



HOUSE OF LORDS

Liaison Committee

3rd Report of Session 2022–23

New committee activity in 2023

Ordered to be printed 28 November 2022 and published 7 December 2022

Published by the Authority of the House of Lords

HL Paper 104

Liaison Committee

The Liaison Committee is appointed by the House of Lords to advise the House on the resources required for select committee work and to allocate resources between select committees; to review the select committee work of the House; to consider requests for Special Inquiry Committees and report to the House with recommendations; to ensure effective co-ordination between the two Houses; and to consider the availability of members to serve on committees.

Membership

The Members of the Liaison Committee are:

[Lord Blencathra](#)

[Earl Howe*](#)

[Lord Bradley](#)

[Lord Judge](#)

[Lord Collins of Highbury*](#)

[Baroness Scott of Needham Market](#)

[Baroness Coussins](#)

[Lord Taylor of Holbeach](#)

[Lord Davies of Oldham \(did not participate\)](#)

[Baroness Walmsley](#)

[Lord Gardiner of Kimble \(Chair\)](#)

*On 28 November the Earl of Courtown attended in place of Earl Howe, and Lord Kennedy of Southwark attended in place of Lord Collins of Highbury

Declaration of interests

See Appendix 1.

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

<https://members.parliament.uk/members/lords/interests/register-of-lords-interests>

Publications

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Further information

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

Committee staff

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New committee activity in 2023

INTRODUCTION

1. The purpose of this report is to recommend new committees to the House, to conduct inquiries during 2023.
2. Since 2012 the House of Lords has usually appointed four special inquiry committees each session. At least one of these has normally been a post-legislative scrutiny committee (conducting an inquiry into the efficacy of an existing Act of Parliament). The Committee has varied this approach as necessary, for example pausing post-legislative scrutiny work in 2020–21 to allow the appointment of a committee to examine the Government response to, and the wider impacts of, COVID-19.
3. The four special inquiry and post-legislative committees appointed in January 2022 were on Adult Social Care; the Children and Families Act 2014; the Fraud Act 2006 and Digital Fraud; and Land Use in England. These Committees have worked hard over the course of the year and have either recently reported or are expected to report shortly.¹ We thank the Members who took part in these Committees and everyone who contributed in some way to these inquiries. We look forward to these important reports receiving well-considered Government responses within the usual timeframe of two months.
4. For the coming year, we invited Members to submit proposals for new special inquiry committees by 9 September. We are grateful to all Members who contributed to the 20 proposals received, which are available on the Committee’s website.² They cover a wide range of policy areas and illustrate well the breadth of interest, experience and expertise across the House. We considered these proposals at a shortlisting meeting on 17 October, and then at a final nomination meeting on 28 November, at which we heard in person from the lead proposer of each of the shortlisted topics.
5. We considered the proposals in accordance with the published criteria for selection, which are:
 - Makes best use of the knowledge and experience of Members of the House;
 - Complements the work of Commons departmental select committees;
 - Addresses areas of policy that cross departmental boundaries; and
 - The activity should be capable of being confined to one year.

1 Fraud Act 2006 and Digital Fraud Committee, *Fighting Fraud: Breaking the Chain* (Report of Session, Session 2022–23, HL Paper 87), Children and Families Act 2014 Committee, ‘Summary’: <https://committees.parliament.uk/committee/581/children-and-families-act-2014-committee> [accessed 28 November 2022], Adult Social Care Committee, ‘Summary’: <https://committees.parliament.uk/committee/580/adult-social-care-committee/> [accessed 28 November 2022] and Land Use in England Committee, ‘Summary’: <https://committees.parliament.uk/committee/583/land-use-in-england-committee> [accessed 28 November 2022]

2 Liaison Committee, *Special Inquiry Committee Proposals for 2023* (18 October 2022): <https://committees.parliament.uk/publications/30352/documents/175424/default/> [accessed 28 November 2022]

6. In addition, as set out in our invitation to Members to submit proposals,³ the Committee took into account wider factors such as the balance of topics across special inquiry committees (including in previous years), the work being undertaken by other Committees and within Government, and the possibility of early legislation on the subject matter.
7. Over the past ten years, House of Lords special inquiry committees have conducted post-legislative scrutiny on adoption, inquiries, extradition, equality and disability, licensing, the natural environment and rural communities, bribery and electoral registration. In the current session, special inquiry committees have considered both the Children and Families Act 2014 and the Fraud Act 2006.⁴ The Liaison Committee continues to believe in the value and importance of post-legislative scrutiny and will continue to consider suitable legislation in future special inquiry committee appointments. This year, the Committee has recommended the appointment of four special inquiry committees that were proposed by Members.
8. Our expectation is that the nominated committees will be considered and confirmed by the House in December, and that the committees themselves will be appointed in late January. They will be required to complete their work by the end of November 2023.
9. **We are conscious that some of the proposals cover potentially broad subject areas. Having heard from the proposers, we have recommended that these committees examine these broad subjects with a particular focus. *We recommend that, as the new committees consider and agree their detailed calls for evidence, they bear in mind what can feasibly be achieved in ten months and focus their inquiries accordingly.***
10. ***In view of the pressures on committee rooms in the House of Lords, particularly on Tuesdays and Wednesdays, we repeat the recommendation we have made previously that newly appointed committees should meet on Mondays or Thursdays.***

3 See Appendix 3

4 Fraud Act 2006 and Digital Fraud Committee, *Fighting Fraud: Breaking the Chain* (Report of Session 2022–23, HL Paper 87) and Children and Families Act 2014 Committee, ‘Summary’: <https://committees.parliament.uk/committee/581/children-and-families-act-2014-committee> [accessed 28 November 2022]

INTEGRATION OF PRIMARY AND COMMUNITY CARE

11. Lord Patel proposed a special inquiry committee to consider primary and community care.

Background

12. Primary care includes general practice, community pharmacy, dental and optometry services. Community health services cover a more extensive and diverse range of activities⁵ and can be difficult to define. Community services are delivered in a wide range of settings—including in people’s own homes as well as in community clinics, community centres and schools—so are less visible than services delivered in hospitals and GP surgeries. It has been suggested they are “often poorly understood by policy-makers, national and local health service leaders and staff working in other parts of the system.”⁶
13. Primary and community care is delivered by a wide range of professions, including GPs but also nurses, dentists, optometrists, pharmacists, physiotherapists, mental health nurses, care co-ordinators and, in the community, health visitors, specialist nurses, midwives and end-of-life carers.
14. NHS England describes primary care services as the “first point of contact in the healthcare system, acting as the ‘front door’ of the NHS”.⁷ Up to 90% of healthcare is delivered by primary care,⁸ providing up to 300 million patient consultations a year, compared to around 23 million A&E visits.⁹
15. There are increasing concerns over the state of primary and community care. Like much of the NHS, primary and community care services are struggling to cope with changing patient needs. When the NHS was set up, it focused on treating single conditions. Now, people are living longer, often with multiple conditions, and requiring more complex, ongoing care. This has not, however, been reflected in the structure of the NHS, which has been described as a patchwork of organisations that often work independently from one another.¹⁰ As a consequence, people too often receive fragmented care which can lead to poorer outcomes and create inefficiency.¹¹
16. These pressures have been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic which has increased GP workloads.¹² There are also chronic workforce issues, with primary care teams stretched beyond capacity, and significant shortages

5 A list (not exhaustive) of community services can be found here: NHS England, ‘Community health services’: <https://www.england.nhs.uk/community-health-services/> [accessed 28 November 2022]

6 The King’s Fund, ‘Community health services explained’: <https://www.kingsfund.org.uk/publications/community-health-services-explained> [accessed 28 November 2022]

7 NHS England, ‘Primary Care Services’: <https://www.england.nhs.uk/get-involved/get-involved/how/primarycare/> [accessed 28 November 2022]

8 Health and Social Care Committee, *The future of general practice* (Fourth report, Session 2022–23, HC 113)

9 NHS England, ‘Primary Care’: <https://www.england.nhs.uk/five-year-forward-view/next-steps-on-the-nhs-five-year-forward-view/primary-care/> [accessed 28 November 2022]

10 The King’s Fund, ‘How does the NHS in England work and how is it changing?’: <https://www.kingsfund.org.uk/audio-video/how-does-nhs-in-england-work> [accessed 28 November 2022]

11 The King’s Fund, ‘Integrated care systems explained’: <https://www.kingsfund.org.uk/publications/integrated-care-systems-explained> [accessed 28 November 2022]

12 Dr Claire Fuller (commissioned by NHS England and NHS Improvement), *Next steps for integrating primary care: Fuller Stocktake report* (May 2022): <https://www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/next-steps-for-integrating-primary-care-fuller-stocktake-report.pdf> [accessed 28 November 2022]

in general practice.¹³ A recent report commissioned by NHS England and NHS Improvement stated that: “left as it is, primary care as we know it will become unsustainable in a relatively short period of time.”¹⁴

Suggested scope for a potential inquiry

17. A special inquiry committee would need clearly to define primary care and community care, including what services are included within those terms.
18. An inquiry would need to be mindful of the fact that, while many of the challenges faced by primary and community health services impact most heavily on general practice, GPs and general practice have been heavily examined over recent years.¹⁵ A potential inquiry may therefore wish to avoid a central focus on general practice.
19. A useful focus could be provided by the need for greater integration across primary and community care; and for primary and community care with the rest of the healthcare system. Subject to this focus, key issues that the committee might choose to examine include the challenges facing primary and community health services and the key changes required for long-term sustainability; workforce challenges; recent announcements on improving integration; the impact of structural changes via the Health and Care Act 2022; the role of Primary Care Networks since their inception in 2019; and the opportunities of increased use of technology.
20. ***The Committee recommend that a special inquiry committee be appointed “to consider the integration of primary and community care”, to report by the end of November 2023.***

13 Dr Claire Fuller (commissioned by NHS England and NHS Improvement), *Next steps for integrating primary care: Fuller Stocktake report* (May 2022): <https://www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/next-steps-for-integrating-primary-care-fuller-stocktake-report.pdf> [accessed 28 November 2022]

14 *Ibid.*

15 Including Health and Social Care Committee, *The future of general practice* (Fourth report, Session 2022–23, HC 113); and Policy Exchange, ‘At Your Service’: <https://policyexchange.org.uk/publication/at-your-service/> [accessed 28 November 2022]

EDUCATION FOR 11–16 YEAR OLDS

21. Lord Baker of Dorking, Lord Aberdare, Lord Blunkett, Baroness Garden of Frognal, Lord Lucas, Baroness Morris of Yardley and the Duke of Wellington proposed a special inquiry committee to examine the case for a fundamental reform of the English secondary school system so that it is relevant to the needs of the digital and green economy.

Background

22. The English education system has had multiple interventions from successive governments and department leads. The education sector is currently facing a number of significant challenges, including a reported ‘funding crisis’, in part caused by rising pay and energy costs,¹⁶ workforce shortages,¹⁷ and pressures reported by teachers caused by the assessment system, both exam league tables and Ofsted inspections. Another recognised challenge, particularly for secondary education, is how to ensure the curriculum keeps pace with the evolving needs of business and industry. A special inquiry committee undertaking an inquiry into how the education system might better support children to gain skills relevant for the digital and green economy would need to consider several interrelated policy areas, including the school curriculum, vocational skills training opportunities and the needs of employers.

The school curriculum

23. Successive governments have alternated in emphasis in education policy between knowledge and skills. Previous governments focused more on skills: the Department for Education and Skills (DFES) existed until 2007.¹⁸ More recently, Government focus has been more on knowledge: in his tenure as Education Secretary, Rt Hon. Michael Gove MP emphasised the importance of “cultural literacy.”¹⁹ The current Minister of State for Schools, Rt Hon. Nick Gibb MP, continues to champion a ‘knowledge rich curriculum’.²⁰
24. Under the Coalition Government there was significant reform of GCSE, AS and A-level qualifications, which has continued under the Conservatives. The reforms are extensive and include changes to both the subject content and assessment of these qualifications, as well as the qualifications that may be studied.²¹ The reforms aimed to increase the rigour of the qualifications.
25. Over time it has been suggested that there has been a gradual narrowing of the GCSE curriculum. Recent trends in secondary education have highlighted a decline in take-up of creative and technical subjects in the past ten years:

16 BBC News, ‘Schools to cut staff in budget squeeze, union says’: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/education-63518326> [accessed 28 November 2022]

17 House of Commons Library, Teacher recruitment and retention in England, Research Briefing, [07222](https://www.parliament.uk/research-briefings/crbs07222), September 2022, p.8—“The number of reported teacher vacancies (full-time and part-time) in state funded schools has also risen, from 452 (0.1% of the workforce) in November 2010 to 1,564 (0.3%) in 2021.”

18 HM Government, ‘Department for Education and Skills’: <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-education-and-skills> [accessed 28 November 2022]

19 Hirsch, E. D., *Cultural Literacy: What every American needs to know* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1987): <http://people.whitman.edu/~frierspr/hirsch%20cultural%20literacy.pdf> [accessed 28 November 2022]

20 Rt Hon. Nick Gibb MP, Speech on The importance of a knowledge-rich curriculum, 21 July 2021: <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/the-importance-of-a-knowledge-rich-curriculum> [accessed 28 November 2022]

21 House of Commons Library, GCSE, AS and A level reform (England), Research Briefing, [06962](https://www.parliament.uk/research-briefings/crbs06962), March 2017

- There has been a 70% decline in GCSE entries in Design & Technology (D&T) between 2010–2021²² (D&T is a requirement up to age 14).²³
 - Similarly, there has been a 40% decline in GCSE entries in creative subjects over the same period.²⁴
26. Skills gaps are reported widely from employers. Employers say that only 48% of people leaving full-time education have the advanced digital skills required.²⁵

Suggested scope for a potential inquiry

27. In considering this proposal we were mindful that the Commons Education Committee is currently undertaking an inquiry entitled *The Future of post-16 qualifications*.²⁶ We also took into account the recent work of the House of Lords Select Committee on Youth Unemployment, which reported in November 2021 and which made far-reaching recommendations, amongst other things, on further education and apprenticeships, which also normally focus on the 16+ age range. We also took into account the need to ensure any inquiry had a sufficient focus and could be completed successfully within one year.
28. ***The Committee recommend that a special inquiry committee be appointed “to consider education for 11–16 year olds with reference to the skills necessary for the digital and green economy”, to report by the end of November 2023.***

22 Youth Unemployment Committee, *Skills for every young person* (Report of Session 2021–22, HL Paper 98) p 62

23 House of Commons Library, The school curriculum in England, Briefing Paper, [06798](#), March 2021

24 Youth Unemployment Committee, *Skills for every young person* (Report of Session 2021–22, HL Paper 98) p 63

25 Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport, *UK Digital Strategy* (June 2022): https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1089103/UK_Digital_Strategy_web_accessible.pdf [accessed 28 November 2022]

26 Education Committee, ‘The future of post-16 qualifications’: <https://committees.parliament.uk/work/1637/the-future-of-post16-qualifications/publications/> [accessed 28 November 2022]. The Committee is currently at the reporting stage with the last evidence session held in November 2022.

HORTICULTURAL SECTOR

29. Baroness Fookes proposed a special inquiry committee to examine the evolving role of horticulture.

Background

30. The horticultural sector is a branch of agriculture that relates to the production, cultivation and management of both fruits and vegetables, known as edible horticulture, and ornamental plants, known as ornamental horticulture. The Office for National Statistics (ONS) found in 2021 UK domestic horticultural production was worth around £4.2bn (of which around £1.7bn was in vegetables, £900m in fruit, and £1.6bn in ornamental plants).²⁷
31. One of the major challenges faced by the sector is the availability of labour and skills. The House of Commons Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Committee published a report in December 2020 into labour and the food chain and found “as much as 99%” of the seasonal labour recruited for the edible horticultural sector are EU workers.²⁸ In the ornamental horticultural sector labour and skills concerns predate the UK’s departure from the EU.²⁹ The Government has included horticulture in the scope of its Seasonal Worker visa, and this scheme has been extended to the end of 2024. However, the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) has warned that the industry must reduce its reliance on foreign labour and concentrate on the domestic workforce.³⁰ The Department for Education has been taking steps to encourage qualifications and careers in horticulture, as part of a wider drive to encourage ‘green’ jobs.³¹
32. Technology is also a key focus of the sector, with the Government commissioning an independent review on automation in horticulture which published its report in July 2022.³² The review highlighted six key clusters of technologies that could accelerate automation and identified the barriers to adopting automation. The review concluded that “technology alone is not a solution” and emphasised the need for a secure labour force before automation can be implemented. In October 2022 the Government

27 Office for National Statistics, ‘Latest horticulture statistics’: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/latest-horticulture-statistics> [accessed 28 November 2022]

28 Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Committee, *The UK’s new immigration policy and the food supply chain* (Third Report, Session 2019–21, HC 231)

29 Ornamental Horticulture Roundtable Group, *Horticulture sector skills survey 2019* (October 2019): <https://www.rhs.org.uk/science/pdf/horticulture-skills-report/horticulture-sector-skills-survey-report.pdf> [accessed 28 November 2022]

30 HM Government, ‘Seasonal Worker visa (Temporary Work)’: <https://www.gov.uk/seasonal-worker-visa> [accessed 28 November 2022] and Home Office and the Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs, ‘Industry given certainty around seasonal workers but told to focus on domestic workforce’: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/industry-given-certainty-around-seasonal-workers-but-told-to-focus-on-domestic-workforce> [accessed 28 November 2022]

31 Department for Education, ‘Sustainability and Climate Change Strategy: a strategy for the education and children’s services systems’: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/sustainability-and-climate-change-strategy/sustainability-and-climate-change-a-strategy-for-the-education-and-childrens-services-systems> [accessed 28 November 2022]

32 Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs, ‘Independent report - Automation in horticulture review’ (27 July 2022): <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/defra-led-review-of-automation-in-horticulture/automation-in-horticulture-review> [accessed 28 November 2022]

announced £12.5million would be invested in automation and robotics through the Farming Innovation Programme.³³

33. The sector has also stressed the role of horticulture in protecting the environment and aiding the transition to a greener economy. Horticulture could provide opportunities to assist the Government in reaching environment and climate change targets, including tree planting and plans to phase out the use of peat.

Recent committee activity

34. The House of Commons Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Committee has not conducted an inquiry specifically into horticulture but has addressed areas overlapping with this sector. The 2020 inquiry into labour in the food supply chain considered labour in the edible horticultural sector and the impact of technological innovation.³⁴ The Committee is currently conducting an inquiry into food security and this may involve follow-up on the labour inquiry and anticipated future inquiries may also involve a degree of overlap.³⁵ Other committees including the House of Commons Digital, Culture, Media and Sport Committee and the House of Lords European Affairs Committee have also conducted inquiries in areas relevant to horticulture.³⁶ As is typical for special inquiry committees, a committee in this area would need to be conscious of relevant committees previous and current work to avoid overlap where possible.

Suggested scope for a potential inquiry

35. A special inquiry committee on the horticultural sector could be cross-cutting and consider both edible and ornamental horticulture and the nuances between the two areas. Many of the policy areas relevant to horticulture are devolved, including agriculture, environmental, education and health policy, and a committee's recommendations in these areas would be limited to England.
36. A special inquiry committee on this topic might consider the following:
- The challenges facing the sector in terms of the availability of labour and the levels of skills, and how any shortages and gaps could be addressed.
 - The future opportunities for technological innovation within the sector, such as automation and robotics; the benefits and limitations of technology in addressing the other issues facing the sector (such as labour/skills shortages and tackling climate change).

33 Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs, 'Environment Secretary commits to sustainable horticulture growth': <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/environment-secretary-commits-to-sustainable-horticulture-growth> [accessed 28 November 2022]

34 Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Committee, *The UK's new immigration policy and the food supply chain* (Third Report, Session 2019–21, HC 231)

35 Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Committee, 'Food Security': <https://committees.parliament.uk/work/6861/food-security/> [accessed 28 November 2022]

36 Digital, Culture, Media and Sport Committee, *Garden design and tourism* (Fourteenth Report, Session 2017–19, HC 2002) and Letter from the Earl of Kinnoull, Chair of the European Affairs Committee to the Minister for Brexit Opportunities and Government Efficiency, 18 May 2022: <https://committees.parliament.uk/publications/22296/documents/164926/default/>

- The role of the horticultural sector, both now and in the future, in supporting the environment and tackling climate change; the challenges the sector itself faces in becoming more environmentally friendly.
- A review of current Government policy and Whitehall institutional architecture in relation to the horticultural sector, and whether this could be improved.
- A cross-cutting examination of the extent to which the different parts of the sector face the same or different challenges and opportunities in these areas, in particular the distinction between edible horticulture and ornamental horticulture.
- The current and potential future contribution of the horticultural sector to the wider economy, including objectives such as Levelling Up.
- How the sector could contribute to improved mental and physical health.
- The development and design of parks and green spaces in towns and cities.
- Trade and biosecurity issues in the sector, such as the risk of imported plant diseases.

37. ***The Committee recommend that a special inquiry committee be appointed “to consider the development of the horticultural sector”, to report by the end of November 2023.***

USE OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE IN WEAPON SYSTEMS

38. Lord Clement-Jones proposed a special inquiry committee to examine the use of artificial intelligence in weapon systems.

Background

39. The Ministry of Defence (MOD) defines artificial intelligence (AI) as “a family of general-purpose technologies, any of which may enable machines to perform tasks normally requiring human or biological intelligence, especially when the machines learn from data how to do those tasks.”³⁷ The use of AI in weapon systems is an emotive subject, with a 2020 poll conducted across 28 countries finding opposition to lethal autonomous weapon systems (LAWS), or so-called ‘killer robots’, has increased to 62% from 56% in 2017.³⁸ There is not an internationally agreed definition of LAWS and the MOD does not have an operative definition of LAWS.³⁹
40. The UN Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) established a Group of Governmental Experts (GGE) in 2017 to discuss emerging technologies in the area of LAWS. In 2019, 11 guiding principles on LAWS were adopted, however these are not legally binding.⁴⁰ The GGE is yet to reach a consensus on how LAWS should be defined or legislated on.⁴¹ In October 2022, 70 states delivered a joint statement to the UN General Assembly calling for internationally agreed rules, including prohibitions and regulations, on autonomous weapon systems. The UK was a signatory to the statement alongside the United States of America, Australia and the Netherlands.⁴²
41. There is no specific legislation relating to the use of AI and autonomous systems in military applications, however, existing International Humanitarian Law (IHL) governs the use of emerging technologies in warfare.⁴³ The Government has reiterated its view that IHL “provides a robust, principle-based framework for the regulation of weapons development and use” and remains “the most appropriate way of regulating new means and methods of warfare.”⁴⁴

37 Ministry of Defence, *Defence Artificial Intelligence Strategy* (June 2022): https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1082416/Defence_Artificial_Intelligence_Strategy.pdf [accessed 28 November 2022]

38 Stop Killer Robots, ‘Opposition to killer robots remains strong – poll’: <https://www.stopkillerrobots.org/news/poll-opposition-to-killer-robots-strong/> [accessed 28 November 2022]

39 Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, *Government response to the House of Lords Select Committee on Artificial Intelligence*, February 2021, CP 390: <https://committees.parliament.uk/publications/4753/documents/48948/default/> [accessed 28 November 2022]

40 United Nations, ‘Background on LAWS in the CCW’: <https://www.un.org/disarmament/the-convention-on-certain-conventional-weapons/background-on-laws-in-the-ccw/> [accessed 28 November 2022]

41 The Conversation, ‘UN fails to agree on killer robot ban as nations pour billions into autonomous weapons research’: <https://theconversation.com/un-fails-to-agree-on-killer-robot-ban-as-nations-pour-billions-into-autonomous-weapons-research-173616> [accessed 28 November 2022]

42 Stop Killer Robots, ‘70 states deliver joint statement on autonomous weapons systems at UN General Assembly’: <https://www.stopkillerrobots.org/news/70-states-deliver-joint-statement-on-autonomous-weapons-systems-at-un-general-assembly/> [accessed 28 November 2022]

43 International Committee of the Red Cross, ‘War & Law’: <https://www.icrc.org/en/war-and-law> [accessed 28 November 2022]

44 Ministry of Defence, *Defence Artificial Intelligence Strategy* (June 2022): https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1082416/Defence_Artificial_Intelligence_Strategy.pdf [accessed 28 November 2022]

42. The MOD published its Defence AI Strategy in June 2022 and set out its intention to utilise AI from “‘back office’ to battlespace” and clarified that this includes AI-enabled weapon systems. The Strategy explains that over 200 AI-related research and development programmes are taking place across a range of defence activities.⁴⁵
43. Alongside the Defence AI Strategy, the MOD published an accompanying policy statement on the ethical and responsible application of AI in defence.⁴⁶ The statement sets out an ethical framework, key principles and establishes an AI Ethics Advisory Panel to scrutinise the MOD’s uses of AI. The MOD establishes that AI weapon systems which identify and attack targets must have “context-appropriate human involvement”. Though many saw this as a positive step in acknowledging decisions such as these should not be left solely to machines, the lack of information on how “context-appropriate human involvement”⁴⁷ would be determined has led to criticism from organisations such as the UK Stop Killer Robots campaign and its members.⁴⁸ The statement reiterates that the UK does not have fully autonomous weapon systems and does not intend to develop them.
44. The Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) published a policy paper on *Establishing a pro-innovation approach to regulating AI* in July 2022 and an AI governance White Paper is anticipated by the end of 2022.⁴⁹ DCMS and the Foreign, Commonwealth, and Development Office (FCDO) are also due to publish an International Technology Strategy, which is understood to set out the principles governing the UK’s international engagement on technology and how it will shape global AI governance.

Recent committee activity

45. The House of Lords special inquiry committee on Artificial Intelligence in 2018 recommended the UK update its definition of autonomous weapons in order to align with its international counterparts.⁵⁰ The Government did not take up the Committee’s recommendation however the Liaison Committee carried out follow-up on the Committee’s work reiterating this recommendation.⁵¹ The Government subsequently adopted the NATO definitions of ‘autonomous’ and ‘automated’ systems.

45 Ministry of Defence, *Defence Artificial Intelligence Strategy* (June 2022): https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1082416/Defence_Artificial_Intelligence_Strategy.pdf [accessed 28 November 2022]

46 Ministry of Defence, *Ambitious, Safe, Responsible: Our approach to the delivery of AI-enabled capability in Defence* (June 2022): https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1082991/20220614-Ambitious_Safe_and_Responsible.pdf [accessed 28 November 2022]

47 *Ibid.*

48 Article 36, ‘New UK Government position on “autonomous weapons” – recognises that lines need to be drawn, but lacks detail or signs of real leadership’ (June 2022): <https://article36.org/updates/new-uk-government-position-on-autonomous-weapons-recognises-that-lines-need-to-be-drawn-but-lacks-detail-or-signs-of-real-leadership/> [accessed 28 November 2022]

49 Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, *Establishing a pro-innovation approach to regulating AI An overview of the UK’s emerging approach*, CP 728 (July 2022): https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1092630/CP_728_-_Establishing_a_pro-innovation_approach_to_regulating_AI.pdf [accessed 28 November 2022]

50 Select Committee on Artificial Intelligence, *AI in the UK: ready, willing and able?* (Report of Session 2017–19, HL Paper 100)

51 Liaison Committee, *AI in the UK: No Room for Complacency* (7th Report, Session 2019–21, HL Paper 196) and Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, *Government response to the House of Lords Select Committee on Artificial Intelligence*, February 2021, CP 390: <https://committees.parliament.uk/publications/4753/documents/48948/default/> [accessed 28 November 2022]

46. The International Relations and Defence Committee is currently concluding its inquiry into the Government's ambitions for defence in the Defence Command Paper and the Integrated Review.⁵² The inquiry considered emerging technologies though this was not the sole focus of the inquiry. The House of Commons Science and Technology Committee has recently launched an inquiry on the governance of AI⁵³ and could potentially consider defence. Similarly, the House of Commons Defence Committee future work programme may have limited scope for overlap. A new special inquiry committee would typically consult with any relevant committees where overlap may occur.

Suggested scope for a potential inquiry

47. A committee on this topic might consider the following:
- The potential benefits and risks posed by the application of AI to weapon systems and the current position of technological developments in AI weapon systems.
 - How effective the Defence AI Strategy is in providing an effective framework for the development and application of AI in weapon systems.
 - Whether the MOD accompanying policy statement is a sufficient ethical and responsible safeguard for the application of AI to weapon systems.
 - Whether the IHL in place to regulate weapon developments is sufficient to regulate the development and deployment of weapon systems using AI.
 - If current legal provisions and regulations are not sufficient, consider what reform is needed both nationally and internationally.
 - The progress and barriers in achieving international agreement on the regulation of autonomous and AI weapon systems.
 - Whether an effective balance can be struck between encouraging innovation and establishing effective safeguards in the application of AI to defence.
48. ***The Committee recommend that a special inquiry committee be appointed “to consider the use of artificial intelligence in weapon systems”, to report by the end of November 2023.***

52 International Relations and Defence Committee, ‘Defence concepts and capabilities: from aspiration to reality’: <https://committees.parliament.uk/work/6638/defence-concepts-and-capabilities-from-aspiration-to-reality/>

53 House of Commons Science and Technology Committee, ‘Governance of artificial intelligence (AI)’: <https://committees.parliament.uk/work/6986/governance-of-artificial-intelligence-ai/>

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. We are conscious that some of the proposals cover potentially broad subject areas. Having heard from the proposers, we have recommended that these committees examine these broad subjects with a particular focus. *We recommend that, as the new committees consider and agree their detailed calls for evidence, they bear in mind what can feasibly be achieved in ten months and focus their inquiries accordingly.* (Paragraph 9)
2. *In view of the pressures on committee rooms in the House of Lords, particularly on Tuesdays and Wednesdays, we repeat the recommendation we have made previously that newly appointed committees should meet on Mondays or Thursdays.* (Paragraph 10)
3. *The Committee recommend that a special inquiry committee be appointed “to consider the integration of primary and community care”, to report by the end of November 2023.* (Paragraph 20)
4. *The Committee recommend that a special inquiry committee be appointed “to consider education for 11–16 year olds with reference to the skills necessary for the digital and green economy”, to report by the end of November 2023.* (Paragraph 28)
5. *The Committee recommend that a special inquiry committee be appointed “to consider the development of the horticultural sector”, to report by the end of November 2023.* (Paragraph 37)
6. *The Committee recommend that a special inquiry committee be appointed “to consider the use of artificial intelligence in weapon systems”, to report by the end of November 2023.* (Paragraph 48)

APPENDIX 1: LIST OF MEMBERS AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members

Lord Blencathra

Director, Cleanstreets CIC (vehicle for delivery of major programme of work to tackle smoking related litter across United Kingdom)

Deputy Chairman (formerly Board Member), Natural England (this role is linked to the Joint Nature Conservancy Council entry in category 10(a))

Board Member, Food Standards Agency (appointed by Department of Health)

Member, Joint Nature Conservancy Council (as part of this role, member is also Director, JNCC Support Co) (this role is also linked to the Natural England entry in category 2)

A signatory and sponsor of bid 11 in the name of the Lord Hodgson of Astley Abbotts and will recuse himself from discussing proposal 11.

Lord Bradley

Proposals 10 & 15

Chair of Council, University of Salford

Honorary Special Adviser, University of Manchester

Trustee, Centre for Mental Health

Honorary Fellow - Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists

Non-Executive Chair, MAST & BTG LiftCo's

Proposal 12

Chair of Council, University of Salford

Honorary Special Adviser, University of Manchester

Lord Collins of Highbury

Previously supported Lord Alton's proposal on Genocide

Earl of Courtown

No relevant interests to declare

Baroness Coussins

No relevant interests to declare

Lord Davies of Oldham

No interests declared

Lord Gardiner of Kimble

My farming interests are as stated in the register, with reference to any rural based proposals

Earl Howe

Partner in a family farm business and the proprietor of a small rural estate in the Chilterns (reference proposal 16)

Lord Judge

No relevant interests to declare

Lord Kennedy of Southwark

No relevant interests to declare

Baroness Scott of Needham Market

No relevant interests to declare

Lord Taylor of Holbeach

Has a family horticultural business

Residential home is in a rural community

Baroness Walmsley

No relevant interests to declare

A full list of members' interests can be found in the Register of Lords' Interests:
<https://members.parliament.uk/members/lords/interests/register-of-lords-interests>

APPENDIX 2: LIST OF PROPOSALS SUBMITTED

The proposals we received this year were all published online on 18 October 2022. These are available at <https://committees.parliament.uk/publications/30352/documents/175424/default/>. The titles of the proposals are listed below.

- A review of the Government’s policies on and responses to the crime of genocide and to other atrocity crimes (Lord Alton of Liverpool)
- Female inclusion in sport - ensuring female voices are heard and that sports remain fair, inclusive and welcoming (Baroness Hayter of Kentish Town, Baroness Hoey, Baroness Jenkin of Kennington, Baroness Massey of Darwen, Lord Moynihan and Lord Triesman)
- Finances of Divorce (reform) (Baroness Deech)
- Food insecurity (Lord Browne of Ladyton)
- Mathematical Education in Britain and the Deployment of Mathematicians (Viscount Hanworth)
- Money Laundering regulations (Viscount Hailsham)
- Need for Permanent Resettlement of Refugees and Internally Displaced People (Lord Hylton)
- Overseas Territories and Crown Dependencies (Lord Foulkes of Cumnock)
- Parental alienation in family courts (Baroness Helic)
- Primary and Community care: reforming an essential NHS service (Lord Patel)
- Procedures for scrutinising secondary legislation (Lord Hodgson of Astley Abbotts, Lord Blencathra, Lord Bridges of Headley, Lord German, Lord Gilbert of Panteg, Lord Knight of Weymouth, Lord Lisvane, Lord McLoughlin, Lord Rooker, Lord Stevenson of Balmacara and Lord Wallace of Saltaire)
- Reform of the English Secondary Schools System (Lord Baker of Dorking, Lord Aberdare, Lord Blunkett, Baroness Garden of Frognal, Lord Lucas, Baroness Morris of Yardley and the Duke of Wellington)
- Restoration of standards of service by public departments (Lord Boswell of Aynho)
- Review of the Ministerial Code (Lord Young of Cookham)
- Tackling the problems of adolescent health (Lord Robertson of Port Ellen)
- The Rural Economy (Lord Foster of Bath)
- The need for a Written Constitution (Lord Foulkes of Cumnock)
- The evolving role of horticulture (Baroness Fookes)

- Use of Artificial Intelligence in weapon systems (Lord Clement-Jones)
- Violence against Men and Boys (Lord Farmer)

APPENDIX 3: TEMPLATE SPECIAL INQUIRY SUBMISSION FORM

The current special inquiry committees are due to complete their work by the end of November. On behalf of the Liaison Committee, I am now writing to invite members to suggest proposals for up to four new special inquiry committees to start in early 2023. The Liaison Committee expects to follow our usual practice of one of the four special inquiry committees being devoted to post-legislative scrutiny.

In order to provide greater consistency, the Committee is again inviting all members submitting proposals to use the headings suggested in the form accompanying this invitation. Proposals should be sent to the Clerk of the Liaison Committee, Philippa Tudor, by email: hl Liaison Committee@parliament.uk no later than 9 September 2022.

All ideas submitted by then will be considered by the Liaison Committee using the following criteria for selection:

- Makes best use of the knowledge and experience of Members of the House
- Complements the work of Commons departmental select committees
- Addresses areas of policy that cross departmental boundaries
- The activity proposed should be capable of being confined to one year.

Members whose proposals are shortlisted by the Liaison Committee will be invited to present their proposal briefly to a meeting of the Committee later this year.

In reviewing proposals, the Liaison Committee takes into account the criteria listed above. In addition, the Committee may also take into account wider factors such as the balance of topics across the special inquiry committees (including in previous years), the work being undertaken by other Committees and within Government, and the possibility of early legislation on the subject matter.

Gardiner of Kimble

6 July 2022

Liaison Committee

Proposal for a special inquiry committee in 2023

Note: Following feedback, the Liaison Committee has agreed this template for use by members wishing to propose an inquiry. Members are invited to use it as a guide, and to address each of the questions below. Members are asked to describe the proposal in 100–500 words.

Title:

Name of member(s) of the House making the proposal:

Description of the proposal (in 100–500 words). If you are proposing a post-legislative scrutiny committee, please explain the aspects of the Act that you think particularly warrant scrutiny:

What would the inquiry be trying to achieve?

How does the proposal make best use of the knowledge and experience of Members of the House?

How does the proposal address areas of policy that cross departmental boundaries?

Is the proposed special inquiry committee capable of being completed by the end of November 2023? (For reference, most special inquiry committees hold approximately 20 x 1-hour evidence sessions throughout the inquiry, but proposals for shorter inquiries are also welcome.)

Do you have any additional comments in relation to your proposal which you wish to draw to the attention of the Liaison Committee?

Please could you list below any relevant interests that relate to your proposal. If you have no relevant interests, please could you state no relevant interests.

Please send this form, if possible by email, to the Clerk to the Liaison Committee hlliaisoncmttee@parliament.uk, to arrive no later than 9 September 2022.