updated our adaptation plan, as we were not required to update it, but we did last update it in 2011 and as part of our continuing investment in estates—and we obviously have an ongoing investment programme in our estate—we do look at the issues that were identified, so where is a risk from flooding? We have done a number of estate improvement works such as clearing out culverts and generally taking action where our assessment showed that there was potential risk from flooding. So it is something that is an ongoing consideration as part of estate investment strategy.

Q89 Martin Caton: You say you were not required to update the adaptation plan. Does that mean it is driven from another Government department or from the Climate Change Committee or—

Mike Parsons: I presume it was from the lead Government department that the requirements were set, and there was not a requirement to update it, but we did publish a plan in 2010, as required, and we did then update that in 2011. We have not updated it since, but as I say, we have continued to invest in our estate to reduce the risk of flooding.

Martin Caton: Thank you.

Q90 Dr Whitehead: Mr Parsons, you mentioned earlier that all properties will be caught somehow as far as energy efficiency requirements and measurements are concerned, but some have escaped, haven't they? I particularly have in mind asylum seekers' homes.

John Fernau: I think it is hard to classify that as our estate, if we consider the contracts we have let for the provision of asylum seekers' accommodation to three suppliers. They are then managing the provision of accommodation to asylum seekers, and that accommodation is owned by landlords. I think that is not to say that we are not doing anything to improve it. The first priority has to be to improve the quality of that asylum accommodation, and certainly of this month, the quality across the board is up to where we need it to be now, where previously it has not. So the estate, certainly two of the providers that have taken it on, it has proven difficult for them. They have had to invest heavily to upgrade it. So that is the sort of social and economic benefit to those asylum seekers to have the decent standard of accommodation that they deserve.

The next challenge then is to what we do to drive those contracts to improve the performance of that estate going forward, and there is provision within the contract for sustainable KPIs. We are working with the providers and we are expecting to get a draft sustainability KPI to them this month and it to be in effect within three months, but there are a number of challenges beyond that for them. They are incentivised and encouraged to reduce their costs, which are largely energy, by 5% a year in the contract, but going beyond that, they do face some specific challenges.

Anecdotally, this is around inspectors routinely finding the heating on full blast and all of the windows open, and then the companies will then try to limit access to the controls for the heating, including burying it in walls, and the inhabitants will sometimes dig them out of the walls. Within all three providers, they are looking at slightly different solutions of how to do this. One of them has employed a company to monitor energy usage across their estate and where they see hotspots or spikes in energy use, they then sent in their housing officers to investigate what is going on.

The second one is then looking more at remote metering, and they are piloting a remote metering project, of which the potential intent is they can remotely control the heating systems. The last one then is looking at a combination of these two measures, so we are looking to pursue the sustainability and performance of that asylum seekers' estate, but it had to follow on from the primary drive, which was to up the standard of accommodation in the estate.

Q91 Dr Whitehead: But the department did not apply its sustainable KPIs when you made the transition to the COMPASS arrangements for the provision of homes by the four independent providers.

John Fernau: No, it did not. No.

Q92 Dr Whitehead: Why was that?

John Fernau: There was always a provision in the contract to consider a KPI, but it was deemed most important at the time to get the accommodation standards to where they needed to be, so we are now—

Q93 Dr Whitehead: Isn't that done through a sustainable KPI?

John Fernau: By accommodation standards I mean in good repair, the heating, ventilated, clean, tidy and so on. I mean, they are fairly basic standards and the priority was to get those basic standards right. Now that we have those basic standards right, we can move to a further sustainability KPI, and that is what we are looking to introduce.

Q94 Dr Whitehead: Are you in active discussion with any of the four providers about either repair and improvement arrangements for properties that are already contracted with those bodies, and alternatively penalty arrangements if they continue to let out properties or so procure properties that fall below the required standards?

John Fernau: We are. The accommodation standards and accommodation KPIs are rated. They are penalised in proportion to the severity of the failure, if there is a failure, so if something is unsafe, they are highly penalised and very rapidly penalised, down to if something is inconvenient, they may still be penalised, but it will be less heavy.

Moving to sustainability, this is discussed at the working group level and they have been discussing how to improve this. It does fall into their cost drivers. Beyond this 5% cost reduction, if the providers can reduce their own costs, this is to their own benefit and these contracts are commercially very tight, so they seek to increase their profitability at any point. So as well as their own interest and their own driver in doing this, we are having ongoing discussions with them, and that will lead to this KPI within three months.

Q95 Dr Whitehead: The Government has some schemes available for improvement to energy efficiency, insulation of boilers, which as far as I understand, to date the department has not taken up. Is that right?

John Fernau: It is. You would think the providers are having to make some substantial investment, in the millions, into their housing stock to bring them to standard, and on the other side, we have capital funding available to improve things and the question is, "Why is this crossover happening? Why aren't they attracting that funding?" It seems at this stage that the answer is driven by this is down to landlords, so landlords are responsible for the fabric of a building, which includes heating systems, and landlords are reluctant to—again, back to the same commerciality—make any capital expense and expenditure that they do not need to. I think there is an opportunity through our supply chain, and we could make sort of a blanket communication, if you like, a blanket promotion of these schemes to those landlords to demonstrate how they can make improvements which will not necessarily cost them.

Q96 Dr Whitehead: Those, yes, the landlords own the properties, but they are contracted out on effectively a long-term basis to the bodies who are then responsible to you for the contracting of the homes. Therefore they are let presumably as whole homes rather than individual parts of homes as far as your contracts are concerned.

John Fernau: Yes, they are let as whole properties, not individual rooms, for example.

Q97 Dr Whitehead: So presumably they will come under the terms of the shortly to be consulted on secondary legislation on energy efficiency, minimum letting standards for tenanted property?

John Fernau: I do not know the answer to that.

Q98 Dr Whitehead: I asked that because another part of Government is about to consult on this process, whereby by 2018 properties which are regarded as whole tenanted properties, which it appears these properties will fall into, will not be lettable if they are below it as far as the energy efficiency standards are concerned as to the property as a whole. Might the department commit itself to an early adoption of that particular piece of secondary of legislation as far as its lettings are concerned to ensure that landlords do indeed provide property one way or another that is of a suitable energy efficiency standard?

John Fernau: I think the first step would be to engage with our three COMPASS providers to ensure that they are aware of the forthcoming legislation and to encourage them, as part of their investment programmes, which are well-established, while they are undertaking these works and these programmes, should they not be carrying on and making themselves legislation proof going forward, so I think that—

Chair: Sorry, could you just speak up? I am having difficulty hearing.

John Fernau: Sorry. I think the first step for us would be to ensure that we engage with our three asylum providers to ensure that they are aware of the legislation that is forthcoming and then to encourage them, while they have these investment programmes in their housing stock, to invest, to develop their housing stock further to meet the legislative requirements before they come into effect.

Q99 Dr Whitehead: Do I take it from that that the department would be concerned to do that?

John Fernau: I think we are very happy to engage with the suppliers to encourage them to do this. I think we would have to take a view on whether we were going to contract to that stage ahead of legislation.

Q100 Dr Whitehead: A final thought on this particular area is of course as far as the Green Deal and ECO provisions are concerned, there are possibilities effectively of tenants requiring those improvements to be made by their landlords, but presumably since the department and all the providers stand in stead of the tenants in relation to the landlord, to what extent has the department investigated how it might develop Green Deal and ECO improvement schemes within those properties on that basis?

John Fernau: I think at this stage we have not investigated that with the three COMPASS providers. As I said, I think the focus has been improving the fairly basic standards in accommodation before pushing on to engage with them on future standards and what they might do to engage on those Government schemes, so I think that is something that we need to do, but we have not done so far.

Q101 Dr Whitehead: Are you intending to place the energy effect of those properties within departmental sustainability reports in future years, because it is not in there at the moment, is it?

Mike Parsons: It is something we have on the list to consider as part of either this report or the following year's report, yes. It is one of the things that we—

Chair: Sorry, everyone is dropping their voice levels. I would be really grateful if you could speak up a little.

Mike Parsons: Oh, sorry. Yes, it is one of the things that we will consider for the next *Sustainability Report*.

Q102 Dr Whitehead: Is that a sort of yes or maybe?

Mike Parsons: It depends whether we have the information in time for this year's one or whether it is something we need to consider for the following year, so it is something we will consider the extent to which we can include information around the asylum estate in the report, but I cannot give a confirmation that we will be able to do that for this year. It may be for the following year.

Q103 Chair: Can I just try a different tack on the procurement issue, and going back to what was said previously about the CAESER method and going back to what Dr Whitehead was just saying, do you think that there is a danger that there is an over-reliance by the Home Office on using the CAESER requirements to the extent that it is not so easy to embed in procurement principles or in the procurement specification? If so, if it is a yes, which I take it it is, what could be done to embed that into subsequent contracts without relying on the CAESER procedure?

John Fernau: I think it is a good question, because CAESER is just the tool to measure this and then you need to have alternative mechanisms in place as well if you are to deliver something in addition to the outright thing that you are buying. We do include sustainability in our procurement, but we do not do it in a consistent way. Part of this is historical and we have consolidated various different commercial teams from across the Home Office into a single commercial directorate under myself, but they currently are all carrying on their previous ways of working, their previous templates and methodologies. They do engage with our sustainability team that we have been talking about and they do include it in their procurement, but it is not in a consistent way.

So I think we are working now to build a consistent and a minimum set of standards for inclusion on sustainability in procurement, which is then clearly going to result in sustainability standards in the resulting contracts and we would then look to bolster that, depending on the subject matter concerned, to meet our requirements. So there is something there, but it is not there yet, but ultimately I think we would want to be building a more multiple method of driving this behaviour rather than just relying on CAESER, which is valuable, but it is not everything.

Chair: Okay. A final question to Dr Offord.

Q104 Dr Offord: I will be very brief then. As you would expect, a significant amount of the energy spending was through the police services in England and Wales, but there was NAO report in 2013 that said the Home Office was not able to assure Members of Parliament, and indeed the public, that the £1.7 billion the police service spends on non-ICT equipment was good value for money. Taking the issue of environmental sustainability, how can you demonstrate the same kind of reassurances for the spending there?

John Fernau: Again, to go back to that hearing and the issue that procurement responsibility is devolved, several PCCs are elected on local procurement agendas and our approach is less of mandation and more of creating good value frameworks and vehicles to drive economic value, good service and indeed sustainability, and those are outright our prime methods of doing this, that either we create a proposition for a common police

requirement, say body armour or ammunition or light bars, very specific things, then we have the opportunity to assure both the value and the sustainability content of that procurement. Otherwise we can drive areas of police spend that are common to the whole public sector. We are working with police to drive towards Crown Commercial Service frameworks, which include sustainability, but the final element of this is to encourage the police to work more collaboratively by whichever means they see fit, which might be with local authorities, it might be fire agencies, it might be with other local vehicles, and in those areas we have less control over what happens within those frameworks, but there is potential to measure and monitor, and this is under discussion in overall value terms what they are achieving.

Q105 Dr Offord: Do you do that now?

John Fernau: We do not assess sustainability across how they are performing now in sustainability terms. We do analyse their spend and we are now looking to consider how we can benchmark and compare and contrast that spend.

Q106 Dr Offord: Okay, so just to clarify, you do not have direct communications with police services on those sustainability achievements?

John Fernau: In my team, we do not, no.

Q107 Chair: Could you?

John Fernau: We could do. The challenge would be, if we were looking across the categories of spend that they have and the greatest crossover to sustainability and sustainability impact, we would probably be looking at estates, for the most part. I think if we were considering other things like vehicles, tyres, glass and windscreen, we are involved in those categories already so we can have influence, and since we manage those frameworks, we can see and understand what goes through those frameworks and how those frameworks are performing in recycling used material and so on.

Q108 Dr Offord: My final question is we have received some evidence about uncertainty about the relevance of the Public Services Act, the Home Office's activities. What is your view on whether this should apply to Home Office procurement?

John Fernau: I think the challenge for us in this is the majority of these services that we are providing are not geographically specific, other than the UK, and I know this is often the view of other departments, so it is difficult then for us to assess the impact in a specific area, because we are looking to provide services over the whole country. It is not to say that we should not be considering it, but that is the approach we have taken thus far.

Q109 Dr Offord: What about issues that are not geographically specific, such as education and employment opportunities for staff?

John Fernau: I think there is more that we could be doing on that. I think the current paradigm in approach is very much on value and our priority is around service delivery to support our priorities. I think there is always something to be considered in procurement of, "What do you want to deliver beyond the obvious thing?" so I think there is potential for us to do that, but we are not pursuing that at the moment.

Dr Offord: Okay, thank you.

Chair: Okay. I think we have reached the end of what has been quite a lengthy session and I would like to thank the four of you for coming along, and also the members of the Committee for sticking it out to the bitter end, as it were. I think that our scrutiny of different

Government departments is something that we feel is important it should be done. I suppose we will obviously be reporting, but we do see it as an opportunity for you to do a little bit of self-assessment as well. We hope that the very fact of coming before the Committee will help you in preparing to reassess where the gaps are and what needs to be done. Can I thank you all very much indeed and for the work that you do?