

Special Inquiry Committee Proposals for 2021

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Proposal 1: Letter from Baroness Tonge and Baroness Barker

Abortion in the UK

Description of proposal

An inquiry into abortion in the UK. The inquiry should have a particular focus on:

- (a) How to best update the current outdated UK abortion legislation to improve abortion services for women and girls in the UK
- (b) How to improve service provisions for women and girls accessing abortion services in the UK with a particular focus on healthcare provider workforce; financing NHS/Private Providers; quality of care; expedite access; adolescent girls and marginalised/migrant populations, partnerships, and the use of digital technology

Purpose of inquiry

Decriminalisation of abortion in the UK

Increased funding to abortion service provisions in the UK

Improved abortion service provisions in the UK

Relevant Member experience

A cross party parliamentary inquiry into abortion will ensure input and scrutiny of an important service provision that affect 1 in 3 women in the UK—and currently outdated due to new technologies; health workforce shortages; and financial and bureaucratic constraints

Cross-cutting departmental boundaries

Abortion address areas of policy in the Department of Education, the Department of Health and Social Care, the Northern Ireland Office and the Home Office.

One-year time frame

Yes.

Additional comments

Abortion is very topical at present both in the UK and abroad.

The UK taking a lead in updating abortion legislation will lead the way for commonwealth and other countries to follow suit.

TONGE AND BARKER

Proposal 2: Letter from the Lord Bishop of Durham

Children's well-being

Description of proposal

This proposal is for a committee to consider children's well-being in the United Kingdom.

The Government should enable children to 'thrive not just survive'.¹ Well-being is about children feeling satisfied with their lives, feeling listened to, and being optimistic about their future. Research from The Children's Society's 'Good Childhood Report' suggests that children's mean overall life satisfaction and well-being has declined over the past ten years.

Children's well-being is affected by at least five key Government policy areas:

- Providing a world class education.
- Improving mental health.
- Addressing inequality in society.
- Promoting work.
- Protecting children (1989 Children Act).

However, the full range of factors which affect children's well-being have not been considered as a whole by either Government or a Parliamentary committee.

We know that the conditions in which children grow up have substantially changed in recent years, particularly the context of 'family' and family stability, and we would like the committee to consider how different factors influence children's well-being and how Government policy could improve well-being.

The inquiry would likely have a particular focus on the poorest and most disadvantaged children, as children living in income poverty are significantly more likely to have low well-being in their overall life satisfaction. Given the projected rise in child poverty, looking at *why and how* growing up in poverty and financial strain affects children's well-being will enable more effective policy solutions.

The committee could consider issues around measurement of children's well-being, and whether the impact on children's well-being is sufficiently considered when legislation and policy are formulated.

We would hope that the voices of children themselves would be central to any work of the inquiry and that such an inquiry would consider the context of children's familial relationships. We anticipate that children's experience of family life affects their well-being, creating questions for how Government policy can impact the stability a child experiences in their family life.

The theme of children's well-being is particularly suited to a House of Lords inquiry, not only because it is a pressing issue for our country, but also because it has policy relevance for a wide range of Government departments and can utilise the expertise within the House. The Government does not yet have a policy framework for tackling the decline in children's well-being. Our hope is that a

¹ Mark Russell, The Children's Society, [The Good Childhood Report 2019](#), p 5

committee would be able to identify the key public policy interventions which could improve children's well-being nationally.

Purpose of inquiry

- Identifying key factors affecting children's well-being across the United Kingdom.
- Identifying policies which promote or impede high life satisfaction for children.
- Advising Government about how children's well-being should be considered as part of the policy-making process.
- Considering the effects of child poverty on children's well-being.
- Creating an evidence base for how children's well-being affects their lives.
- Considering how policies impact family stability, and the effect of this on children's well-being.
- Assisting in the development of a coherent cross-departmental strategy for reversing the recent decline in children's well-being.

Relevant Member experience

Members of the House have extensive knowledge and experience of both well-being and children's issues. The proposal would use Members' experience in both Government policy-making and civil society organisations to consider factors that affect children's well-being. The committee would particularly use the expertise of Members with professional backgrounds in medicine, social care, local government, law, and education.

Cross-cutting departmental boundaries

There are many departments involved in children's well-being and the consequences and causes of low well-being for children:

- The Department for Education: interested in how education can impact children's well-being and how children's well-being can impact their experience of, and contribution to, education. There is evidence that children's overall levels of well-being impact their behaviour and engagement in school, affecting their academic achievements. The recent emphasis on holistic education furthers the Department for Education's interest in this area, as children's well-being will be affected by how holistic their education is.
- The Department for Work and Pensions: vulnerable children, living in families who are financially struggling, are more likely to have low well-being meaning the Department for Work and Pensions will be interested in factors like household income which affect children's well-being.
- The Department for Health and Social Care: well-being as a term has often been interchanged with mental health. Although this proposal views well-being more broadly than children's mental health, mental

health is an integral part of a child's well-being which therefore places this issue within the interests of this department.

- The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government: Local authorities work closely with vulnerable children and administer programmes to promote children and families' well-being. Housing and family relationships in particular are likely to influence children's well-being.

One-year time frame

With a focus on the factors affecting children's well-being, particularly focussing on the most disadvantaged children, the inquiry would be able to hold evidence sessions looking at different factors influencing the well-being of children. We therefore believe this could be completed within a year.

Lord Alton of Liverpool, Baroness Armstrong of Hill Top, Lord Beecham, Baroness Bennett of Manor Castle, Baroness Garden of Frogna, Lord Bates, Lord Bishop of Derby, Baroness Finlay of Llandaff, Lord Bishop of Gloucester, Baroness Hollins, Lord Hylton, Lord Laming, Baroness Lister of Burtersett, Lord Judd, Baroness Massey of Darwen, Baroness Meacher, Baroness Neuberger, Bishop of Portsmouth, Lord Ramsbotham and Baroness Tyler of Enfield support this proposal

+ PAUL DUNELM

Proposal 3: Letter from Baroness Greengross

COVID-19 and Prevention in Public Health

Description of proposal

The scale of the COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted all too starkly the importance of public health. The pandemic has been characterised by a combination of health, social and economic shocks to the system. In an ageing society, more of us are likely to be vulnerable in the face of the pandemic, and so it is vital that we move upstream to support people of all ages to continue to live healthily, actively and independently for as long as possible and to reduce the burden on our already overstretched NHS.

Those with pre-existing medical conditions are at far greater risk if they catch COVID-19. A March 2020 report by the International Longevity Centre UK² projects that the time spent in poor health as a result of preventable diseases will increase by 17% over the next 25 years. Rates of diagnosis for conditions such as Type 2 diabetes, cardiovascular disease, lung cancer and HIV can be reduced through stronger public health prevention programmes. Greater investment in prevention could have significantly reduced the number of COVID-19 deaths and hospitalisations.

Shortly before the outbreak of COVID-19 analysis by the Nuffield Trust³ revealed a shortage of 1 in 12 healthcare professionals in the NHS. The long-term sustainability of our health system has now been further challenged by this pandemic.

The purpose of this inquiry is to look ahead at how the UK's public health system can be more resilient. Would shifting focus upstream to prevent ill health help ease pressure and reduce demand on the NHS rebuilding from the current pandemic and would this apply in any future crisis?

Purpose of inquiry

The inquiry would seek to develop practical, evidence-based recommendations for action across public health and social care and other Government departments to ensure the NHS is better prepared for any future pandemic or public health crisis. All this needs to be seen in the context of a rapidly ageing population. This inquiry will assess the impact of investing in preventative health interventions across the life course and how this could help Britain be more resilient when faced with future pandemics or other similar crisis.

Cross-cutting departmental boundaries

This proposal is by its nature inter-departmental and would include recommendations across departments including the:

- Department for Health and Social Care;
- Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government;
- Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs.

2 International Longevity Centre UK. 2019. "Maximising the longevity dividend". Available at: <https://ilcuk.org.uk/maximising-the-longevity-dividend/> [accessed: 6 March 2020]

3 Nuffield Trust. 2019. "The NHS workforce in numbers". Available from: <https://www.nuffieldtrust.org.uk/resource/the-nhs-workforce-in-numbers> [accessed: 6 March 2020]

But will also include a number of other government departments and agencies.

One-year time frame

The special inquiry committee would hold a total of 12 x 1-hour evidence sessions over the period of a year, consisting of three evidence sessions across each of the themes of:

- What has happened?—The NHS and COVID-19
- Rebuilding the NHS—Public health and prevention
- What needs to happen next?—Resilience to future pandemics

Seeking input from:

- Members of both Houses and other policy and practice experts;
- Research bodies, professional bodies and third sector organisations; as well as
- Business and the private sector respectively.

GREENGROSS

Proposal 4: Letter from Baroness Thomas of Winchester and Baroness Campbell of Surbiton

Disabled people and work

Description of proposal

The committee would examine barriers to disabled people of working age to live independently in the community and access employment opportunities. The committee would assist the Government, and their recently published National Disability Strategy, in trying to get 1 million disabled people into work over the next 10 years. Independent living for disabled people is now regressing but must be reversed if this target is to be met. The UK used to be world-leading in supporting disabled people to be active, participating citizens, and it is vital to know why this is no longer the case, and what can be done about it. We envisage the committee focusing on social care, housing, transport and education.

Purpose of inquiry

It would publish practical and affordable proposals which would help to enable disabled people of working age to participate fully in society, including getting a job. This would include an analysis of what has gone wrong with existing support services, learning from what works in other countries, and finally considering whether legislative remedies are needed.

Relevant Member experience

There are disabled members all round the House who know from first-hand experience about barriers to independent living. There are also experts in all parties and none in the fields of housing, education, care and employment which would be the most relevant to this inquiry.

Cross-cutting departmental boundaries

It is now acknowledged that cross-departmental working is essential if the needs of disabled people are to be met in a way that enables them to participate fully in society. The Government last year set up an inter-Ministerial Group to address this agenda, so a special inquiry committee in the Lords would give this Group added strength.

One-year time frame

Yes. A one-year limit would be an essential discipline.

Additional comments

Diversity is now gaining traction as essential for successful organisations and companies. But disability seems to be the poor relation. Our proposed committee would help to remedy this in helping to put disability in the mainstream of life rather than in a siding. After all, many disabled people of working age are longing to be tax paying members of society instead of just benefit recipients.

THOMAS OF WINCHESTER AND CAMPBELL OF SURBITON

Proposal 5: Letter from Lord Harries of Pentregarth

Genome Editing

Description of proposal

Genome editing is at the cutting edge of science. At the moment somatic genome editing is permitted, with the usual research ethics approvals. But is the present legislative framework adequate? The 2018 report of the Nuffield Committee on bioethics suggested a committee that would look at this and examine whether all areas are adequately covered.

Germline genome editing is permitted for research purposes if licensed by the HFEA. But should it be permitted in clinical practise? At the moment it is not permitted but the Nuffield Council argued that provided certain rigorous criteria had been met it should in principle be allowed. On the other hand, given the great risks and danger involved should there be a definite moratorium?

These issues were discussed in the Lords' debate on 30 January 2020⁴.

Purpose of inquiry

Legislative clarity in a field of great potential benefit but grave ethical concern.

Relevant Member experience

Very well. It would use philosophers, lawyers and scientists from members of the Lords.

Cross-cutting departmental boundaries

The Department of Health and Social Care and the Department of Science and Technology have a stake in these issues.

One-year time frame

Yes.

Additional comments

When I was Bishop of Oxford I had the privilege of chairing the Select Committee on Stem Cell Research which reported in 2002.⁵ This produced a report which directly influenced and shaped government policy in this area. A committee on genome editing could be equally significant.

Lord Patel supports this proposal.

HARRIES OF PENTREGARTH

⁴ HL Deb, 30 January 2020, [cols 801–1554](#)

⁵ Select Committee on Stem Cell Research, [Stem Cell Research](#), (Report of Session 2001–02, HL Paper 83)

Proposal 6: Letter from the Lord Bishop of Leeds

Improving Foreign Language Learning in the UK

Description of the proposal

The Government's ambition for the UK to be (a) a leader in global free trade and (b) more influential on the world stage makes more critical than ever the need to address our paucity of language skills.

UK trade and investment research shows that a deficiency of language skills costs the UK economy 3.5% of GDP per year—around £48 billion.

The combination of Brexit, the sharp decline in language learning in schools and universities, and the current nature of language GCSE and A-levels make a bad situation worse. Retention of language teachers is increasingly difficult.

Knowing the language of competitors and colleagues is vital for effective trade, negotiation, diplomacy and access to intelligence. (Monoglots only ever hear as much as the people around them want them to hear.) In addition, competence in other languages fosters self-reflection, social cohesion, social mobility and educational attainment through the development of analytical, interpretative and social skills. Switching between languages accepts difference whilst building bridges—vital for a healthy public discourse—and gives an ability to look at ourselves through the eyes of the 'other'.

The British Chambers of Commerce have stated: "Few business people are confident to conduct deals in the buyers' language, while non-exporters see a lack of proficiency in another language as a barrier to do so." The British Council sees "the closing down of opportunities for overseas work, a lack of international business sense, a failure to recognise that other cultures have different ways of doing things and a potential tendency to overestimate the global importance of British culture."

No other culture sees this as an optional extra or a luxury.

An improved, effective strategy for improving our language skills shouldn't be left to educationalists; it needs an informed cross-discipline, multi-departmental approach.

Purpose of inquiry

Starting from a recognition of the current state, to research how language learning can be better valued, promoted, structured and advocated for—in order to encourage a strategic approach nationally to resourcing a new generation of linguistically flexible and able citizens.

The inquiry would (a) discover the reasons for our inadequacies in language learning (educational, cultural, economic and psychological barriers), and (b) propose novel and creative solutions through soundings from, for example, the CBI, trade unions, British Council, the Foreign & Commonwealth Office, military, educationalists, other countries with proven success (for example 70% of pupils in Ireland take a foreign language in their school leaving exams).

Relevant Member experience

There are a number of Peers who have expertise or strong interest in this area, including former language teachers, diplomats and linguists (such as me: I worked

as a professional linguist at GCHQ in Cheltenham, using Russian, German and French).

Cross-cutting departmental boundaries

There are few departments that do not use language, communication & negotiation/diplomacy, but in particular: the Department of Trade and Industry, the Department for International Trade, the Department for Education, the Foreign & Commonwealth Office, Department for International Development, the Ministry of Defence, the Department of Health and Social Care, the Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport & the Ministry of Justice.

One-year time frame

Yes.

Additional comments

I would be happy to expand on what I have put as concisely as possible in written form here.

+ NICK LEEDS

Proposal 7: Letter from the Earl of Caithness

Land Use Framework in England - the case for it

Description of proposal

In much of England there are competing demands for the same bit of land. Although there is a degree of planning at regional and, more particularly, local level, the failure is not having a joined-up framework at national level. In stark contrast to England, the Devolved Administrations all have over-arching land use plans and policies.

The Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 Committee⁶ (2017–18) touched on this and the Rural Economy Committee⁷ (2018–19) recommended there should be such a plan, partly because of its importance for struggling rural communities. The Commission on Food Farming and the Countryside which reported towards the end of last year also called for such a plan.

The population is increasing as is the demand for food but there is only a finite amount of land in England and even less farmable land. Land use is a ‘hot’ political issue and farmers in particular face huge challenges due to leaving the Common Agricultural Policy. In addition, Climate Change and how to meet net zero is forcing big changes in land use to which they will have to adapt. There are added pressures due to topsoil degradation, the need to improve biodiversity and probable water shortages in some areas in the future and excess water in others. Meanwhile on that same land, the Government is encouraging farmers and landowners to plant 11 million more trees the next five years. The Infrastructure Commission are recommending new projects and the Government are planning developments, including a massive increase in house building to 300,000 new homes a year. In 2017 40% of local planning authorities did not have an up to date plan that meets the projected growth in households in their area and thus no idea where they would be built nor of the consequences. Many of these proposals will take the land out of agricultural, forestry or amenity use forever but there is no co-ordination as to where this should happen.

In addition, there is the change, which has already started, whereby more foods, particularly meat products, will be engineered by scientists at a molecular level and uploaded to databases that can be accessed by food designers anywhere in the world. For the foreseeable future, the meat and alternative-protein industries will coexist. However, in the medium term, such food will be readily available, and probably cheaper than current farming methods. The consequences not only for land use, as we know it, but also for the internationally renowned English landscapes which farmers have helped shape, will be immense.

Purpose of inquiry

Many of the Government’s policies have inherent conflicts and can be contradictory. The aim of the inquiry would be to take expert witness from those involved, assess the merits of the arguments, and to recommend what sort of overall framework plan should be developed to help resolve the competing pressures so as to maximise the benefits for all and enable rural economies and communities, in particular, to be sustainable and grow. It could also recommend how Local Authority (maybe

6 Select Committee on the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006, [The countryside at a crossroads: Is the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 still fit for purpose?](#) (Report of Session 2017–19, HL Paper 99)

7 Select Committee on the Rural Economy, [Time for a strategy for the rural economy](#) (Report of Session 2017–19, HL Paper 330)

clusters of Local Authorities) or maybe Local Enterprise Partnerships should be adapting that national framework on a regional basis.

Relevant Member experience

The House has members across all parties and groups who have interests not only in rural and urban policies but in infrastructure, development, housing and planning, all of which is so important to our Country's future.

Cross-cutting departmental boundaries

Most departments are affected by how we utilise our land– the Cabinet Office, the Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy, Defra, the Department for International Trade, the Department for Transport, The Department of Health & Social Care, HM Treasury, The Home Office and The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government are the obvious ones.

One-year time frame

Definitely.

Additional comments

Our diet is the worst in Europe and costing the country billions of pounds annually. This will become an increasingly important Government concern. The Food, Poverty, Health and the Environment Committee (currently still taking evidence) has heard a lot of compelling evidence of the need to use land to grow more vegetables and other crops for a healthier diet. Suitable land for this is relatively limited in England. Should such land continue to be farmed or allowed to be developed for other purposes?

Recommendation 80 from the Rural Economy Committee's report states:

“Government should revisit the merits of a spatial plan for England, particularly as it relates to rural areas, to ensure that planning policy operates in a framework where land use priorities are properly considered above the local level. This will help ensure that the right type of development is brought forward in the right places, enabling sustainable and growing rural economies and communities. Government must carefully consider how such a plan may be developed at a local and regional level, focusing on how groups of local authorities may be encouraged or required to work together to develop and implement the plans. (Paragraph 405)”

Only a national framework plan can give guidance to help avoid huge unnecessary mistakes in the short term that will affect future generations.

Lord Cameron of Dillington and Baroness Young of Old Scone support this proposal.

CAITHNESS

Proposal 8: Letter from Lord Clement-Jones

Live Facial Recognition Technology

Description of proposal

To conduct an inquiry into the quality of and the regulatory environment surrounding the deployment of automated or live facial recognition technology (LFR) and make recommendations for future regulation of its use.

The focus of the inquiry would focus on the purposes for which LFR is being deployed, its quality and accuracy and the implications for human rights and data privacy of its use.

Purpose of inquiry

To assess the risks posed to privacy and other civil and human rights by LFR and assess where the technology should be permitted and/ or regulated.

Relevant Member experience

Members of the House have a considerable interest and expertise in ethics, human rights and civil liberties and have successfully previously conducted a special inquiry into Artificial Intelligence⁸, an essential component of LFR. The Data Protection Bill, now Act, 2018, was very relevant to the use by facial recognition technology of biometric data, was very robustly and expertly debated by many members of the House.

Cross-cutting departmental boundaries

Policy on digital issues resides with the Cabinet Office and the the Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport; the Office for Artificial Intelligence reports to the Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport and the Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy, and the procurement, utilisation and deployment of Artificial Intelligence solutions including LFR technologies is a matter for individual departments such as the Home Office and public authorities such as local councils and the police.

This inquiry is designed to examine practice and policy across these departments and public authorities as well as the private sector and consider whether a risk-based approach to regulation and best practice is appropriate and can be instituted.

One-year time frame

Yes. I calculate that some 40-60 witnesses would need to be called which would fit well within the normal 20x1 hour sessions on the basis of a manageable three witnesses per one hour session.

Additional comments

This is a topic of very strong public current interest and great controversy. It has begun to be widely deployed by UK police forces. A legal challenge has been made in one case still to be decided on appeal. Numerous reports on the technology have been produced: from RUSI and the Ada Lovelace Institute, the Law Society, the Biometrics Commissioner, Big Brother Watch, and the Scottish Parliament's Justice Committee, which call for a regulatory framework or a moratorium on its use pending regulation. The Information Commissioner has also expressed concerns

8 The Select Committee on Artificial Intelligence, [AI in the UK: ready, willing and able?](#) (Report of Session 2017-19, HL Paper 100)

about the lack of a regulatory framework. The Home Office's own Biometrics and Forensics Ethics Group has expressed concerns about the accuracy of the technology and noted its potential for biased outputs and biased decision-making on the part of system operators.

Time is of the essence in terms of the rollout of this technology and the debate and decisions that are needed on the appropriate level of permitted deployment and required regulation. The Science and Technology Committee made certain recommendations in 2019 as part of its inquiry into the work of the Biometrics Commissioner and the Forensic Science Commissioner but there has been no specific parliamentary scrutiny of the public and private sector adoption of this technology which is now becoming widespread.

Furthermore, LFR is an important area of technology where our attitude to the risks posed by rapidly developing forms of AI needed to be considered and whether regulation rather than a code of practice or design standards is appropriate.

CLEMENT-JONES

Proposal 9: Letter from Lord Campbell-Savours

National Identity Cards

Description of proposal

Can I suggest a Liaison Committee inquiry into the introduction/use of national identity cards?

Purpose of inquiry

The areas I would like to see covered would include

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

And more!

Lord Blunkett, Lord Clark of Windermere, Lord Grocott and Lord Rooker support this proposal.

CAMPBELL-SAVOURS

Proposal 10: Letter from the Earl of Lytton

New Home Communal Assets and Rentcharges

Description of proposal

A committee of inquiry to look into the issue of rentcharges levied on owners of new homes by management companies particularly in respect of maintaining communal space, unadopted roads and parking areas, lighting, drainage and open or play space; the level of such charges, their transparency and rights of redress against excessive charges; the negative stance of mortgage lenders towards high levels of charges in certain instances; the circumstances in which poor construction issues and lax conveyancing may exacerbate problems; local authority financial bearing on decisions as to whether to adopt or not; the role, structure and need for regulation of management companies engaged in this area.

Purpose of inquiry

Highlight the extent of the problem, the nature of the issues of concern and following evidence, suggest remedies and safeguards and raise public awareness.

Relevant Member experience

Covers areas of property, law, private and local government finance, construction and wellbeing of householders drawing on the considerable expertise of the House in these areas.

Cross-cutting departmental boundaries

Although primarily the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government', the scope would also cover MoJ and potentially Treasury and Defra interests, the Department for Health and Social Care, and consumer rights generally.

One-year time frame

This relatively narrow subject area ought to be capable of investigation and report in under a year.

Additional comments

This subject area sits alongside but is separate from issues of leasehold and defective construction in new homes.

I am not entirely clear how widespread the issue of rentcharge problems currently is.

LYTTON

Proposal 11: Letter from Lord Faulkner of Worcester and Lord Shutt of Greetland⁹

Reversing Beeching—the case for reopening closed railway lines and stations

Description of proposal

The Government has committed itself initially to expenditure of £500 million to look at the opportunities for reopening railway lines closed after the Beeching report of 1963. It has so far identified two candidates: the lines from Ashington to Blyth in Northumberland, and to Fleetwood in Lancashire. There are numerous others, in all parts of Great Britain, where there is substantial local authority and parliamentary support for the restoration of rail services, but there has so far been little co-ordination of efforts to achieve this, or to establish workable criteria for doing so. The purpose of the inquiry would be to receive evidence from campaigners wishing to make the case for specific reopenings (lines and stations), from academics who have made a study of these matters, and from government, think-tanks, environmentalists, existing train operators and infrastructure providers. It would also look at the relationships between heritage railways and the national rail operators, and the role the former could achieve—often through relatively simple and inexpensive connections—in providing public transport services as well as heritage rail experiences. It would be particularly valuable if the study were able to demonstrate value for money (positive or negative) in the case of each project, and the wider social and environmental benefits which would flow from them (eg modal shift from car use to railway, reduced CO₂ emissions, tourism and regional economic regeneration).

Purpose of inquiry

To provide a realistic benchmark against which railway reopenings could be judged, and to draw up a list of candidates in order of preference, taking account of affordability, likely demand, and economic and environmental return.

Relevant Member experience

The special inquiry on the future of seaside towns demonstrated clearly how members' knowledge can be put to good advantage, and the study proposed here would draw similarly on that experience. The House of Lords Library produced on 6 February a useful short briefing paper entitled “Reversing the Beeching Closures: Full Steam Ahead?”¹⁰

Cross-cutting departmental boundaries

The Department for Transport would be the principal ministry involved in the inquiry, but there would be important roles for the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (in respect of tourism and heritage), and for the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government. It is likely that there would also be inputs from the governments of Scotland and Wales.

One-year time frame

Yes.

⁹ Lord Shutt of Greetland died on 30 October 2020.

¹⁰ House of Lords Library, Reversing the Beeching Closures: Full Steam Ahead?, Library Research Briefing, [LLN-2020-0052](#), February 2020

Additional comments

The report produced by the committee following the inquiry would be likely to attract substantial national, regional and local media interest.

FAULKNER OF WORCESTER AND SHUTT OF GREETLAND

Proposal 12: Letter from the Lord Bishop of Carlisle

Social Care

Description of proposal

A Cross-party group to review previous reports and proposals on social care, explore the current situation in England and its implications for the NHS, and make specific recommendations to HMG for long-term action (further to the debate sponsored by Lord Hunt of King's Heath on 6 February 2020).

Purpose of inquiry

A long-term strategy for Social Care in England, given the growing need, importance of integration with Health, necessity of cross-party agreement and continued absence of a Green Paper.

Relevant Member experience

This will draw on the huge experience of Members in this field and that of Health.

Cross-cutting departmental boundaries

The Department of Health & Social Care have implications for most departments.

One-year time frame

Yes.

Additional comments

Others (for example Baroness Brinton) have emphasised the need for a cross-party commission of some kind, and the PM has declared his commitment to cross-party progress.

+JAMES CARLIOL

Proposal 13: Letter from Baroness Cox

The problem of ‘marriages’ that are not marriages

Description of proposal

An inquiry into the problems experienced by women in polygamous households or those who have had a religious-only marriage, to find upon divorce they have little to no rights in terms of finance, property or child custody.

Women who are married in Islamic ceremonies but are not married under English law can suffer grave disadvantages because they lack legal protection.¹¹ What is more, they can be unaware that their marriage is not officially recognised.

The situation was highlighted in a Channel 4 survey, which found that six in 10 Muslim women who have had traditional Islamic weddings in Britain are not legally married. Of these, over a quarter (28 per cent) are not aware that they do not have the same rights as they would have with a legally-recognised marriage.¹²

A separate study by the Muslim women’s group Aurat: Supporting Women highlighted cases of women in Britain living in polygamous marriages. The evidence for its findings was drawn from 50 case studies of Muslim women living in the West Midlands. Two thirds of those who identified as being married said their ‘husband’ had more than one ‘wife’.¹³

The reports’ findings are all the more alarming when it is considered that as many as 100,000 couples in Britain are estimated to be living in Islamic marriages not recognised by English law.¹⁴

For more information, see the House of Commons Library Briefing ‘Islamic marriage and divorce in England and Wales’¹⁵, November 2019.

Purpose of inquiry

We are fortunate to live in a democracy that enshrines the principle of equality before the law and is committed to the promotion of gender equality. However, there are increasing concerns that—because of the Government’s failure to act in this area—many women continue to suffer from systematic gender discrimination.

Our hope is that the inquiry will act as a catalyst for much needed legislative and policy change. It offers an important opportunity for redress for vulnerable Muslim women, some of whom are suicidal because they have unequal rights and are so ostracised by their community.

11 See, for example, the widely-reported case which ruled that a couple’s Islamic marriage was ‘invalid’ under English marriage law: Court of Appeal, *HMAg v Akhter, Khan & ors*, [2020] EWCA Civ 122 (4 February 2020)

12 Channel 4, ‘New Channel 4 survey reveals The Truth About Muslim Marriage’: <https://www.channel4.com/press/news/new-channel-4-survey-reveals-truth-about-muslim-marriage> (20 November 2017) [accessed 4 June 2020] The survey was carried out by 20 Muslim female community researchers between December 2016 and September 2017, using a mix of face to face and phone interviews. Data were tabulated by ICM analysed from the responses of 923 participants from 14 cities across Britain.

13 Aurat, *Supporting Women, Equal and Free? 50 Muslim Women’s Experiences of Marriage in Britain Today* (December 2014): <https://www.secularism.org.uk/uploads/aurat-report-dec2014.pdf> [accessed 4 June 2020]

14 ‘Young Muslims fuel huge rise in Sharia marriage.’, *The Times* (3 July 2015): <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/young-muslims-fuel-huge-rise-in-sharia-marriage-c2mynkmg38f> [accessed 4 June 2020]

15 House of Commons Library, *Islamic marriage and divorce in England and Wales*, Research Briefing, [CBP-8747](https://www.parliament.uk/research-briefings/cbp-8747), February 2020

Relevant Member experience

Many members of the House have great legal and professional knowledge and experience of addressing issues relating to gender discrimination, arbitration and mediation services, support for victims of abuse, and appropriate statutory responses.

Cross-cutting departmental boundaries

The investigation, analysis and findings relate to the Home Office, Ministry of Justice and the Government Equalities Office.

The inquiry would consider recommendations of: the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (Resolution 2253, January 2019)¹⁶; the Integrated Communities Strategy Green Paper (March 2018)¹⁷; the Independent Review into the Application of Sharia Law in England and Wales (February 2018)¹⁸; and the Casey Review (December 2016)¹⁹.

One-year time frame

Yes.

Lord Carlile of Berriew, Baroness Corston, Lord Dholakia, Baroness Eaton, Baroness Finlay of Llandaff, Lord Green of Deddington, Lord Kalms, Baroness Lister of Burtersett, Baroness Massey of Darwen, Baroness O'Loan, Lord Tebbit and Lord Vinson support this proposal.

COX

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- 16 Sharia, the Cairo Declaration and the European Convention on Human Rights, [Resolution 2253 \(2019\)](#), Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe [accessed 8 June 2020]
- 17 Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, *Integrated Communities Strategy Green Paper* (March 2018): https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/696993/Integrated_Communities_Strategy.pdf [accessed 8 June 2020]
- 18 Home Office, The independent review into the application of sharia law in England and Wales, Cm 9560, February 2018: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/678478/6.4152_HO_CPFG_Report_into_Sharia_Law_in_the_UK_WEB.pdf
- 19 Department for Communities and Local Government, *The Casey Review: A review into opportunity and integration* (December 2016): https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/575973/The_Casey_Review_Report.pdf [accessed 8 June 2020]

Proposal 14: Letter from Baroness Fookes

The Role and Importance of Horticulture to the Economy, Health and Well Being, and Climate Change

Description of proposal

Horticulture is composed of a number of related disciplines which include arboriculture, plant nurseries, garden centres, garden design and landscape design, colleges of horticulture, important and historic gardens, garden machinery, research into pests and diseases and the development of new and improved varieties of ornamental plants. This list is not exhaustive.

Many of these are small enterprises and correspondingly find it difficult to bring to the attention of a wider audience and the government both the opportunities to contribute to the public good and their problems.

Horticulture has an important role to play in the following areas:

- (1) Its economic importance in providing employment for around half a million people and its contribution of £24.2 billion to the economy (2017 figures).
- (2) Its capacity to mitigate the ill effects of climate change.
- (3) Its contribution to the health and wellbeing of the community.
- (4) Its prowess in research into pests and diseases affecting plants and in the development of machinery capable of undertaking delicate tasks currently done by hand.

Purpose of inquiry

In addition to the importance I attach to bringing to the attention of a wide audience the opportunities afforded by horticulture to the public good I would wish the inquiry to focus on solving a number of challenges faced by horticulture.

To name a few:

- A shortage of skilled workers holding back the expansion or even the maintenance of a number of enterprises including the mass planting of trees.
- A failure by the education system to provide high quality courses in the numbers needed and failing to encourage young people to take up horticulture as a career.
- The need for import substitution to avoid pests and diseases from abroad and the need for incentives.
- The encouragement of the NHS in its various capacities to see gardening as a therapy.
- The need to encourage local authorities, especially planners, to implement robust policies about green space.

Relevant Member experience

There are a number of Peers with direct experience of growing trees and running nurseries as well as those with medical expertise and expertise in the areas of local government and climate change.

Cross-cutting departmental boundaries

Horticulture clearly covers Defra but also the Departments of Health and Social Care, the Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport, the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, the Home Office and Department for Education.

One-year time frame

Yes.

Additional comments

As far as I am aware no Select Committee in either House has tackled the subject of horticulture as a whole. It is high time this gaping hole is filled in!

FOOKES

Proposal 15: Letter from Lord Black of Brentwood

The UK's role in expanding Global Media Freedom

Description of proposal

In 2018 the Government—with cross-party support—committed to making the expansion of media freedom across the globe a matter of priority in public policy. This was followed by a Global Media Freedom Conference in London in 2019, hosted by the Foreign Secretary, and the launch of the Media Freedom Coalition, a new intergovernmental body to which 35 states are already committed and of which the UK is co-chair. A further conference is due to take place in Canada in September this year. The initiative has received significant international support and interest.

The aim of this inquiry would be to assess how this is working across Government—as it impacts on a number of Departments—and what further initiatives need to be taken at domestic and, where the UK has a role, international level to ensure media freedom, including the safety of journalists, is at the heart of policy making. It would help ensure this immensely important UK initiative is successful and sustainable over the longer term.

The focus would be on both international policy and on domestic media freedom issues, as the UK's performance at home inevitably impacts on our effectiveness in promoting media freedom abroad (not least in the Commonwealth where we have a significant leadership role). Regrettably, the UK is set to fall down the Reporters Sans Frontières' World Press Freedom Index this year following the killing of Lyra McKee and this inquiry can look into how that position can be reversed.

Central to the inquiry will be an examination of how respect for media freedom can be delivered across all parts of Government in both policy and practice, and not just compartmentalised as a purely “media” issue. (How this fits across Whitehall and the devolved Governments in policy terms is set out in one of the sections below.)

The inquiry can also look at how threats to media freedom globally are rapidly changing: this is an issue which merits a deeper and more nuanced understanding which the House of Lords can provide, particularly now in light of the reaction to the coronavirus in different countries. Technological advances have changed the nature of journalism and in turn the nature of the threats to journalists and publishers, and it is important Parliament and Government understand this fully, especially at a time when complex Online Harms legislation is being planned.

This is also a really important opportunity to establish how the UK can establish a global leadership role in this area post-Brexit.

Purpose of inquiry

This is an area where the UK has shown substantial international leadership and placed the issue on the agenda for many Government and international organisations. This includes the Council of Europe, where a recent report—led by Lord Foulkes—called for this issue to be followed up by national Parliaments as this proposal recommends.

If the policy is to continue to be successful and sustainable in the UK and internationally, it will be essential to:

- take stock of the initiatives that have taken place over the last three years;
- assess their effectiveness and how they can be made sustainable;
- ensure the UK is living up to the high standards it is expecting of other countries (and if not what must change);
- make recommendations to ensure that respect for media freedom is embedded across Government and not compartmentalised;
- look at the scope for the UK's leadership role on this issue in international organisations, including within the EU post Brexit; and
- look at the changing nature, in a digital age, of the threats to media freedom and journalist safety worldwide to inform the effective development of policy in the future.

Relevant Member experience

There are many Members of the House whose knowledge and expertise would be invaluable in such an inquiry. This includes those with knowledge of and experience in:

- the media (of which there are large numbers as recent debates on the BBC, on online harms and on journalist safety have shown);
- terrorism, cyber security and judicial matters which are at the heart of the changing nature of the threats to press freedom in the UK and globally;
- international relations, including relationships with the Commonwealth (where the UK has a significant role to play and where issues of media freedom are acute);
- international development (a key area for global press freedom and good governance);
- domestic and international law, which can help set the framework for future progress, as well as easing existing burdens; and
- global conflict, as media freedom is often under most intense pressure in post-conflict zones.

As a blend of domestic and international policy, it is ideally suited to the expertise of the House of Lords.

Cross-cutting departmental boundaries

Before the Government's initiatives in 2018 this is an area which was often compartmentalised as a "media-specific" issue, but it is not, as the Global Media Freedom Initiative has shown. To be successful this policy will need to be embedded across Government, as well as being an issue which is regularly included in the agendas for international organisations. (At the last Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in Malta the issue was not even raised.) There will also need

to be far more significant co-operation across, and dialogue between, Government Departments than there ever has been before.

In domestic and Governmental terms, the brief specifically includes in direct policy areas:

- The Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport
- Foreign and Commonwealth Office
- Department for International Development
- Ministry of Justice
- Cabinet Office and No 10
- Home Office and the police service
- Devolved Governments and relevant Departments
- Department for International Trade

One-year time frame

Yes.

Additional comments

Aspects of this brief as they relate just to the Foreign & Commonwealth Office were touched on by the House of Commons Foreign Affairs Committee last year. But the scope of this inquiry would be significantly wider—encompassing how to embed the issue in all Government Departments, how to frame policy with regard to future threats as well as looking at past behaviour, looking specifically at the UK's own domestic performance, and assessing the role of the UK post-Brexit in shaping international policy in this area. It would draw perfectly on the expertise and strengths of the House of Lords, and its recommendations would have significant domestic and global impact.

It probably needs no underlining, but the current COVID-19 pandemic highlights precisely why freedom of expression and media freedom on a global stage are important, and how dangerous their suppression can be for societies and for the public worldwide. What happens to the media in China demonstrably matters here. That is why an inquiry of this sort is so vital and so pressing.

Viscount Colville of Culross, Lord Foulkes of Cumnock, Lord Lexden, Lord Wakeham support this proposal.

BLACK OF BRENTWOOD

Proposal 16: Letter from Lord Soley

These Islands

Description of proposal

To examine and make recommendations on the links between the nations and regions of the UK with the object of strengthening and where appropriate renewing and developing those links. To provide evidence on where those links are weak or vulnerable and make proposals to strengthen them with the object of renewing and strengthening the Union.

Purpose of inquiry

It would recommend ways of strengthening the union of the UK and gaining a better understanding of the stresses and strains that lead to a fracturing of the Union. It would aim to enable the government and public and private bodies to gain greater understanding of the economic, political and social advantages of the Union.

Relevant Member experience

Members of the House have knowledge and experience of governmental structures, public and private bodies that cross regional and national lines within the UK. This knowledge puts them in a unique position to be able to recommend ways of strengthening the Union.

Cross-cutting departmental boundaries

It will address economic, social and cultural issues in the broadest sense and could touch on the work of many government departments.

One-year time frame

Yes. I would anticipate a maximum of one year. The committee would not be looking at the wider constitutional issues. It is essentially about improving the links between nations and regions and demonstrating the role and importance of the Union of the UK.

Additional comments

Some stresses and strains have emerged between the nations and regions of the UK in recent years, but the importance of regions and nations should not be allowed to reduce the importance of the Union in binding the people of these islands together. There is an underlying loyalty to the idea of Britain and the UK, but we have, I suggest, undervalued the importance of that loyalty in recent years. It needs to be rekindled and I hope this committee will help to do that.

Lord Bridges of Headley, Lord Brabazon of Tara, Lord Cormack, Lord Foster of Bath, Baroness Liddell of Coatdyke, Lord Murphy of Torfaen, Baroness Quin and Lord Touhig support this proposal

SOLEY

Proposal 17: Letter from Lord Lilley

To investigate the ‘Crisis of Replication’ in science and ways of assuring the quality of scientific studies on which public policy is based.

Description of proposal

There is growing concern in the scientific world about the number of published, peer-reviewed studies whose findings cannot be replicated. Yet, if the results claimed for a scientific theory cannot be replicated, it cannot be true. Pfizer found they could not replicate three quarters of published results suggesting potential drugs. *The Economist* reported: “A rule of thumb among biotechnology venture-capitalists is that half of published research cannot be replicated. Even that may be optimistic - one biotech firm, Amgen, found they could reproduce just six of 53 ‘landmark’ studies in cancer research.”²⁰

One of the most often downloaded articles of all time is Professor Ioannidis’ “Why Most Published Research Findings are False”²¹. Ioannidis explains that errors and bias occur at every stage from choice of research project through project design, selection of results and statistical tests of validity, to publication. For example, the standard statistical test of whether a result may be caused by random variation, works only if applied to a single experiment. But if, as is often the case in fashionable areas of research, multiple teams are trying to establish a particular result the chance of a random false positive result becomes large and the test ceases to be valid. However, Journals will usually publish only the single study showing the positive result and ignore those finding no such outcome. As a result, Ioannidis concludes: “For many current scientific fields, claimed research findings may often be simply accurate measures of the prevailing bias.”

In view of the huge sums of public money funding much published scientific research, it is important to establish whether this is the case and, if so, to seek ways of assuring higher quality in future especially in respect of scientific studies on which public policy is based.

Purpose of inquiry

To establish whether there is a ‘crisis of Replication’ in peer-reviewed scientific research, especially that funded by the taxpayer.

To examine ways of assuring higher quality in published research.

To consider how the quality of research on which government policy is based may be assured.

Relevant Member experience

The House contains:

- many prominent scientists, a number of whom will be familiar with this problem,
- peers familiar with statistical methodology,

20 ‘How science goes wrong’, *The Economist* (21 October 2013): available at: <https://www.economist.com/leaders/2013/10/21/how-science-goes-wrong>

21 John P. A. Ioannidis, ‘Why Most Published Research Findings Are False’ *PLOS Medicine*, e124 (2005): <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pmed.0020124>

- peers who have been responsible for development of public policy dependent on scientific research,
- peers who have been leaders of universities and research establishments who will be familiar with the pressures under which scientific research is carried out.

Cross-Cutting Departmental Boundaries

All Government Departments try to develop ‘evidence-based policy’ which often means relying on published research—and therefore should be alarmed if a significant portion of it may be invalid.

One-year time frame

Yes.

Lord McColl and Lord Ridley support this proposal.

LILLEY

Proposal 18: Letter from Lord O'Donnell and Lord Layard

Wellbeing as the guide to policy

Description of proposal

Recent events make it more urgent than ever to review the fundamental objectives of our government, and how these objectives influence the choice of policies. On one view the overriding objective should be the wellbeing of the people. As you well know this view goes back to the 18th Century Anglo-Scottish enlightenment. But it has now become more feasible due to the new science of wellbeing. On the other side critics argue it is unfeasible or mistaken. Whatever one thinks no one can any longer pretend that GDP is the objective when the government has so deliberately reduced it. We need to define another objective just as in 1993 we found a new objective for macro-economic policy.

We would therefore like to suggest a select committee to examine the feasibility of "Wellbeing as the guide to policy".

This would arouse huge interest. There are plenty of competent witnesses for and some against. And the report could do a huge amount to clarify this crucial issue of the government's objectives.

O'DONNELL AND LAYARD

APPENDIX 1: DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST FOR PART 1

Baroness Armstrong of Hill Top

Ambassador for Action for Children

Baroness Barker

Committee Member of the APPG on Population, Development and Reproductive Health

I co-chair the APPG on Sexual and Reproductive Health

Lord Beecham

I am a city councillor in Newcastle and a member of its Health Scrutiny committee. I am also an honorary Vice President of the Local Government Association

Lord Black of Brentwood

I have a number of media interests listed in the Register. Of those specifically engaged in this issue, I am Deputy Chairman of Telegraph Media Group, Vice President of News Media Europe, Patron of the Rory Peck Trust, Chairman of the Commonwealth Press Union Media Trust, Director of the Regulatory Funding Company and a Special Adviser to Albany Associates.

Lord Blunkett

Former Home Secretary. I introduced the original national identity card scheme as Home Secretary.

Lord Brabazon of Tara

No relevant interests to declare

Lord Bridges of Headley

I am a Trustee of the Ditchley Foundation.

Earl of Caithness

I declare my interest as a former Surveyor (FRICS) with Agricultural and land use experience.

Lord Cameron of Dillington

I should say that my family has farming, forestry and landowning interests including commercial and domestic property in rural Somerset. I am a member of the National Trust, the NFU and CLA and I am a fellow of the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors.

Baroness Campbell of Surbiton

Disabled, but past retirement age

Lord Campbell-Savours

No relevant interests to declare

Lord Bishop of Carlisle

Lead Bishop for Health and Social Care

President of Silloth Nursing Home

Former member of Select Committee on the sustainability of the NHS and Social Care.

Lord Clark of Windermere

No relevant interests to declare

Lord Clement-Jones

I speak frequently on these issues, chaired the AI Ad Hoc (Special Inquiry) Select Committee and Co-Chair and founder of the All Party Parliamentary AI Group.

Viscount Colville of Culcross

I am a freelance TV producer. Until the end of April I am a freelance series producer working for RawTV making content for CNN.

Lord Cormack

No relevant interests to declare

Baroness Corston

Previous member of the House of Commons in a constituency where there were a lot of marriages according to Islamic law, and I am sure that not all of them were followed by a marriage under domestic law.

Baroness Cox

Baroness Cox is an officer of the APPG on ‘Honour’-Based Abuse, which has heard numerous testimonies from Muslim women in religious-only marriages.

Baroness Cox’s current Private Member’s Bill [Marriage Act 1949 (Amendment) Bill] seeks to protect Muslim women in religious-only marriages. Its provisions create an offence of purporting to solemnise an unregistered marriage.

Baroness Cox’s previous Private Member’s Bill [Arbitration and Mediation Services] placed a duty on public bodies to ensure that couples in religious-only marriages are made aware of their (lack of) legal rights under English law. The Bill was introduced in six consecutive Parliamentary Sessions and received three Second Reading debates in the House of Lords, with widespread cross-party support.²²

The above Bills are strongly supported by many organisations concerned with the suffering of vulnerable women, including Karma Nirvana, the Council for Muslims Facing Tomorrow, British Arabs Supporting Universal Women’s Rights (BASIRA) and the Muslim Women’s Advisory Council.

Lord Bishop of Derby

I am Vice Chair of Trustees of The Children’s Society. I am the Church of England lead Bishop for Sport (oversight which includes social, health and well-being for all ages)

I have held responsibility in the past for diocesan social responsibility engagement and training (in the Diocese of Chester) for children, young people and families. I have been a trustee of an Adoption Agency.

Lord Dholakia

Lord Dholakia is an officer of the APPG on ‘Honour’-Based Abuse, which has heard numerous testimonies from Muslim women in religious-only marriages.

I have served and attended a number of APPG dealing with this subject

Lord Bishop of Durham

Acting Chair of the National Society

Baroness Eaton

No relevant interests to declare

Lord Faulkner of Worcester

No remunerated interests: Lord Faulkner chairs the Great Western Railway advisory board, is president of the Heritage Railway Association, and is an officer in the rail, and heritage rail APPGs.

Baroness Finlay of Llandaff

The problem of “marriages” that are not marriages

My daughters goddaughter has entered into a sharia marriage and does not yet have a civil wedding arranged

Children’s well-being

I chair the National Mental Capacity Forum and the Commission on Alcohol Harms

Baroness Fookes

Co-Chairman of All Party Parliamentary Gardening and Horticulture Group.

²² HL Debs, 27 January 2017 [cols 892–925](#); 23 October 2015 [cols 876–908](#); 19 October 2012 [cols 1683–1716](#)

Member of the Royal Horticultural Society

Member of the European Boxwood and Topiary Society

Lord Foster of Bath

No relevant interests to declare

Lord Foulkes of Cumnock

I was the PACE General rapporteur on Media Freedom and The Safety of Journalists up to 31st. December 2019 and the Rapporteur for a Report on the issue

Baroness Garden of Frognal

No relevant interests to declare

Lord Bishop of Gloucester

No interests declared

Lord Green of Deddington

General interest stems from a Foreign & Commonwealth Office career largely in the Middle East

Baroness Greengross

No interests declared

Lord Grocott

No relevant interests to declare

Lord Harries of Pentregarth

I have in the past been a member both of the HFEA and the Nuffield Council on Bioethics

When I was Bishop of Oxford I had the privilege of chairing the Select Committee on Stem Cell Research which reported in 2002.

Baroness Hollins

My interest are in the needs of Children with disabilities and I should declare that I chair Books Beyond Words, a charity which creates and distributes resources to support the social, emotional and mental health of children and young people

Lord Hylton

15 grandchildren

Lord Kalms

No relevant interests to declare

Lord Laming

Career was in social work and has a particular care about family support services and the protection of children at risk

Lord Layard

Chair of Action for Happiness

Lord Bishop of Leeds

I continue to lecture, preach and write in Germany. I am part of an academic project based at Manchester University researching languages

Lord Lexden

No relevant interests to declare

Baroness Liddell of Coatdyke

No relevant interests to declare

Lord Lilley

No relevant interests to declare

Baroness Lister of Burtersett

Children's well-being

I am hon president of child poverty action group and the chair of a British Academy working group on childhood

The problem of "marriages" that are not marriages

No relevant interests to declare

The Earl of Lytton

I am a practising chartered surveyor (due to retire from most professional work in June 2020) with some limited involvement with this area but have received several communications in my parliamentary post, highlighting problems.

Baroness Massey of Darwen

The problem of “marriages” that are not marriages

I am a member of the Joint Committee on Human Rights, co - chair of the APPG on Young People’s Health and Secretary of the APPG on Humanism

Children’s well-being

I am on the Children Sub Committee (previously Chair) of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe and engaged in writing 2 reports on Violence Against Children and Child Participation

I am co- chair of the All Party Parliamentary Group on Young People’s Health and on the committee of the APPG on children

I am a patron of a number of children’s charities

I am a Lady Taverner, a cricket charity which fund raises to buy equipment to enable disabled children to take part in sport

Lord McColl

I am a Professor Emeritus University of London

Baroness Meacher

Since running the Child Poverty Action Group’s (successful) campaign for the introduction of Child Benefit in the early 1970s I have had a 50 year interest in child poverty and child welfare. I have contributed to countless debates on welfare legislation with a particular interest in the impact of legislation on children, since becoming a cross-bench peer.

I worked in child care as a front line social worker at the beginning of my career, and finished up as Chair of the East London NHS mental health Trust for nine years. We ran CAMHS services and an in-patient unit for children with severe psychiatric problems. I understand the consequences of the persistent under funding of these services relative to the physical health services.

I have chaired the APPG for Drug Policy Reform in Parliament for about ten years, and through this work have been very much in touch with the consequences for teenagers of inadequate youth and drug treatment services. We are aware of good practice in other Countries.

Lord Murphy of Torfaen

Held the positions of Secretary of State for Wales and for Northern Ireland and was a Welsh MP

Baroness Neuberger

I chair both UCLH and the Whittington Hospital NHS Trusts, I am a Trustee of the Rayne Foundation which makes some grants towards children’s interests, and I chair the Schwab Westheimer Trusts which provide grants for young asylum seekers to access education. Most, but not all, are at college/university level, but a few are for laptops for young looked after asylum seeking children. I am also a trustee of the Netherlands based Van Leer Foundation, where the key objective is the welfare of children.

Lord O’Donnell

No interests declared

Baroness O’Loan

No relevant interests to declare

Lord Patel

I am fellow of Acad Medical sciences and Royal Society of Edinburgh

Member of Professional Advisory Committee, Vopulus Limited (medical education technology)

Professor of Obstetrics & Consultant Obstetrician, Ninewells Hospital, University of Dundee (retired)

Member, UK-Israel Science Council

Lord Bishop of Portsmouth

No relevant interests

Baroness Quin

No relevant interests to declare

Lord Ramsbotham

No relevant interests to declare

Lord Ridley

No relevant interests to declare

Lord Rooker

No relevant interests to declare

Lord Shutt of Greetland²³

No remunerated interests. Lord Shutt is a vice-chair of the heritage rail APPG

Lord Soley

No relevant interests to declare

Lord Tebbit

No relevant interests to declare

Baroness Tonge

Baroness Jenny Tonge is the Joint-Chair of the UK APPG on Population, Development and Reproductive Health

Want to improve health service provisions for women and girls in the UK with a particular focus on reducing- abortion gestation, -NHS expenditure and improve the quality of care experienced by women and girls in need of Abortion services

Baroness Thomas of Winchester

Disabled, but past retirement age

Lord Touhig

No relevant interests to declare

Baroness Tyler of Enfield

My only direct interests are as a former Chair of CAF/CASS (I stepped down in April 2018) and as President of the National Children's Bureau where I stepped down at the end of last year.

I am also a Board member of Social Work England.

Lord Vinson

No relevant interests to declare

Lord Wakeham

I spent 9 years as the Chairman of the Press Complaints Commission concerned with both Standards of the Press and the Maintenance of a Free and Responsible Press

Baroness Young of Old Scone

Chairman of the Woodland Trust

Chancellor of Cranfield University

Vice-President of RSPB

Commissioner on the RSA Commission on the Future of Food, Farming and the Countryside

23 Lord Shutt of Greetland died on 30 October 2020.

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

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

Proposal 1: Letter from Baroness Finlay of Llandaff

Alcohol and society in the UK

Description of Proposal

This inquiry would consider alcohol within society, assessing its cultural significance and impact on health, public services, the economy, environment and trade. It would consider links with drugs, and with crime including domestic abuse. It would also examine the impact on children including foetal alcohol spectrum disorders.

The topic has relevance to many: 35.6 million people consume alcohol in England.²⁴ In 2018, 450,000 people were employed in UK pubs.²⁵ The way we drink is changing and more choose to drink at home,²⁶ with consequences for the hospitality sector. Pub numbers are declining and supermarket beer is 188% more affordable than in 1987, with the price gap between on- and off-trade alcohol increasing over time.²⁷ Other trends include an increase in popularity of “no and low” products.²⁸ The committee would seek to understand what drives these trends and assess implications for the market, health and public policy.

EU Exit and corresponding legislation also contribute to a changing landscape. Scotch whisky exports equalled £4.7bn in 2018,²⁹ and trade deals will have implications for both alcohol exports and public health. The UK Internal Market Bill, which creates the framework for internal trade, will impact upon alcohol policy, with critics claiming it will limit devolved governments’ ability to implement policies to improve population health.

The pandemic highlights the importance of the nation’s health. Alcohol is the leading risk factor for early mortality, ill-health and disability in the 15-49 age group.³⁰ It also compounds other risk factors, such as obesity: drinkers consume nearly 10% of their calories from alcohol.³¹ Early indications suggest alcohol

24 Public Health England, *The public health burden of alcohol and the effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of alcohol control policies* (December 2016); . https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/733108/alcohol_public_health_burden_evidence_review_update_2018.pdf [accessed 30 October 2020]

25 House of Commons Library, Briefing: Pub statistics, [CLB8591](#), 28 May 2020

26 ‘Off-trade beer sales 700,000 pints ahead of on-trade’, *Morning Advertiser* (24 October 2019): https://www.morningadvertiser.co.uk/Article/2019/10/24/Off-trade-beer-sales-beats-on-trade?utm_source=copyright&utm_medium=OnSite&utm_campaign=copyright [accessed 30 October 2020]

27 Institute of Alcohol Studies, *The rising affordability of alcohol* (February 2018), http://www.ias.org.uk/uploads/pdf/IAS_reports/sb20022018.pdf [accessed 30 October 2020]

28 ‘Young drinkers’ thirst for no and low-alcohol beer sets new trend’, *The Guardian* (11 March 2020): <https://www.theguardian.com/food/2020/mar/11/young-drinkers-thirst-for-no--and-low-alcohol-beer-sets-new-trend> [accessed 30 October 2020]

29 Scotch Whisky Association, *Scotch Whisky economic impact report* (April 2019), <https://www.scotch-whisky.org.uk/media/1591/final-2018-economic-impact-report.pdf> [accessed 30 October 2020]

30 Public Health England, *The public health burden of alcohol and the effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of alcohol control policies* (December 2016): https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/733108/alcohol_public_health_burden_evidence_review_update_2018.pdf [accessed 30 October 2020]

31 Department of Health and Social Care, *New obesity strategy unveiled as country urged to lose weight to beat coronavirus and protect the NHS* (27 July 2020): <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-obesity-strategy-unveiled-as-country-urged-to-lose-weight-to-beat-coronavirus-COVID-19-and-protect-the-nhs> [accessed 30 October 2020]

consumption has polarised during the pandemic and there are reported reductions in numbers starting alcohol or drug treatment.³²

COVID-19 puts pressure on our economy and public services, and the Chancellor must make difficult fiscal decisions. Alcohol is an important source of revenue for the Treasury with alcohol duty forecast to raise £12.6bn in 2019/20.³³ However, alcohol's cost is significant: £3.5bn annually to the NHS in England,³⁴ with alcohol-related crime costing society £11.4bn.³⁵ A full assessment of costs and benefits will be timely.

Purpose of Inquiry

The inquiry would seek to plug the gaps that have arisen through the absence of an up-to-date alcohol strategy. The *ad hoc* committee would also seek to identify public policy solutions to problems caused by alcohol.

The Prime Minister has committed to “build back better” in the nation’s recovery from the pandemic. In doing so, the Government will want to adopt evidence-based measures to improve the nation’s health whilst protecting the hospitality industry and an *ad hoc* inquiry on alcohol would help to provide the government with robust recommendations about how to do so.

Importantly, the committee would not confine itself to examining health. It would seek to build a holistic view of alcohol in society and would provide the framework for a cross-departmental alcohol strategy.

Relevant Member Experience

Alcohol is relevant to many subject areas and Members of the House are well placed to contribute their varied knowledge and experience. Within the House sit people who have experienced alcohol addiction first-hand. There are experts on alcohol and drug treatment including those on boards of treatment providers. There are former policemen and police commissioners who have understanding of the link between alcohol and crime. Physicians and former health ministers in the House understand the impact of alcohol upon physical and mental health. Leaders of industry can contribute their experience of alcohol from a business and economic perspective. There is also a wealth of experience on local government and its role in alcohol licensing.

The interest that this topic sparks amongst Members is evidenced by the number of All Party Parliamentary Groups (APPG) relating to alcohol, and the number of members these groups attract. There are APPGs on beer, wine and spirits and pubs, as well as those concerned with the more negative impacts of alcohol such as the groups on liver health and cancer.

32 Institute of Alcohol Studies, *Alcohol consumption during the COVID-19 pandemic in the UK* (October 2020): <http://www.ias.org.uk/uploads/pdf/IAS%20reports/sb29102020.pdf> [accessed 30 October 2020]

33 House of Commons Library, Debate pack: Taxation on beer and pubs, [CDP 2020/0022](https://www.parliament.uk/publications/2020/022), 4 February 2020

34 Home Office, *Impact assessment: a minimum unit price for alcohol* (November 2012): https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/157763/ia-minimum-unit-pricing.pdf [accessed 30 October 2020]

35 Association of Police and Crime Commissioners, *PCCs Making a Difference: Alcohol and Drugs In Focus* (April 2020): <https://www.apccs.police.uk/media/4956/alcohol-and-drugs-in-focus-v10-final.pdf> [accessed 30 October 2020]

Cross-cutting Departmental Boundaries

Alcohol policy spans departmental boundaries and this would be a cross-cutting inquiry. General responsibility for alcohol lies jointly between the Home Office and Department of Health and Social Care. Alcohol duty and taxation sits under HM Treasury and HMRC. Troubled families fall within the remit of the Department for Work and Pensions. Alcohol is closely linked with rough sleeping, which falls under the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government. Alcohol production and labelling is the responsibility of the Department for Environment and Rural Affairs.

One-year Time Frame

Yes. Given the need to inform the Government's COVID-19 recovery, the inquiry would be completed before summer recess 2021.

Additional Comments

We both sat on an independent commission, chaired by Baroness Finlay and made up of Members from across the House together with external experts, which received over 140 pieces of written evidence from a range of organisations and individuals. The issue of minimum unit pricing for alcohol was considered in a joint evidence session by the House of Commons Home Affairs and Health Select Committees in 2018. The work of the independent commission and the Commons Select Committees would serve as an ideal "pilot" for an *ad hoc* committee.

This proposal is supported by Baroness Boycott.

FINLAY OF LLANDAFF

Proposal 2: Letter from Lord Dykes

An examination of the modalities of the UK staying in the EU.

Description of proposal

Although there was a public vote in the December 2019 General Election, our first past the post voting system produced an artificial majority of 80 seats, there was actually a loss in the public voting percentage. Since then recent opinion polls have shown 50% to 35% support for Brexit. Moreover, in the voting figures in December 2019 the parties receiving support for EU membership still, were a sizeable majority. The UK system apart from France-has a totally unrepresentative system which blocks the popular voting result, which is not available in all EU collective or national vote systems.

If we had a written constitution and a fair voting system the result would not have happened. In the meantime, a new referendum would show a different result.

Purpose of Inquiry

To put right what has become an ominous and huge mistake for the British public because of the faulty referendum plan launched by Prime Minister Cameron.

Relevant Member Experience

The House appears to have a very large and learned and well informed majority for EU membership.

One-year Time Frame

Yes indeed.

Additional Comments

This proposal will obviously seem surprising even too esoteric. However, it is the only way for the Lords to seek to surmount the disadvantage for the UK of no written constitution.

Another referendum seems compelling.

I seek to put right a tragic mistake.

DYKES

Proposal 3: Letter from Baroness D'Souza

An International Role for the UK post-Brexit

Description of Proposal

The UK now needs, in the post Brexit world, to demonstrate that it has not retreated from the world stage. But what kind of new role should it build and how best might it be deployed?

Other powerful nations rely predominantly on military, economic and, in the case of superpowers, political might. The UK cannot compete equally in these areas. That said the UK must now play to its strengths which include a long and distinguished tradition (and reputation) of soft power. It has also gained wide respect for its Development Programmes upon which it can build. Soft power encompasses language, diplomacy, special relations and networks and culture by means of which the UK has wielded considerable influence. This proposal seeks to go beyond the well-rehearsed advantages of existing soft power channels to redefine new initiatives for the next decade. Older iterations of soft power might not have sufficient bite.

The UK's particular strengths and mechanisms will need careful re-examination in order to identify effective activities in a post Brexit context. This stage of the work would benefit from expert witnesses from other European countries, Canada and the USA amongst others. It may be that the Committee would conclude by recommending new international partnerships; specifying areas in which UK diplomacy could play additional roles; convening networks to foster cultural exchange and encouraging international co-operation in scientific research; playing a leading part in upholding fundamental human rights and re-emphasising the UK's commitment to the rule of law. In fact, working in many different arenas to build relationships around the world. The Committee might consider that existing channels of soft power (for example, the British Council, the Commonwealth), follow a more structured programme to both introduce and embed a new international role. Another avenue of inquiry could address the opportunities and constraints of pioneering a D10 Alliance (the G7 plus India, Japan and Australia) to engage constructively with anti-democratic approaches encroaching on free and democratic nations worldwide.

Purpose of Inquiry

Although a wide-ranging topic, this kind of inquiry would benefit from a time-limited period of research and evidence if the purpose is to arrive at a few practical and doable actions that would provide a sound basis for more detailed planning to set the UK on a new path in its new-found independent status. It is hoped that the work of this Special Committee would serve to underline how dangerous the world could become if democracies do so little to stop their opponents winning the race for military, political and technological and superiority.

Relevant Member Experience

If we define the UK's strength as largely 'soft power' with all that this implies, then we have within the House of Lords a wide range of relevant experience and skills in fields such as international relations, longstanding specific country knowledge and affiliations, development assistance, diplomacy, negotiating expertise, creative, scientific and other research links within the multilateral world (such as the UN, WTO and NATO), to name but a few.

Cross-cutting Departmental Boundaries

The recommendations of any resulting report would necessarily link with the work of the Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office, the Department for Digital, Culture Media and Sport, the Home Office, the Department of Education, the Treasury and a host of Non Departmental Public Bodies.

D'SOUZA

Proposal 4: Letter from Lord Clement-Jones

Big Data: Assessing Future Opportunities and Mitigating the Risks

Description of Proposal

It is already a cliché that “data is new oil”. Noam Yuval Hariri recently put it more graphically “If you want to make a country a colony, don’t send the tanks in. Just get the data out”³⁶

The COVID lockdown and aftermath have re-emphasized its fundamental importance in both the public and private sector. This is whether in medical advances, improvement in government provision and access to services, targeting of consumer products and services or political messaging and in a huge variety of digital means such as the cloud, Internet of Things, Artificial Intelligence, blockchain and other new technologies.

The governance of the use and sharing of data and regulation of competition in this space is of huge importance going forward for innovation, quality of decision making and in terms of privacy transparency and freedom from bias. This especially applies to the increasing use of biometric data.

It is important in both sectors that we take the considerable opportunities available but at the same time we need to mitigate risks, defend individual rights and freedoms and maintain public trust in the regulatory regime, particularly given our exit from the EU the possibility of making changes to the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the Government’s initiative in consulting on a National Data Strategy and setting up a Digital Markets Taskforce to assess the need for more competition regulation in this area.

The inquiry would be a deep dive into current government data strategies in both the UK and more widely, particularly in the NHS, the state of data use and competition in the private sector, whether the regulatory regime applying to both public and private sector is fit for purpose in the light of the challenges revealed, whether we are entrusting our public data to the appropriate cloud service provider on the right terms and whether vehicles such as data trusts or hubs are a way of protecting individual rights and ensuring greater public trust in data sharing and use.

Questions will include:

- What are the opportunities for society through the use of big data?
- Can this make a valuable contribution whether economically or through broader benefits for patients, taxpayers and others?
- What government action is needed to realize the opportunities?
- For instance, in the public sector how desirable is it that datasets are interoperable? If it is how do we achieve this?
- What is the role of UK Research and Innovation (UKRI), the Alan Turing Institute and other bodies in research in the field?

³⁶ “Harari: ‘If you want to make a country a colony, don’t send the tanks in. Just get the data out’”, Kathimerini English Edition (4 October 2020): <https://www.ekathimerini.com/257687/article/ekathimerini/comment/harari-if-you-want-to-make-a-country-a-colony-dont-send-the-tanks-in-just-get-the-data-out> [accessed 30 October 2020]

- What is the appropriate ethical framework in the public and private sector to minimise the risks and ensure public confidence?
- Are compliance mechanisms adequate?
- What is the role of the Cabinet Office central Transparency Data team?
- What are the roles of the Data Standards Authority and the Data Ethics and Transparency team within the Government Digital Service (GDS)?
- In NHSX's Digital Transformation Portfolio programmes are the Caldicott Principles on using and sharing data adhered to? What oversight has the National Data Guardian for Health and Social Care over the programmes?
- Where are the key partnerships for development of government policy and strategy on data within the private, voluntary or research sectors?
- Can data trusts fulfil a role in this respect?
- How is Government procuring cloud and data services and on what terms?
- What are implications of concentrating data within a very few cloud providers?
- Are the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) and Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) fit for purpose as a regulator in their respective fields as regards concentration of datasets?
- Is the remit of Centre for Data Ethics and Innovation adequate?

Purpose of Inquiry

The building of an evidence base on the opportunities and challenges in this area and the formulation of recommendations on what should be the UK's approach to data governance and regulation in the digital era.

Relevant Member Experience

The issues relating to the use of data are highly cross sectoral and cut across many disciplines and policy and service areas. The House of Lords has a huge range of experience available able to assess the opportunities risks and need for regulation in this field.

In particular there are members with experience on the Science and Technology Committee, the Communications and Digital Committee and two recent Special Inquiries into Artificial Intelligence³⁷ and Democracy and Digital Technologies³⁸ -who have already gained particular insight into the issues involved. To a considerable degree this Special Inquiry would be a necessary and logical follow on from inquiries conducted by those committees.

37 The Select Committee on Artificial Intelligence was appointed on 29 July 2017 and published its report *AI in the UK: ready, willing and able?* (Report of Session 2017–19, HL Paper 100)

38 The Select Committee on Democracy and Digital Technologies was appointed on 13 June 2019 and published its report *Digital Technology and the Resurrection of Trust* (Report of session 2019–21, HL Paper 77)

Cross-cutting Departmental Boundaries

Data use and governance is one of the most cross departmental aspects of government and one which successive UK governments have failed to grasp coherently. Currently both the Cabinet Office, the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, and to a more limited extent the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, have a role in policy making in this area but the key departments generating data are the Treasury, the Department for Work and Pensions, the Home Office and the Department of Health and Social Care. Any national data strategy therefore requires buy in across the full range of government departments, something which the GDS's Verify project failed to achieve.

One-year Time Frame

Yes

Additional Comments

As the RSA say in their paper, "Who Is at Risk? Work and Automation, in the Time of Covid-19"³⁹, with COVID-19 some sectors have accelerated their transition to digital services by 5 years. This I believe makes the requirement for clarity in strategy and governance in the data space urgent. Government use of data is in particular of growing importance alongside the "surveillance capitalism" aspects of use by the private sector. A deep dive into Big Data would very much be a continuation of House of Lords work into aspects of the impact of technology on society carried out by recent Special Inquiries.

CLEMENT-JONES

39 RSA, *Who Is at Risk? Work and Automation, in the Time of COVID-19* (October 2020): https://www.thersa.org/globalassets/foundation/new-site-blocks-and-images/reports/2020/10/work_and_automation_in_time_of_covid_report.pdf [accessed 30 October 2020]

Proposal 5: Letter from Lord Blunkett

Development of an identity system

I think there should be a special inquiry into the future adoption of a comprehensive database combining passport and DVLA information to allow for the development of an easy-to-use identity system.

This would pick up on the Prime Minister's suggestion in his virtual conference speech to the Conservative Party Conference on the 6th October in relation to the use of "digital identity" in respect of border controls post the conclusion of the transition period following the UK's departure from European Union.⁴⁰

I have an expertise in this area as the Secretary of State who originally brought in the identity register and associated card scheme from 2003 onwards (abolished by the Coalition Government in 2010).

BLUNKETT

40 Prime Minister Boris Johnson, Speech to the Conservative Party conference, 6 October 2020: <https://www.conservatives.com/news/boris-johnson-read-the-prime-ministers-keynote-speech-in-full> [accessed 30 October 2020]

Proposal 6: Letter from Lord Lipsey

Devolution and Coronavirus

I suggest a select committee on devolution and coronavirus. Immense difficulties have been caused from the very start of the virus by issues between the UK government and the devolved administrations.

From memory, and to cite only examples, there was an initial difference with the Welsh and Scottish administrations about permitted travel. Then there was the episode where Johnson moved from Stay Home to Stay Alert whatever that meant, while the devolved administrations didn't. Even today we have the First Minister of Wales imploring Johnson to stop people from seriously affected areas in England travelling to Wales and threatening to do it himself if Johnson refused—though of course if he thought the powers he had allowed him to do it he wouldn't be wasting time lobbying Johnson.

Of course, sometimes differences between the countries can be justified on objective grounds eg Northern Ireland might need tougher measures as announced today because it has more coronavirus. However there are also cases which arise because of lack of communication (Johnson failed to talk to the leaders of the devolved administrations before making his first announcement) or because of crude politics (Mark Drakeford is wanting a boundary because he faces a serious Plaid Cymru challenge at the Senned elections next year) or simply because there are no clear bureaucratic rules for resolving matters.

I live partly in a country (Wales) where devolution applies and partly in London where it doesn't. For me and many of my fellow Walesians this makes a set of regulations for England which are already essentially incomprehensible worse. All sorts of practical issues are not addressed. If I go to London for work in the week will I be able to return to Wales? When I am allowed to exclude children from the rule of six as in Wales but have to include them when going to England? Should I throw a few of them out over the Severn Bridge?

I guess thousands will die simply because of the confusion all this is causing.

Of course this matter could be tackled by the Constitution Committee or by the COVID-19 Committee. But its essential nature is that it bridges the remit of both which is precisely why it is fitted to a select committee embracing both perspectives.

LIPSEY

Proposal 7: Letter from the Lord Bishop of St Albans

Ethical Trade Post-Brexit: How to Uphold the UK's International Obligations

Description of Proposal

This Committee will examine how the UK can utilise its newfound independent trade policy, and the new policy options this entails, to uphold global human rights standards, sustainable development goals, and international climate agreements, while at the same time ensuring the UK's future prosperity.

Background:

- The UK is a signatory to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), 2030 UN Agenda for Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and the UNFCCC Paris Climate Agreement.
- Previously the EU negotiated trade agreements with third countries on the UK's behalf. The EU's approach has been to press for trade agreements that contain general obligations.
- Unilateral economic sanctions that related to the single market could only be implemented by the EU with exemptions in very specific national security situations.
- The Government has made it clear that one of the objectives in leaving the EU is so that the UK can pursue an independent trade policy.
- The UK's new status as an independent sovereign market will provide an opportunity to explore how the UK can use free trade agreements and economic sanctions to pursue broader international objectives whilst recognising the need for a balanced and proportionate approach.
- In February 2019, the then Secretary of State for International Trade, Liam Fox, said that the UK was resisting attempts by some countries to reduce the human rights provisions in trade agreements as the UK moved from EU to independent trade agreements.⁴¹ In July 2019, the Minister for the Middle East, Andrew Murrison, discussed whether any future trade agreement with China may or may not include human rights clauses.⁴²
- In March 2019, the Joint Committee on Human Rights published a report on human rights in international agreements. It said that there was "*a strong case for requiring minimum standard processes, practices and clauses to protect and promote human rights in all international agreements*".⁴³ It called for greater parliamentary scrutiny of trade agreements, and for negotiating teams to have access to human rights expertise.
- In its response, the Government committed to a more extensive scrutiny process for trade agreements.⁴⁴ However, it rejected the call for a standardised approach and strict regulations that would legally

41 HC Deb, 13 February 2019 [cols 892–3](#)

42 HC Deb, 22 July 2019, [col 1101](#)

43 Joint Committee on Human Rights, *Human Rights Protections in International Agreements* (Seventeenth Report of Session 2017–19, HC 1883, HL Paper 310), para 13

44 Joint Committee on Human Rights, *Human Rights Protections in International Agreements: Government Response* (Sixth Special Report of Session 2017–19, HC 2199)

bind the government to these obligations in trade agreements, instead preferring to maintain flexibility.

- The Lords has recently unsuccessfully attempted to place amendments on Bills such as the Agriculture Bill and Trade Bill to bind the government to commit to SDGs, Paris Climate Agreement, and the UN Convention on Genocide Prevention within future and existing trade agreements.

With the UK's departure from the EU, and the subsequent transfer of powers back to the UK, for example the right to agree bilateral trade deals and unilaterally impose economic sanctions, the Committee will scrutinize how to utilise these new policy instruments and conduct to secure our economic prosperity while at the same time uphold global human rights norms and environmental standards.

Purpose of Inquiry

The Committee will explore questions such as:

- How should Britain structure its trade relations with countries that have a poor human rights record?
- How can trade agreements advance the SDGs and international climate targets?
- How do trade agreements undermine our international obligations?
- Should future trade agreements include clauses to uphold our international obligations and what is the evidence to suggest that such provisions advance these goals?
- What should be the scope and application of any such clause and when should it be invoked and by whom?
- Assess the economic and social impact domestically and internationally of obligational clauses within trade agreements.
- What would be the risks of such an approach both to the UK and to Third countries, especially poorer ones?

The aim will be to produce a series of guidance and recommendations for the Government and Civil Service to best deal with these questions. These recommendations will also be of value to Parliament as it monitors and evaluates Britain's future trading relations. Overall, the committee aims to achieve a considered framework for ethical trading that best balances economic prosperity with our environmental obligations and the promotion of human rights.

Relevant Member Experience

The House has been very engaged in matters relating to the UK's future trading relationships and considerations relating to international obligations. Examples of these include:

- Lord Judge's motion of regret on Part 5 of Internal Market Bill and the provisions, if enacted that would undermine the rule of law and reputation of the United Kingdom, which passed on division.⁴⁵

45 HL Deb, 20 October 2020, [col 1421](#)

- Lord Grantchester’s amendment 12 on the Trade Bill which sought to prevent the implementation of a trade agreement if it was inconsistent with the Paris Agreement, Convention on International Trade on Endangered Species, and the Convention on Biological Diversity.⁴⁶
- Lord Purvis’s amendment 39 on the Trade Bill which sought to make conditions for trade in relation to Sustainable Development Goals.⁴⁷
- Lord Alton’s amendment 68 on the Trade Bill which sought to revoke any trade agreement if the Court of England and Wales made a preliminary determination that a signatory to any agreement had committed Genocide under article II of the UN Convention on the Prevention of Genocide.⁴⁸

The expertise and concern around upholding international obligations within the House has been present in domestic legislation also, notably the recent Agriculture Bill and the amendments placed that sought to uphold the Paris Agreement within the new framework.

The Committee would be able to draw on the knowledge of the House of Lords International Agreements Sub-Committee, which “*scrutinises all treaties that are laid before Parliament under the terms of the Constitutional Reform and Governance Act 2010 and considers the Government’s conduct of negotiations with states and other international partners.*”⁴⁹

The proposed committee would provide and draw upon expertise highlighted in the above areas of trade and international obligations within the House and channel and consolidate them into a single forum for thorough discussions that would lead into considered recommendations.

Cross-cutting Departmental Boundaries

The committee will address areas of policy relating to the Department for International Trade; Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office; Department for Environment; Food and Rural Affairs; and HM Treasury.

Central to the committee will be the Department for International Trade and the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office particularly when addressing the issue of human rights, the sustainable development goals and trade, and how best to uphold these rights internationally and whether doing so configures to current UK foreign policy. This link between the Department for International Trade and other departments also extends to the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs in the area of the climate change. Furthermore, scrutinizing the economic cost of obligation clauses in trade deals, and the effects this may have on domestic revenue will cross over into the remit of HM Treasury.

One-year Time Frame

The committee is capable of being completed by the end of November 2021. The topic of future trading relationships has been a central issue of this current government, and we believe it is in the interests of the House of Lords to produce a

46 HL Deb, 1 October 2020, cols [74GC–75GC](#)

47 HL Deb, 29 September 2020, cols [64GC–67GC](#)

48 HL Deb, 13 October 2020, cols [1025–1031](#)

49 EU International Agreements Sub-Committee: <https://committees.parliament.uk/committee/448/eu-international-agreements-subcommittee/> [accessed 30 October 2020]

framework for ethical trading as soon as possible to ensure these recommendations are accounted for when negotiating new trading relationships in the future.

Given the relevance of trade within the current UK political discussion, and the existing external contributions to the subject on international obligations within trading relationships, the committee would quickly be able to draw upon existing work, and expert evidence submissions, to produce considered recommendations that analyses the trade-off between upholding international obligations and economic prosperity.

This proposal is supported by Lord Alton of Liverpool and Lord Purvis of Tweed.

+ ALAN ST ALBANS

Proposal 8: First Letter from Lord Puttnam

Economic and Taxation Implications of the Transition from a Petro to a Digital Economy

As we (hopefully) emerge from the COVID-19 crisis these two issues will undoubtedly emerge as areas of serious concern.

In both cases these subjects seem to attract far more conjecture than underlying fact - which is always a good starting point for any serious investigation.

The Chancellor will have to find new and imaginative areas of revenue collection, and with over 450 billion dollars held as 'reserves' by just five of the digital monoliths they're likely to be the subject of serious Treasury attention; and not just in this country!

These five companies, Microsoft, Apple, Google (Alphabet) Amazon and Facebook lie at the heart of a still rapidly growing business sector, one which has become significantly larger than the declining Energy sector, upon which all our pensions have been largely underpinned for the past 50 years and more.

I hope this is of interest and I'd be grateful if you could add these thoughts to those currently being considered by Lord McFall.

PUTTNAM

Proposal 9: Second Letter from Lord Puttnam

Future of the High Street

As we (hopefully) emerge from the Covid 19 crisis these two issues will undoubtedly emerge as areas of serious concern.

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The Chancellor will have to find new and imaginative areas of revenue collection, and with over 450 billion dollars held as 'reserves' by just five of the digital monoliths they're likely to be the subject of serious Treasury attention; and not just in this country!

These five companies, Microsoft, Apple, Google (Alphabet) Amazon and Facebook lie at the heart of a still rapidly growing business sector, one which has become significantly larger than the declining Energy sector, upon which all our pensions have been largely underpinned for the past 50 years and more.

I hope this is of interest and I'd be grateful if you could add these thoughts to those currently being considered by Lord McFall.

PUTTNAM

Proposal 10: Letters from Lord Trees and Lord Blencathra

*Globalisation and Biosecurity—risks and benefits for animal, plant and environmental health.*⁵⁰

Description of Proposal

Globalisation has been a powerful driver for good in terms of international relations and economic development. It comes, however, at a cost—that cost is reduced biosecurity. The current coronavirus pandemic has brought into sharp focus the human cost of biosecurity breaches associated with globalisation and has revealed the speed and ease with which pathogens can spread internationally, and the economic consequences that can result. Similar risks pertain to pathogens and pests affecting animal, plant and environmental health. Although the economic costs of biosecurity breaches in these cases are lower than in the current human pandemic, they can still be substantial. The last major foot and mouth disease epidemic closed the countryside and cost some £8 billion and it is estimated that the cost of dealing with ash dieback will eventually be some £15 billion. Invasive species are affecting our natural environment and biodiversity in profound ways. Alien species are one of the main drivers of animal and plant extinction and are expected to cost the UK economy £3.4 billion in the next 20 years.

Given current events, it is timely and essential that we review our national risks, benefits and preparedness with respect to incursions of plant, animal and environmental pathogens and pests. This proposed inquiry would look at the extent of movement of relevant goods (livestock and their products; trees and plants and their products; bulk products which could harbour pests and their pathogens; and material carried by humans, legally or illegally, including ‘bushmeat’), assess known risks, and consider national preparedness and mitigation capabilities. Brexit gives us new opportunities to control the import of goods which could threaten our biosecurity. Whilst it is not certain how ash dieback reached the UK, the import of ash saplings has been incriminated. The plans to plant millions of trees to mitigate climate change raise questions as to the source of the saplings; if imported, we risk losing as many trees from introduced pathogens and pests as we might plant. Whilst Dutch elm disease and ash dieback have changed the face of the countryside, further pests such as oak processionary moth (brought to Britain in 2005) now threaten our oak trees. Significantly, the first Plant Health and Biosecurity conference was held this year at Kew Gardens.

In animal health, African Swine Fever (ASF) in pigs has devastated the pig population in China and has advanced westward across continental Europe. Since wild boar provide a wild animal reservoir, control or eradication is doubly difficult. Germany has reported (September 2020) its first case of ASF in boar and in Denmark, a fence is being built along the German border to prevent the incursion of infected wild boar.

With regard to wild native species in the UK, there has been a serious decline in UK amphibian populations—partly associated with ranavirus (introduced into the UK in the 1980s), and a fungal disease of amphibians (which has been proposed as a cause of global amphibian decline) has been found in captive newts and salamanders in the UK in 2015. And yet we continue to import vast numbers of frogs, amphibians and reptiles with scant biosecurity checks - between 2014–2018, 2.5 million frogs were legally imported into the UK.

⁵⁰ Lord Trees submitted a similar proposal to the Liaison Committee in the spring, this is a revised version of that proposal.

In this age of globalisation, I suggest that we have not taken risks to biosecurity seriously enough. Unless we do, there will be further, and more frequent “new” diseases and pests with adverse consequences. There is little point in improving habitats to increase biodiversity if we allow the introduction of alien pathogens and pests against which native species have not evolved resistance. There is no excuse now for being ignorant or complacent.

Purpose of Inquiry

To increase political awareness that there are by-stander costs associated with globalisation and free trade. This would not be to suggest they are per se not worth pursuing but rather to set a context in which there can be an evidence-based, balanced political analysis of the benefit-cost ratio in such activities. This might lead to increased investments in preventive or mitigation efforts proportionate to the value of certain enterprises and a consideration of who benefits and who pays. It could highlight areas where more research is needed, either operational research in improving surveillance and control methods (including specific trade restrictions), or more basic research into prophylactic measures such as vaccines or genetics. It may also seek to influence policy regarding to what extent, as a nation, we should increase self-reliance on critical resources.

Above all, it would seek to reach recommendations that would strengthen our proactive or reactive capability to safeguard our environmental, plant and animal health in a world where global trade and movement of people and goods will continue.

Relevant Member Experience

This would draw on the great knowledge and expertise of the House in economics, trade and business, agriculture, plant and animal health, public health and international relations.

Cross-cutting Departmental Boundaries

As mentioned in the section above, the proposal involves areas of policy in trade and finance, science and technology, foreign relations, health and the activities of the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, Department for International Trade and the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office.

One-year Time Frame

Yes—but detailed benefit-cost analysis of globalisation would be beyond its scope.

Additional Comments

This is an issue that has been quietly growing as a matter of national concern, but which current events have brought into sharp focus.

This proposal is supported by Lord Blencathra, Lord Browne of Ladyton, Lord Krebs, Lord Rooker and Lord Teverson. A letter of support from Lord Blencathra is below.

TREES

Lord Trees has briefed me on the bid he submitted and I hope that it is not too inappropriate if I write to the Liaison Committee to support it, albeit belatedly.

I am the Deputy Chair of Natural England and as such I automatically serve on the Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC), the government's UK adviser on nature and biodiversity matter across the whole United Kingdom and overseas. It consists of top scientific experts and its Board has equal numbers of members from the four countries of the UK.

The JNCC became aware that because of the COVID-19 outbreak originating in China and the likely crossover of the disease from animals to humans, the acknowledged zoonotic crossover problem has really risen to the top of the agenda. The JNCC is working on an urgent report on habitat loss forcing animals closer to humans and the inevitable crossing of animal diseases to human beings. As you know the COP 26 in Glasgow has been delayed till next year. So too has the equally important, but less well known Convention on Biological Diversity 15 which will still take place in China, but sometime next year. The JNCC report will inform the UK Government negotiating position on the exploitation of wild animals for food consumption and habitat loss.

However it is not just the JNCC; all top animal rights organisations, veterinary bodies and think tanks are preparing reports. Everyone is getting in on the act except this House and we have more credibility than many of those preparing reports to advise the Government.

Because of international travel and trade we are much more vulnerable to exotic diseases coming in from plants and animals. One of the largest challenges we face is Non Native Invasive Species. On the 10th of September Germany confirmed the first ever case of African Swine Fever in wild boar in the country with potentially devastating consequences.

This is now not just a matter of Japanese Knot Weed, nasty though that is. It is now a matter of life and death. Forty years ago 40% of human diseases came from animals; now it is 70% and continuing to increase.

This is a complex and cross cutting subject and exactly the sort of matter which our experts in this House are best suited to tackle. It is a subject whose time has come and I urge colleagues to look again at Lord Trees's bid and hopefully accede to it.

I hope that my intervention in this matter is not inappropriate.

BLENCATHRA

Proposal 11: Letter from Baroness Greengross

Hospital Patient-Hotel Developments

Description of Proposal

Hospital Patient Hotels have for the last 30 years successfully been used throughout Scandinavia and other parts of continental Europe to reduce hospital admissions and to support better outcomes for patients. The idea is to separate the accommodation element of a hospital stay from the clinical content and its associated costs. In these less formal hotel-type surroundings frail people, often with comorbidity can recover in a more homely non-clinical environment. Accommodation is typically in hotel-style private rooms with en-suite facilities. In this part of the hospital, just like in any other hotel, the work is carried out by staff trained in cooking and cleaning, except they are also trained to keep an eye on the guest patient's progress and to report quickly any adverse changes or deterioration and where appropriate the patient is transferred back to the main hospital.

Presently hospitals regularly face capacity issues. Even prior to the COVID-19 pandemic UK hospitals have struggled with admission numbers. Studies have found that many patients remain in hospital well beyond the point it is deemed clinically necessary. This creates capacity issues and overcrowding in hospitals. A 2019 survey found that many NHS Trusts were spending up to £200 a night on hotel accommodation for patients who do not need full hospital care but need to be in nearby accommodation for treatment. The cost of someone staying in an NHS hospital bed can be even greater, depending on their length of stay and the type of treatment needed.

This inquiry would assess the use of Hospital Patient Hotels internationally and understand how this model could be established in the United Kingdom. It would assess the benefits to the NHS of establishing Patient Hotels as an addition to current hospitals. Given these facilities are now well established internationally it is important this inquiry examine what has made these so successful and whether these models could be replicated in this country.

It would also look at NHS and other Public Sector Organisations with vacant land which could be used for such developments, particularly where this land is near a hospital. Presently, where developers have tried to create these sorts of facilities on NHS trust sites, they have struggled to compete with short term housing developers. The inquiry should consider options such as Development Long-Leaseback models to be legislated in public-sector land sales where the public sector still retains ownership on a long-lease, in order to apply land acquisition costs to such a development.

Purpose of Inquiry

The inquiry would be assessing the benefits to the public health system of investing in Hospital Patient Hotels. Specifically, both the benefits to patients staying in this sort of accommodation whilst receiving treatment or recovering from an injury or illness. It would also look at the potential savings to the national NHS budget a partnership between the public health system and private sector investment would have.

Hospital Patient Hotels are not claimed to be a panacea for all ills. For example, the current and longstanding issues in Social Care would not be addressed through this concept. This model would aim to provide comfortable accommodation for those needing health care whilst saving the NHS money. The inquiry would look at

both of these aspects. For patient experience the inquiry would seek to understand how this sort of accommodation as part of the hospital system would help recovery and rehabilitation. For cost savings the inquiry would look at how hotel-style accommodation as part of NHS hospitals would reduce pressure on hospital beds and understand the possible cost savings this initiative could provide.

The third goal of this inquiry would be to gain a greater understanding of how using vacant NHS or other public land through a Long-Leaseback model would work. Would this require legislative change or could this be achieved through the existing legislative framework. Also, how would a partnership between NHS trusts and private sector to build these facilities be managed. How has this been achieved internationally and could these models be replicated in the UK.

Relevant Member Experience

The House of Lords has a wealth of experience with Peers both from the health and commercial sectors, respectively. The aim of this inquiry is to assess the viability of the private sector providing a new service that could improve patient care and reduce cost. By utilising those with relevant experience in the Lords this inquiry can assess the viability of Hospital Patient Hotels in the UK.

Cross-cutting Departmental Boundaries

The primary departments whose policy areas would be addressed in this proposal are:

- The Department for Health and Social Care
- Public Health England
- The National Health Service (NHS)
- The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government

One-year Time Frame

This inquiry would hold 8 sessions on the following topics:

- (1) The international experience of Hospital Patient Hotels
- (2) Understanding the possible benefits to patients of this concept
- (3) The potential cost savings and efficiencies to the NHS from establishing Hospital Patient Hotels
- (4) How surplus NHS and other Public Sector land can be used for this purpose
- (5) How Hospital Patient Hotels would work as part of the NHS
- (6) The benefits of private sector investment in providing a new service to the NHS
- (7) How Hospital Patient Hotels could benefit the NHS during a global pandemic
- (8) The possible Governance model for Hospital Patient Hotels

This inquiry would be seeking input from:

- Members and other policy experts
- Research bodies and third sector organisations
- Business and the private sector respectively
- NHS Trusts and Public Health England
- Providers of Hospital Patient Hotels internationally

Additional Comments

This inquiry proposal provides the House of Lords with an opportunity to consider an initiative which could improve efficiencies and provide much needed budget savings to the NHS. It could consider whether land currently owned but not presently used by NHS trusts and other public sector organisations could be used to create modern, comfortable appropriate accommodation to those needing medical care and support, but not needing to be admitted to hospital.

In the context of a global pandemic where we know our public health system has been under increased pressure, it is timely that a special inquiry considers an initiative which may improve patient outcomes and efficiencies in the NHS.

GREENGROSS

Proposal 12: Letter from Lord Alton of Liverpool

*Inquiry into the issue of genocide determination conducive to triggering HMG's duties under the UN Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide*⁵¹

Description of proposal

The inquiry will scrutinise Her Majesty's Government's (HMG) long-standing policy of leaving the question of genocide determination to 'international judicial systems', the reasoning behind this approach and its compatibility with HMG's international law obligations. The inquiry will examine the steps taken by HMG to identify and analyse early warning signs of atrocities, especially where the atrocities show the hallmarks of genocide. The inquiry will further consider the process of analysing such data and following up on the findings. As such, the inquiry will consider how HMG's approach aligns with the International Court of Justice (ICJ) finding that

'a State's obligation to prevent, and the corresponding duty to act, arise at the instant that the State learns of, or should normally have learned of, the existence of a serious risk that genocide will be committed. From that moment onwards, if the State has available to it means likely to have a deterrent effect on those suspected of preparing genocide, or reasonably suspected of harbouring specific intent (*dolus specialis*), it is under a duty to make such use of these means as the circumstances permit.'⁵²

The inquiry will consider HMG's response to the cases of alleged genocide, from Armenia to Darfur, the recent Daesh genocide against religious minorities in Syria and Iraq, the genocide perpetrated against Rohingya Muslims in Rakhine state, Burma, and the emerging genocides, such as Nigeria, and targeting of specific groups, such as the Uighurs in China.

The inquiry will consider the possible approaches for HMG to adopt to strengthen its responses to genocide, in line with HMG's duties under the UN Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, and implementing the finding of the ICJ.

Purpose of Inquiry

The inquiry will consider whether HMG's current approaches are adequate and what other steps HMG could be taking to give full effect to its obligations under the UN Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide. Such an inquiry into HMG's position on genocide determination has never been conducted by either House. In the eight decade after the adoption of the UN Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide it is crucial to consider HMG's role in turning the legacy of this landmark document into reality.

Relevant Member Experience

Members of the House with particular expertise on these issues include:

Baroness Kennedy of The Shaws QC, Baroness Butler-Sloss QC, Lord Carlile of Berriew QC, Lord Brennan QC, Lord Pannick QC, Lord Mackay of Clashfern

51 Lord Alton of Liverpool submitted a similar proposal to the Liaison Committee in the spring, this is a revised version of that proposal.

52 *Bosnia and Herzegovina v Serbia and Montenegro* [2007] ICJ 2

QC, Baroness Nicholson of Winterbourne, Baroness Cox of Queensbury, Lord Forsyth of Drumlean, Lord Marlesford, Lord Campbell of Pittenweem, Baroness Helic.

Other Members of the House whose expertise could contribute to the inquiry include:

- Lord Hope of Craighead, former Deputy President of the Supreme Court of the United Kingdom.
- Lord Stirrup, former Chief of Defence Staff, has a detailed knowledge of Iraq.
- Lord Judge, former Lord Chief Justice of England and Wales.
- Lord Trimble, as former First Minister for Northern Ireland, professor of law and barrister.
- Lord Woolf, as former Lord Chief Justice of England and Wales and as a member of the Privy Council he conducted a review of the working methods of the European Court of Human Rights.
- Lord Hannay of Chiswick, member of the All-Party Parliamentary Group on the United Nations, International Relations Committee.
- Lord Wood of Anfield, chair of the United Nations Association, UK and member of the All-Party Parliamentary Group on the United Nations.
- Lord Evans of Weardale, was Director-General of the British Security Service, the United Kingdom's domestic security and counter-intelligence service.
- Lord Collins of Highbury, Opposition Whip (Lords), Shadow Spokesperson (International Development), and Shadow Spokesperson (Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs).

Cross-cutting Departmental Boundaries

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

- Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office
- Department of Defence
- Department of Justice
- Crown Prosecution Service
- Attorney General's Office

Former or current House of Lords Ministers could be asked to give evidence, including:

- Baroness Symons of Vernon Dean
- Baroness Northover

- Baroness Warsi
- Lord Howell of Guildford
- Baroness Anelay of St Johns
- Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon

One-year Time Frame

The proposed special inquiry committee is capable of being completed in one year with an attempt to finalise it within a shorter period of time. The inquiry will conduct between five and 10 expert witness sessions of up to two hours per session. The witnesses will include experts from the above identified departments, legal academics and practitioners, and others with relevant expertise.

Additional Comments

The inquiry could also involve a public call for evidence from individuals or groups with relevant expertise to ensure that the inquiry is as comprehensive as possible to significant contribute to the debates on the topic.

Lord Carlile of Berriew, Lord Hannay of Chiswick and Baroness Smith of Newnham indicated their support for the original proposal.

ALTON OF LIVERPOOL

Proposal 13: Letter from Lord Bird

Protecting the wellbeing of future generations

Description of Proposal

The United Kingdom faces a number of challenges now and in the future, such as global pandemics, climate change, the quality of jobs, poverty and health inequalities amongst others. These matters, all implicitly or explicitly involve action that has implications not just for current generations (including those younger than the legal voting age), but for those not yet born. In order to safeguard and balance the interests of current and future generations, policymakers must think about the long-term impacts of the decisions they make.

However, policymakers tend to respond to the immediate wishes and needs of current electorates, and the short-term media cycle, which means they are predominantly receptive to the interests of present generations. There is therefore a high likelihood that the needs of future generations will be compromised, in the absence of specific mechanisms to redress the balance.

Other countries have begun to address political short-termism—e.g. the Parliament of Finland Committee for the Future,⁵³ Singapore’s Centre for Strategic Futures,⁵⁴ the Future Generations Commissioner for Wales,⁵⁵ the Intergenerational Report of the Australian Treasury⁵⁶—but there is no such body in Westminster.

Hence, this committee would consider:

- Understanding what UK citizens’ vision of a good future might be and what it means to consider the wellbeing of future generations
- Looking at mechanisms that enable and support long term policy making both globally and within existing UK institutions
- Identifying the specific policy areas where policy making today is likely to have a detrimental impact on future generations

This work would build on the previous House of Lords Select Committee on Intergenerational Fairness and Provision,⁵⁷ but look further forward not just at current intergenerational inequality but how our policy making today will impact the generations of the future.

Purpose of Inquiry

The inquiry would be established with the key objective to make clear, tangible recommendations to the Government, in the interest of the wellbeing of future generations.

The inquiry would aim to ensure that government policy works to improve the economic, social, environmental and cultural wellbeing of the United Kingdom.

53 Parliament of Finland, ‘Committee for the Future’: <https://www.eduskunta.fi/EN/valiokunnat/tulevaisuusvaliokunta/Pages/default.aspx> [accessed 30 October 2020]

54 Centre for Strategic Futures, ‘Who We Are’: <https://www.csf.gov.sg/who-we-are/> [accessed 30 October 2020]

55 Future Generations Commissioner for Wales, ‘Our Work’: <https://www.futuregenerations.wales/work/> [accessed 30 October 2020]

56 The Treasury, Australian Government, ‘Intergenerational Report’: <https://treasury.gov.au/intergenerational-report> [accessed 30 October 2020]

57 The Select Committee on Intergenerational Fairness and Provision was appointed on 9 May 2018 and published its report *Tackling intergenerational unfairness* (Report of Session 2017–19, HL Paper 329)

We define ‘wellbeing’ as follows:

- Wellbeing is commonly understood as the state of being happy and/or healthy - it is a concept for understanding social progress. More broadly speaking, there are two concepts of measuring and understanding social progress as wellbeing.
- Personal wellbeing—measuring the quality of life through subjective measures of life satisfaction and happiness (formerly referred to as subjective wellbeing).
- Societal wellbeing—a set of measures (objective and subjective) that are understood by the society as being crucial aspects of wellbeing. Objective measures are those that are fact-based and observable (e.g. educational attainment, income levels). Subjective measures are those that are based on personal opinions, judgements and feelings (e.g. opinions of crime, satisfaction with services).

Relevant Member Experience

Wellbeing, and the needs of future generations, requires broad and wide-ranging knowledge in areas ranging from climate change to economic policy. Reviewing the extent to which the wellbeing of future generations is considered in government requires political expertise. A House of Lords committee would be the ideal place to convene such technical and political knowledge.

Furthermore, the Members of the House often utilise a longer-term outlook than the Commons, as they are not restrained to the same immediate pressures of election cycles. Such a review, focused on long-termism, prevention, and sustainable development, could be overlooked by the Commons and by Government but would be well suited to the Lords.

Cross-cutting Departmental Boundaries

The ‘interests of future generations’ is a cross-departmental issue, and wellbeing cuts across numerous policy areas—for example, wellbeing is laid out as economic, cultural, social and environmental wellbeing in the Well-being of Future Generations Bill.⁵⁸

Ownership and responsibility to act in the interest of future generations is shared across many government departments, who have the ability to establish preventative and long-term policy measures that enhance the future wellbeing of the UK.

One-year Time Frame

We expect that 10-20 x 1-hour evidence sessions should be sufficient.

BIRD

⁵⁸ [Well-being of Future Generations Bill](#) [HL]. Lord Bird introduced the Bill, which had its first reading on 21 October 2019. The 2017-19 Parliament was dissolved on 6 November 2019, and the Bill made no further progress.

Proposal 14: Letter from Lord Dubs

Should there be more devolution in England?

Description of Proposal

Power and decision-making in England is highly centralised around Westminster. Outside Westminster, England is an uneven patchwork of local government power, shared out variously between mayors, County and District Councils. While we now have a devolution settlement in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland there is a political vacuum as regards devolution in England.

The aim of this inquiry would be to investigate the balance of power in England between Westminster and England's regions, to establish if current power arrangements are optimal and to evaluate how they could be improved. The inquiry would examine the drawbacks and benefits of existing models and previous devolution proposals.

Although this proposal is relevant to the present arguments about devolved power to Local Authorities and regions as a result of COVID-19, the aim of the inquiry would be much broader, looking well into the future, beyond the pandemic.

Purpose of Inquiry

This inquiry would not concern itself with the balance of power between Westminster, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, rather it would examine whether some powers in Westminster could be devolved to other parts of England. The inquiry would cover everything from setting up new structures to devolving power to Local Authorities, or combinations of Local Authorities and other existing structures.

The inquiry would have to consider other examples of devolved structures, such as in Germany, Italy and Australia. It would also examine previous attempts to establish devolved centres of power, including the last Labour government's proposal, drawn up by Lord Prescott, to establish regional elected assemblies, which was rejected in a referendum by the voters of the North East.

It would explore the potential for a new constitutional settlement, either based on existing centres of power, such as Local Authorities, or on new ones. It would examine whether it would be right to consider new regional elected bodies or a combination of new bodies and existing structures.

Relevant Member Experience

This House is ideally placed to carry out an inquiry of this kind because of the breadth of knowledge of its members, among whom are former Council leaders, government ministers including those who have had responsibility for the three devolved administrations and representatives of business and trade unions.

Cross-cutting Departmental Boundaries

Emphatically, this proposal crosses every departmental boundary apart from defence and foreign affairs.

Finance and taxation are obviously crucial elements and one key issue would be the extent to which devolved authorities should have income-generating powers.

One-year Time Frame

Yes

Additional Comments

As a Northern Ireland Minister, I took the Northern Ireland Act through the Lords and I was therefore involved in many discussions about the powers of the future Northern Ireland Executive and Assembly. I still recall the debates that resulted in the separation of powers as they are today for example broadcasting and social security remained in Westminster and health, education, transport and agriculture were devolved.

DUBS

Proposal 15: Letter from Baroness Blower and Lord Hendy

The World of Work - Covid and beyond

Description of Proposal

The pandemic and the measures taken in consequence of it have exposed the precarious nature of work for many giving rise to insecurity of health and safety at work, of employment and of income. It has also revealed the extent to which workers have little say in workplace decisions which affect them. In this context it is important to look at how, as a society, we can rethink the world of work: how and where we work and the legal and contractual basis of employment. In the context of the Government's levelling up agenda, the need to build better back to create a fairer and more sustainable society, the inquiry would look at the need for green jobs and to have regard to the social value of much work hitherto considered both unskilled and of low value.

Purpose of Inquiry

Is there a proper role for the voice of the worker in their workplace? The inquiry would seek to demonstrate that there is. The question then is how best a form of industrial democracy may be achieved, a question the inquiry would seek to answer. It would also seek to consider how the health and safety of all workers can be better assured and what realistic steps could be taken to give greater security of jobs and income. A host of other questions arise which are both topical and have been the subject of comment during lockdown and the ensuing regional restrictions. Amongst these are the following.

- Could the skills, knowledge and experience in health, care, education manufacturing been used to better effect during the crisis?
- Should companies have worker directors (as the previous Prime minister proposed)?
- What role should there be for collective bargaining and trade unions?
- What adjustments to the legal regime are required to enable so many workers to work from home?
- How is the issue of automation and artificial intelligence to be dealt with equitably?
- What wage fixing machinery is necessary to ensure that our 'essential' workers are paid at a rate commensurate with their value to society?
- How is working time to be regulated to ensure adequate hours to secure a decent income, curbing excessive hours and ensuring a balance between working hours and recreation time?
- Should the nature of the legal relationship between worker and employer be better regulated by law?

Original thinking derived from the expertise of the House and from specialist think tanks and university academics will be required, as will some comparative input for experience of other countries.

Some historical work would be required to draw on previous experience.

Relevant Member Experience

Members of the House include labour lawyers, former senior trade union and employer leaders, industrial relations experts, entrepreneurs, judges with experience of all levels of court and tribunal, academics, and employers from the private, public, social and co-operative sectors. Persons in all these categories have both knowledge and experience in specific aspects of the world of work.

Cross-cutting Departmental Boundaries

The Department for Work and Pensions and the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy would have a direct interest as would the Treasury.

One-year Time Frame

Yes

Additional Comments

The COVID crisis has laid bare an inequality of voice as well as economic inequality in the UK. It has also revealed a less unequal and better way of doing things in other countries and a desire in many quarters to see a fairer and more sustainable society in the UK after the pandemic. The use of IT, Artificial Intelligence and remote working as well as the need for climate friendly green jobs are all challenges, some of which have begun to be faced with greater urgency.

BLOWER AND HENDY

Proposal 16: Letter from Lord Baker of Dorking

Youth unemployment

Description of Proposal

Youth unemployment for 16-24-olds is 13.4% though this figure is rarely mentioned by the Government which prefers to focus on the overall level of 4.1%. The Resolution Foundation has forecast that youth unemployment is likely to rise to 17.1%. In the three months following the end of July 2020, 300,000 young people between 16-24 joined the ranks of the unemployed and most will be 16-or-18-year olds leaving their schools. It is a tragedy that they must start their post-school life claiming universal credit. It is often thought that youth unemployment is explained by adverse economic circumstances, but even in a recession companies will employ young people who have the skills they need. The tragedy of the recent rapid rise in unemployed 16-18-year olds results from most of them not having any employability skills such as working in teams; making things with their hands; designing complicated 3D images on a computer; working with 3D printers; or fixing things and engaging in problem-solving. I am astonished that no minister in the Department of Education so far has made any comment on the current level of youth unemployment - for them it is as if it is all happening on another planet.

The Committee will explore whether the help the Chancellor of the Exchequer has provided with Kickstart and Traineeships will be sufficient or if more needs to be done. Kickstart will not operate until January and lasts for only six months. The difficulty is that many companies will not be keen to employ young people when they are having to discharge older and more experienced employees. Other measures directed at finding training and jobs for young people will be necessary.

The Work of the Committee

- (1) Whether the present curriculum of secondary schools does take into account the economic requirements of business?
- (2) To explore whether the education system is geared-up to meet the demands of the digital revolution and the need for skilled workers in Health and Caring services?
- (3) To give a voice to business interests and employers to come forward with their ideas on how technical education can be improved, particularly as this year apprenticeships are in a steep decline.
- (4) To explore whether specific schemes lift young people from the unemployment register. Earlier this year I submitted a proposal to the Chancellor and Education Secretary that unemployed 18-year-olds should be offered a free one-year course to improve their employability skills by HNC (Level 4) or HND (Level 5). Currently students have to take out a loan of approximately £6,000 to pay for such a course and I think it is morally wrong to ask 18-year old unemployed young people to take a loan in order to study when loans are usually needed by unemployed people to help pay rent and buy food. Students would also need a maintenance grant as they are unable to claim universal credit when on a training scheme. Ministers turned down the proposal, but I think something like this is needed soon.

Purpose of Inquiry

To allow our House to focus upon one of the greatest problems facing our country in the coming months. Youth unemployment has rarely been mentioned and there has been only one Oral Question - from me. We should show that our House is very concerned and come forward with specific recommendations. It is often thought that youth unemployment is caused by economic troubles but, even now when the country is entering a recession, businesses will still employ young people who have the skills they need.

Relevant Member Experience

There are also many Peers who have been involved in education, including several teachers, and Peers who have a business background. They will all be able to make their own comments as to why there are so many huge skill gaps in our society at present.

Cross-cutting Departmental Boundaries

This inquiry would range over several departments: Education; Health & Social Care—there are acute shortages in Health and Care services; and Business, Innovation & Skills—there are still large skill shortages at Levels 4 and 5, and apprentices have sharply declined this year. In 1981–1983 when there was a high level of unemployment, ministers were charged to bring forward schemes to directly provide work for young people. Similar schemes are needed now. Ideas can be provided by several departments.

One-year Time Frame

I think that the range of the inquiry is so wide the Committee members will be working up to November 2021.

Additional Comments

It is essential that this inquiry must be Cross-Party. The Members who are mentioned above are willing to be openly supportive and come from the three main political parties; the Crossbenches; and a Bishop who will bring to the inquiry the huge knowledge which the Church of England has on youth unemployment and education.

It is very unlikely that the inquiry will want to wait for the full twelve months to publish its findings because youth unemployment is such a pressing problem. If the inquiry reveals useful proposals, say by February or March, there should be an interim report, with further reports later as necessary.

This proposal is supported by Lord Adonis, Lord Blunkett, Lord Forysth of Drumlean, Baroness Morris of Yardley, Lord Field of Birkenhead, Lord Bishop of Winchester.

BAKER OF DORKING

APPENDIX 2: DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST FOR PART 2

Lord Adonis

I am a trustee of the Baker Dearing Charitable Trust

Lord Alton of Liverpool

Ethical Trade Post Brexit

No relevant interests to declare

Inquiry into Genocide

I am a Patron or Trustee of several charities that have helped victims of genocide and crimes against humanity and advocated on their behalf, including the Coalition for Genocide Response established in October 2019.

Lord Baker of Dorking

I am the Chair of Baker Dearing Educational Trust, a registered charity, which originated and supports 48 University Technical Colleges with over 16,000 students from the ages of 14-18. Most UTC leavers are aged 18 as very few students now leave their schools at 16. Each summer UTCs record the destinations of each of their leavers and this year there were only 3% NEETs. I do not believe that can be matched by any other mainstream school this year. UTCs can bring a success story to the inquiry as to why technical education leads to young people gaining jobs.

Lord Bird

Sponsor of the UK Wellbeing of Future Generations Bill

Lord Blencathra

I am the Deputy Chair of Natural England which is a paid post. In that capacity I serve on the Joint Nature Conservation Committee which advises the Government on, inter alia, international conservation matters. I have been pushing strongly for the JNCC to do a report similar to Lord Trees one on habitat destruction and zoonotic disease spillover made all the more critical because of globalisation. The JNCC is not doing that report and I have suggested that they may wish to take a comment from Lord Trees as a top vet and expert on this issue.

NE does not have an international remit but I have been agitating for us to also feed in our views on the destruction on plants and animals worldwide and how we need to set an example at home.

Baroness Blower

Former general secretary of National Union of Teachers and member of TUC General Council. President of ETUCE (European Region of Education International). Member of ETUC Executive Committee. (The latter 2 mandates expire in December 2020)

Lord Blunkett

Development of an identity system

I have an expertise in this area as the Secretary of State who originally brought in the identity register and associated card scheme from 2003 onwards (abolished by the Coalition Government in 2010).

Youth unemployment

No relevant interests to declare

Baroness Boycott

I was a member of the independent Commission on Alcohol Harm. I did not receive any financial benefit from the role.

Please see register

Lord Browne of Ladyton

Interests include my consultancy with the Nuclear Threat Initiative and my position as Vice-chair of the Nuclear Threat Initiative, my role as a Fellow Commoner of St Catharine's College at the University of Cambridge and

my involvement in their BioRISC project and my directorship of the Clean Growth Leadership Network, a not-for-profit organisation.

Lord Carlile of Berriew

Inquiry into genocide

(Lord Carlile previously supported Lord Alton's proposal. His declaration refers to that proposal and was made in April 2020)

No relevant interests to declare

Lord Clement-Jones

Consultant to DLA Piper UK LLP the global law firm

Independent Consultant (unpaid) to the Council of Europe's Ad hoc AI Committee

Chair of the Board of the Ombudsman Service Limited

Chair of the Council of Queen Mary University of London (unpaid)

Senior Fellow of the GeoTech Center of the Atlantic Council (unpaid)

Chair of the Advisory Council of the Institute for Ethical AI in Education (unpaid)

Baroness D'Souza

I have an abiding interest in, and long-term involvement with, international affairs. I have also consulted with a number of colleagues with similar interests who are supportive of the approach I have set out above.

Lord Dubs

My experience as a Northern Ireland Minister in the three years running up to the Good Friday Agreement and the establishment of the Executive and the Assembly. I have been a local councillor and an MP.

Lord Dykes

Since 1970, as an MP and then a peer my main subject has been the EU (SEE BIO-DATA)

I was chair of the European Movement in 1990–96

Lord Field of Birkenhead

I worked for CPAG before coming into the Commons where I specialised on welfare, so I hope I will be able to add to the Committee's work should it be appointed.

Baroness Finlay of Llandaff

I was a member of the independent Commission on Alcohol Harm. I did not receive any financial benefit from the role.

Baroness Greengross

No interests declared

Lord Hannay of Chiswick

Inquiry into genocide

(Lord Hannay previously supported Lord Alton's proposal. His declaration refers to that proposal and was made in April 2020)

I was U.K. Permanent Representative to the UN Security Council when two genocides took place (Rwanda and Srebrenica) without the UN being able to do anything effective about it. I was a member of Kofi Annan's High Level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change which has the prevention of genocide at its heart and gave rise to the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) doctrine which has had patchy observance. I have spoken up often about genocidal activity in Iraq and Syria. And I served on the House's Committee on Sexual Violence in Conflict. I am co-chair of the UN APPG.

Lord Hendy

QC barrister practising in the field of industrial relations and employment and Chair of the Institute of Employment Rights

Lord Krebs

No relevant interests to declare

Lord Lipsey

No relevant interests to declare

Baroness Morris of Yardley

No relevant interests to declare

Lord Purvis of Tweed

No relevant interests to declare

Lord Puttnam

Future of the High Street

No relevant interests to declare

Economic and Taxation Implications of the Transition from a Petro to a Digital Economy

No relevant interests to declare

Lord Rooker

No relevant interests to declare

Baroness Smith of Newnham

Inquiry into genocide

(Baroness Smith previously supported Lord Alton's proposal. Her declaration refers to that proposal and was made in April 2020)

I sit on the Lords' International Relations and Defence Committee and have contributed on questions relating to genocide

Lord Bishop of St Albans

No relevant interests to declare

Lord Teverson

I am an honorary associate member of the British Veterinary Association

Lord Trees

As a veterinarian, I have a specific interest in animal health and biosecurity, but I also have great interest and concern for the natural environment.

Lord Bishop of Winchester

I declare my interests in this topic as the lead bishop for further and higher education, working closely with the Church of England Education Office.