

**Tuesday
17 October 2023**

**Volume 738
No. 206**



**HOUSE OF COMMONS
OFFICIAL REPORT**

**PARLIAMENTARY
DEBATES
(HANSARD)**

Tuesday 17 October 2023

House of Commons

Tuesday 17 October 2023

The House met at half-past Eleven o'clock

PRAYERS

[MR SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

Oral Answers to Questions

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

The Secretary of State was asked—

Training of NHS Staff

1. **Theo Clarke** (Stafford) (Con): What steps his Department is taking to train more NHS staff. [906544]

The Secretary of State for Health and Social Care (Steve Barclay): The NHS long-term workforce plan sets out a path to double the number of medical school training places, increase GP training by 50% and double the number of adult nursing training places.

Theo Clarke: What steps are the Government taking to increase the recruitment of midwives, given the closure of Stafford County Hospital's freestanding midwifery birthing unit due to shortages, and how is the Secretary of State going to ensure that all midwives are trained to deal with birth injuries to reduce risk?

Steve Barclay: My hon. Friend raises an important point, and I know she has secured a debate in the House this week to further explore these issues. She will be aware that there has been a 13% increase in the number of midwifery programme place starters since two years ago. That is alongside the £165 million added to the maternity budget since 2021 and the key increase in midwifery places in the long-term workforce plan.

Derek Twigg (Halton) (Lab): It is obviously welcome to train and recruit as many staff as possible, but part of the problem is actually retaining the staff. We are increasingly seeing among the reasons given for leaving, particularly by nurses, their work-life balance. What is the Secretary of State doing to address that?

Steve Barclay: Just yesterday, I met leaders of the NHS Staff Council, who represent trade unions under Agenda for Change, as part of our ongoing discussions on the agreement we will reach with them, which includes working together on retention and how we address some of the challenges the workforce face.

Matt Hancock (West Suffolk) (Ind): May I congratulate the Secretary of State on being ahead of track to hire 50,000 more nurses this Parliament, as we committed to in the 2019 manifesto? However, can I push him by asking him where he is up to on ensuring that enough staff are trained to do clinical trials, as set out in the excellent O'Shaughnessy review, and can he give us an update of where implementation of that review is up to?

Steve Barclay: I very much welcome my right hon. Friend signalling that we are ahead of the manifesto commitment not just in nurses being recruited, but in key additional roles in primary care, where the target was 26,000 and actually 31,000 have now been recruited. He is right about the importance of clinical research. The O'Shaughnessy review speeds that up and reduces the cost. It better leverages the taxpayer pound in investment from the private sector, and standardises contracts across NHS trusts to bring the time down. We are also looking at innovation in areas such as the NHS app to better empower patients to take part in clinical research trials. That ensures they are at the front of the queue in getting the latest medicine, which is exactly where we want the NHS to be.

Barbara Keeley (Worsley and Eccles South) (Lab): The Secretary of State did not mention the increase planned in the number of physician associates. The Norfolk and Waveney integrated care system has posted:

"Got abdominal pain that isn't going away? A Physician Associate based in your GP practice can help... They are highly skilled at diagnosing conditions".

After the tragic case of Emily Chesterton, who was misdiagnosed after seeing a physician associate twice at a GP practice and no GP at any point, when will the lesson be learned that the NHS workforce cannot be safely expanded by this route of associates with only two years' medical training?

Steve Barclay: All clinical roles need to have the right regulation around them, and we need to ensure that patient safety is to the fore. The hon. Lady gives a very good illustration of how the Labour party talks about reform, but not when it comes to the reform of new roles, having new roles in the NHS and having a ladder of opportunity for people to come into the NHS. Physician associates are people with masters' degrees: these people are highly skilled. Of course, we need to get the regulation right. However, the Labour party talks about reform, but when it comes to standing up to the trade unions, it is not willing to do so, which is why, when there is an innovation such as physician associates, it wants to block it.

Suicide Prevention

3. **Paul Howell** (Sedgefield) (Con): What steps he is taking to help prevent suicide. [906546]

18. **Scott Benton** (Blackpool South) (Ind): What steps he is taking to help prevent suicide. [906562]

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Health and Social Care (Maria Caulfield): Last month, we published a cross-Government five-year suicide prevention strategy. It sets out our pledge to reduce England's suicide rates within two and a half years, with over 100 measures aimed at saving lives and providing early intervention for those at highest risk of suicide, including new mums and middle-aged men.

Paul Howell: Like many others, I dropped into the campaign event for "One Million Lives", developed by Jacobs and supported by R:pple, and I was impressed by its efforts to interfere with the online risk of suicide-centric websites. The Minister may be aware that my wife is a long-term volunteer with Darlington and district

Samaritans, which has raised with me the “Saving Lives Can’t Wait” campaign. It asks the Government to review local funding for suicide-safer communities, which is due to end. Could I ask the Minister to support the “One Million Lives” campaign, and to push for the renewal of local funding to support suicide-safer communities?

Maria Caulfield: I thank my hon. Friend for his hard work in this area and for his mental health campaigning overall, and also his wife and all who selflessly give their time to volunteer with the invaluable mental health charities. We fully recognise that, and that is why when we launched the suicide prevention strategy we also launched our £10 million suicide prevention grant fund.

On my hon. Friend’s point about wider funding beyond 2024-25, that is subject to a future spending review, but our commitment and record in delivering record investment of £15.9 billion in mental health services just in this financial year, which is 28% more funding than in 2018, should give him confidence that this Conservative Government deliver on mental health services.

Scott Benton: Is the Minister able to provide an update on the suicide prevention grant, and particularly on when the money is expected to reach the successful organisations?

Maria Caulfield: We have had a huge response to the opening of the grant, with over 1,800 applications from voluntary groups and organisations. We are assessing those bids and hope to make an announcement before the end of the year.

Mrs Sharon Hodgson (Washington and Sunderland West) (Lab): Campaigns such as 3 Dads Walking and Just 3 Mums Walking have worked incredibly hard to raise awareness of suicide prevention. Has the Minister had time to meet with either of those campaigns yet?

Maria Caulfield: I have met with 3 Dads Walking; I have not met the mums group but am very happy to do so. Because of their intervention and campaigning, we were able to successfully put their campaign about improving mental health awareness in the school curriculum into our suicide prevention strategy. It is a cross-Government strategy, and the Department for Education has very much taken their points on board.

Dr Rosena Allin-Khan (Tooting) (Lab): Over 1.8 million people languishing on mental health waiting lists, black people five times more likely to be detained under the Mental Health Act 1983, and over 2,000 people with learning disabilities detained in hospital, all while the Government are dragging their feet on mental health and suicide prevention. You will be interested to know, Mr Speaker, that we had cross-party support to tackle these burning injustices through the draft Mental Health Bill, yet since the Joint Committee on the Draft Mental Health Bill published our report in January we have heard nothing from the Government, so will the Minister today commit to including reform of the Mental Health Act in the King’s Speech?

Maria Caulfield: I was going to pay tribute to the hon. Lady for her work on mental health campaigning, and she will know we have done a huge amount. The suicide prevention strategy is a cross-Government piece

of work, which makes sure suicide is everyone’s business, not just that of health and social care. Whether by supporting families bereaved by suicide or rolling out mental health support schemes in schools, it is this Government who are delivering on mental health services.

Mr Speaker: I call the shadow Minister.

Abena Oppong-Asare (Erith and Thamesmead) (Lab): The House of Commons Library says there has been no statistically significant change in the rate of suicides in England since 2015. Suicide remains the biggest killer of men under 50 in the UK. Why has it taken so long for the Government to bring forward a strategy, and why do they continue to drag their feet over reform to the Mental Health Act? Can the Minister give the House a firm timetable today?

Maria Caulfield: The hon. Lady is not quite right in her statistics. Just before covid we had seen a 20% reduction compared with two decades ago in suicide levels in England. She might be interested to know that in Labour-run Wales suicide rates are higher than in England, and its suicide prevention strategy expired last year. Mental health has been demoted on the shadow Front Bench, too, as we saw from the resignation of the hon. Member for Tooting (Dr Allin-Khan) when the role of shadow mental health Minister was removed from the Opposition Front Bench.

RAAC in Hospitals

4. **Ian Lavery** (Wansbeck) (Lab): What steps his Department is taking to remediate hospital buildings with reinforced autoclaved aerated concrete. [906547]

The Secretary of State for Health and Social Care (Steve Barclay): We are determined to address the safety issues caused by RAAC. We are prioritising the seven worst-affected hospitals and have a fund of just under £700 million covering the four-year programme of replacement.

Ian Lavery: Can the Secretary of State tell the House how many of the hospitals where RAAC is an issue also have issues with asbestos being present? What assessment has his Department made of the impact should asbestos spores be released in a RAAC collapse?

Steve Barclay: The hon. Member raises an interesting point about asbestos, because much of the NHS estate dates from a time when asbestos was widely used. Of course, asbestos is considered safe if it is undisturbed. It is a similar issue with RAAC.

On RAAC, we are following the guidance from the Institution of Structural Engineers and monitoring it. The advice is not that all RAAC needs to be replaced; the point is that it needs to be monitored. Where there is deterioration, we have a fund of just under £700 million to tackle that. The asbestos is being monitored, as is the RAAC. We have been monitoring this since 2019 and have a four-year national programme backed up with £700 million to address issues as and when they arise.

Jonathan Gullis (Stoke-on-Trent North) (Con): The residents of Stoke-on-Trent North, Kids Grove and Talke would like me to place their thanks on the record to the Secretary of State for having ensured that the Haywood

walk-in centre, which has RAAC present, has just received £26.5 million for a new build out-patient building, which will do a lot to improve the care of residents locally. As spades are already in the ground, will the Secretary of State commit to coming to visit so that we can show off this fantastic progress?

Steve Barclay: It is always a pleasure to visit my hon. Friend's constituency. He highlights a good illustration of how the national programme is working, backed with that £700 million of funding. We are closely monitoring the estate and, where RAAC mitigation is required, that work is taking place. He brings a good example of that to the House's attention.

Mr Speaker: I call the shadow Minister.

Karin Smyth (Bristol South) (Lab): Not only are the hospital buildings crumbling after 13 years of neglect, creating huge capacity challenges; it seems that those still standing do not have enough beds. As we heard from *The Times* this morning, the number of

"hospital beds... has fallen by almost 3,000 since ministers promised 5,000 before winter".

It feels pretty much like winter to me. Is that just another broken promise?

Steve Barclay: First, we have got more than £1 billion of investment in an additional 5,000 permanent beds going into the NHS estate as part of our urgent and emergency care recovery programme. More widely, the Government are committed to the biggest ever investment in the NHS estate, backed with more than £20 billion—the biggest of any Government. Of course, we will not take lectures from Labour, which bequeathed the NHS the consequence of expensive private finance initiative deals that many trusts are still paying for to this day.

Health and Social Care Recruitment: EU Exit

5. **Patrick Grady** (Glasgow North) (SNP): What recent assessment he has made of the impact of the UK's departure from the EU on trends in the level of recruitment in the health and social care sector. [906548]

6. **Gavin Newlands** (Paisley and Renfrewshire North) (SNP): What recent assessment he has made of the impact of the UK's departure from the EU on trends in the level of recruitment in the health and social care sector. [906549]

The Minister for Social Care (Helen Whately) *rose—*

Mr Speaker: You can respond sitting down if you wish.

Helen Whately: It is fine; thank you, Mr Speaker.

Since Brexit, we have more than 13,000 more doctors and 48,000 more nurses working in the NHS in England, and 40,000 more full-time equivalent staff in adult social care. Our points-based immigration system means that we can recruit the talent we need from all over the world for our health and social care system, including from the European Union.

Patrick Grady: If everything is as rosy as the Minister says, why did a spokesperson for the Nuffield Trust say last year that

"greater costs, more paperwork and uncertainty over visas because of Brexit have been among the biggest barriers to recruiting and keeping EU and EFTA doctors"?

Cannot she admit that Brexit is exacerbating difficulties with recruiting appropriate staff for the NHS across the whole of the UK? Scotland did not vote for Brexit. Why are we having to pay the price?

Helen Whately: I suggest it is really time that the hon. Gentleman stops blaming Brexit. He should in fact look to his SNP colleagues in Holyrood and ensure that they make Scotland's NHS a better place to work. If he had listened to my answer, he would have heard me say that since Brexit we have recruited more than 13,000 more doctors to the NHS in England. In fact, we are doing so well that we recently recruited a doctor from the SNP Benches. [*Laughter.*]

Gavin Newlands: Very droll. I congratulate the Minister on that one.

If not the Nuffield Trust, perhaps BMA Scotland's Chair Dr Iain Kennedy will be good enough. He recently said that the recruitment and retention of senior medical staff across the NHS in Scotland remains a huge challenge, with the health immigration surcharge cost increases announced by this Government potentially further deterring foreign workers from joining the NHS. Given the recently announced NHS long-term workforce plan, what steps is the Minister taking to ensure that Scotland has the immigration we need for future recruitment and retention for our health service?

Helen Whately: We have the health and social care visa, which supports our health and social care services to recruit doctors, nurses and other professionals, as well as social care staff, helping to boost those numbers. The hon. Gentleman referred to the important NHS workforce long-term plan, which will increase the home-grown staff in our health service. That will give us 60,000 more doctors, 170,000 more nurses and 70,000 more allied health professionals in our NHS over the next 15 years.

Mr Speaker: I call the SNP spokesperson.

Amy Callaghan (East Dunbartonshire) (SNP): It has been reported that the Home Secretary plans to tighten the rules for those arriving on a health and care worker visa, to block most from bringing dependents with them—yet another in a long list of her vendettas against children coming to these isles. What recent assessments has the Secretary of State made of how that will impact international recruitment and capacity in our already struggling health and care services?

Helen Whately: I work closely with colleagues in the Home Office to ensure that the health and care visa achieves the objectives set out. We are seeing real success in social care—the recent Skills for Care workforce report showed that we have 20,000 more care workers in England. We are doing well on recruitment to social care.

HIV: Emergency Department Opt-out Testing

7. **Peter Gibson** (Darlington) (Con): What recent assessment he has made of the effectiveness of emergency department opt-out testing for HIV. [906550]

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Health and Social Care (Neil O'Brien): Provisional NHS data shows that opt-out testing has found around 700 cases of HIV during its first year. In total, it has found more than 2,000 cases of blood-borne diseases, including hepatitis B and C.

Peter Gibson: I welcome the Minister's news on those figures. He will have seen the impact of opt-out testing—detecting more people, treating them earlier and saving the NHS money. However, if we are to meet our 2030 target on no new infections, we cannot delay a further roll-out of opt-out testing. Will he commit the resources needed to expand it in time for World AIDS Day on 1 December?

Neil O'Brien: I pay tribute to my hon. Friend for all his work on this important issue. We will assess all the evidence and reply before the end of the year. Opt-out testing is not the only thing we are doing to drive down HIV transmission. We have had a 40% rise in the number of people getting pre-exposure prophylaxis, and we have increased the number of people testing, with 20,000 free testing kits handed out this year. We are doing everything we can to meet that visionary goal to stop HIV transmission in this country.

Jim Shannon (Strangford) (DUP): I thank the Minister for his answer to the question from the hon. Member for Darlington (Peter Gibson). It is clear that today, HIV is not the death sentence that it once was, because of the progress of medication and healthcare in prolonging life and improving quality of life. In Northern Ireland we are proactive, as the Minister will know, on PrEP and young people. We are doing progressive things through the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety in the Northern Ireland Assembly. Has the Minister had the opportunity to discuss with the Northern Ireland Assembly and the Health Department how we can work better together? I always say we are better together in every case.

Neil O'Brien: The hon. Gentleman is completely correct. He has been a fantastic champion on this issue. The UK is leading the world on this issue, hitting the UN's 95-95-95 goals, driving down transmission and reducing stigma. People increasingly realise that as well as suppressing the virus, the treatment makes it impossible to transmit, transforming the lives of people with HIV.

Access to GPs: Rural Communities

8. **Greg Smith** (Buckingham) (Con): What recent assessment he has made of the adequacy of the level of access to GPs in rural communities. [906551]

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Health and Social Care (Neil O'Brien): We have increased funding for general practice by about a fifth in real terms since 2018. We have increased the workforce by about 30% since 2019 alone, with 2,000 extra doctors and 31,000 extra clinicians going into general practice. With the hard work of GPs, that has enabled about 15% more appointments than before the pandemic. In rural areas

we are going further with things such as the targeted in-house recruitment scheme and the elements of the funding formula that favour rural areas.

Greg Smith: I am grateful to my hon. Friend for that answer, but I have repeatedly raised with Ministers the specific case of an innovative model from Long Crendon Parish Council to use land secured through planning gain to replace Long Crendon Surgery, which closed during the pandemic. There is an agreement for Unity Health to provide primary care services there, but no money to physically build. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State has advised consistently that the money be sought from the integrated care board, but after prolonged talks it has said that there is no money. Will the Minister look at this innovative model again? It is a great way of building rural GP provision in the future, with a mind to his Department making it happen.

Neil O'Brien: I will absolutely look closely at that specific case. My hon. Friend has put a huge amount of work into Long Crendon. As he knows, we are already changing the national planning policy framework to enable more developer contributions to flow into such innovative projects. We have more GP practices than we did in 2010, but we continue to look at ways to go further.

Cardiovascular Disease Prevention

9. **Suzanne Webb** (Stourbridge) (Con): What steps he is taking to help prevent cardiovascular diseases. [906552]

The Secretary of State for Health and Social Care (Steve Barclay): We are making the most significant public health intervention in a generation by creating a smoke-free generation. To put that in context, every five cigarettes a day increases the risk of stroke by 12%. We are also rolling out free blood pressure checks to people over 40 in community pharmacies, which will help to detect much earlier thousands more people living with high blood pressure.

Suzanne Webb: I thank the Secretary of State for that answer. Many commercial infant and toddler foods are ultra-processed, which sets alarm bells ringing as ultra-processed food is strongly associated with cardiovascular diseases and 40% of 10 to 11-year-olds are overweight or obese. I strongly believe that parents are being misled by companies that put health claims on ultra-processed infant food, when in fact the food is anything but healthy—it is high in fat, salt and sugar. What steps are the Government taking to address the disingenuous and grossly misleading marketing and labelling of commercial infant and toddler food and drink?

Steve Barclay: As my hon. Friend knows, there is no agreed definition for ultra-high processed food. As a general principle, I do not think we should be taxing and banning things—smoking is an outlier. We have to empower the patient and recognise the pressures from the cost of living. We are also rolling out anti-obesity drugs to give patients access to the most innovative drugs as part of our wider response to the challenge of obesity.

Andrew Bridgen (North West Leicestershire) (Reclaim): What is the Secretary of State's view of the worrying trend of increased cardiac-related deaths in the UK and around the world since 2021, which correlates closely with the roll-out of the experimental mRNA vaccines?

Steve Barclay: It is always important to follow the science. That is why, at the G20, Health Ministers agreed to look at the various research being done in multiple countries, particularly on long covid but also on the lessons from that period, to ensure that research from that period is shared internationally so we can learn best practice from other countries as well as within the NHS.

Radiotherapy Linear Accelerator Machines

10. **Tim Farron** (Westmorland and Lonsdale) (LD): How many and what proportion of NHS radiotherapy linear accelerator (LINAC) machines will reach the end of their recommended lifespan in 2024. [906553]

The Minister for Health and Secondary Care (Will Quince): The Government and NHS England are committed to ensuring cancer patients can receive high quality radiotherapy treatment. Between 2016 and 2021, £162 million was invested which enabled the replacement or upgrade of around 100 radiotherapy machines. Responsibility for investment in radiotherapy machines has sat with local systems since April 2022. I look forward to meeting the hon. Gentleman and the all-party group for radiotherapy on this matter soon.

Tim Farron: I am very grateful to the Minister for his reply and in particular for the offer of the meeting coming soon. Radiotherapy UK says that for us to even meet average international standards we must commission 125 additional new linear accelerators. Will he make the commitment to do that and, in doing so, ensure that rural and remote communities do not lose out by placing some of those machines in new satellite centres, such as the Westmorland General Hospital?

Will Quince: The hon. Gentleman is hugely passionate on this subject. As I said, integrated care boards are responsible for meeting the health needs of their individual populations, and that includes capital allocation. The 2021 spending review set aside £12 billion in capital funding, and since 2016 over £160 million has been invested in radiotherapy equipment, but of course I want to see more investment in this important technology and the necessary upgrades across England. I very much look forward to our meeting, where we can discuss that further.

Paediatric Cancer Strategy for London

11. **Stephen Hammond** (Wimbledon) (Con): What recent progress NHS England has made on implementing its paediatric cancer strategy for London. [906554]

The Minister for Health and Secondary Care (Will Quince): Following Professor Sir Mike Richards's review, it is now a national requirement for all paediatric cancer services to be co-located with a children's intensive care unit. The current principal treatment centre for south London and the south-east does not meet those

requirements. NHS England has launched a reconfiguration process to identify a new location, which includes a public consultation. The future centre will achieve world class outcomes for children with cancer. I would be very happy to meet Members whose constituents may be affected to discuss that further.

Stephen Hammond: I am grateful to the Minister for that offer, because that would have been part of my question.

Mr Speaker: Then you don't need to ask it.

Stephen Hammond: But in true style, Mr Speaker, I was hoping for two bites at the cherry. [Laughter.]

In my recent discussions with the management of St George's Hospital, one concern about the consultation is that the specialist paediatric cancer surgical unit based at St George's may be lost if the current proposal goes through. That would potentially affect real outcomes for a number of children. Will the Minister have a look at that and explain to me whether he is concerned about the current scoring by the NHS?

Will Quince: I thank my hon. Friend for his supplementary question. While I cannot pre-empt the outcome of the consultation, which closes on 18 December, I can assure him that there will be no sudden changes in the way patients receive their care. Any move will of course be carefully planned with the full involvement of current teams, and clear information will be provided for parents and families. NHS England will help as many experienced staff as possible to move to the future centre, and I can reassure my hon. Friend that that centre will build on all the strengths of the existing service and provide the best quality of care for patients.

Integrated Care Systems

12. **Justin Madders** (Ellesmere Port and Neston) (Lab): What recent assessment he has made of the effectiveness of integrated care systems. [906555]

The Minister for Social Care (Helen Whately): Integrated care systems and the organisations within them are making real progress in understanding the health needs of their populations, setting out their plans, developing the infrastructure needed for collaboration, and bringing health and social care organisations together to serve the needs of their communities.

Justin Madders: NHS Cheshire and Merseyside integrated care board has instructed all NHS providers to make cuts of 5% in their services. Its instruction is not being discussed with members of the public, Members of Parliament or indeed anyone, and it is clear there is no mandate for this action. Given that the Government have made great play of the NHS having more funds than ever before, I am at a loss to understand why the cuts are necessary, so will the Minister intervene to ensure that they do not happen on her watch?

Helen Whately: NHS England determines the funding received by integrated care systems. That follows a formula which takes into account the needs of local populations, demographic deprivation and so on, and ICSs are then able to direct resources as they are best

needed across those populations. Part of their value, and part of the intention in setting them up along with the organisations within them, lies in that ability to understand the health needs of local populations and direct resources accordingly.

Virginia Crosbie (Ynys Môn) (Con): Integrated care systems bring partner organisations together to improve health, tackle inequalities, and enhance value for money. Detailed data such as that produced by NHS Digital is critical to their work, but we learnt this week that A&E waiting times in Wales had been under-reported for the last 10 years. Does the Minister agree that without accurate data, the Labour Government in Cardiff are scuppering the attempts of NHS Wales to deliver better health outcomes throughout Wales?

Helen Whately: My hon. Friend has made a good point about the importance of transparency and accurate data. As she said, just this week we learnt that Labour-run NHS Wales had been under-reporting its A&E waiting times. According to the Royal College of Emergency Medicine, about 45,000 patients are missing from the data. While we are working hard to improve services in the NHS in England, the Labour-run NHS in Wales is merely fudging the figures.

Mr Speaker: I call the shadow Minister.

Andrew Gwynne (Denton and Reddish) (Lab): The whole purpose of integrated care systems is to join up social care and NHS services in a better way. We know, for example, that fracture liaison services keep 100,000 people out of hospital, but only 50% of English NHS trusts have them, and despite the commitment given by the Under-Secretary of State for Health and Social Care—the hon. Member for Lewes (Maria Caulfield)—to providing more, nothing has happened, and Lord Evans has walked back from her commitment. I realise that I am pushing at an open door in directing this question to a Minister whose leg is strapped up, but when will the Government finally deliver for the “back better bones” campaign to help older people to survive and thrive?

Helen Whately: As the hon. Member has mentioned, I have a broken ankle, and I am taking my responsibility as Minister with oversight of urgent and emergency care very seriously in making use of several of those services. As for my oversight of integrated care systems, what I am seeing is that they are making a very good job of enabling the integration of services. For instance, we are seeing real success in the growth of virtual wards—or “hospital at home”—which bring together acute and community services to look after people in their homes and help them to be discharged earlier. The NHS has achieved its target of having 10,000 “hospital at home” places ready for this winter.

Access to Primary Care

13. **Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi** (Slough) (Lab): What steps he is taking to improve access to primary care services. [906556]

21. **Rob Butler** (Aylesbury) (Con): What steps he is taking to improve access to primary care services. [906565]

The Secretary of State for Health and Social Care (Steve Barclay): Our primary care recovery plan supports GP practices in addressing the 8 am rush for appointments, cutting bureaucracy for GPs and expanding community pharmacy services. We have recruited over 31,000 additional primary care staff and have over 2,000 more doctors working in general practice, compared with before the pandemic.

Mr Dhesi: People are finding it nigh-on impossible to see their GP when they need to. Labour has pledged to guarantee face-to-face appointments when people want them by training more NHS GPs but, as my constituents point out to me, under the Tories, a two-tier healthcare system is emerging where some are forced to pay to be seen quicker while those that cannot afford it are left behind in agony. Why have the Conservatives broken their promise, made in 2019, to deliver 6,000 more GPs, and when will this GP crisis finally be resolved?

Steve Barclay: There is a two-tier approach within the UK, between what is going on with the NHS in Wales and what is going on in England. We have more appointments, more staff—over 2,000 more doctors and over 31,000 additional roles—and more tech, with £240 million invested in delivering the digital telephony and the online booking system so that we can get patients to the right level of care with an appointment as part of our commitment to 50 million more appointments in primary care.

Rob Butler: In my constituency of Aylesbury we have some absolutely fantastic GPs and some brilliant services being delivered, thanks in part to many of the policies that have been introduced under this Government. I thank my right hon. Friend for continuing with that. However, there are still challenges for constituents to get through to their GP surgery to make an appointment in the first place. He has just mentioned digital telephony. Could he update the House on the progress that is being made on rolling out this technology to health centres to end the incredibly frustrating waits that people have, sometimes being on hold on the phone for hours at a time?

Steve Barclay: Through that £240 million, we have 100% adoption from GP practices that want to take part in receiving those funds and putting digital telephony in place if they have not already done so. This includes call-back, which allows people to know where they are in the queue, and links to online booking, which allows us to maximise the 31,000 additional roles that we have put into primary care so that people can see the specialist that they need. In my hon. Friend's own integrated care board, appointments for July increased from 768,000 last July to 816,000 this July, so more patients are being seen, more appointments are taking place and more tech investment is going into the practices in his area.

Mr Speaker: I call the shadow Secretary of State.

Wes Streeting (Ilford North) (Lab): To listen to the Secretary of State, you would think it was all going so well, so let me give him a reality check. In Tamworth last year, only a third of patients said it was easy to get through to their doctor on the phone, one in three GP appointments were not conducted face to face and fewer than half of patients were offered a choice of

appointment. The Government are not listening to the people of Tamworth. Perhaps the Secretary of State would like to explain to the people of Tamworth why, after 13 years of Conservative Government, this is the case, and better still, adopt Labour's plan to cut red tape, incentivise continuity of care and bring back the family doctor.

Steve Barclay: I am glad that the hon. Gentleman raised GPs in Tamworth. The GP lead for the Doctors Association said that his plans for general practice filled them with despair, and his proposal for GP nationalisation was mocked by the Nuffield Trust, one of the respected think-tanks. The reality is that this Government are investing in more tech in primary care, have recruited 31,000 additional roles into primary care and have over 2,000 more doctors working in primary care than before the pandemic. Those are the facts. His plans have been mocked by respected think-tanks because he talks a good game on reform but we know that he will never stand up to the trade unions.

New Health Centre: Thornbury

14. **Luke Hall** (Thornbury and Yate) (Con): What steps his Department is taking to provide a new health centre in Thornbury. [906557]

The Minister for Health and Secondary Care (Will Quince): I am aware of the project to provide a new health centre in Thornbury and, of course, my hon. Friend's tireless work to champion it. My officials are working closely with colleagues in NHS England and the integrated care board to help progress the scheme. I understand that he met Lord Markham earlier today to discuss imminent funding for the development of the business case, and we will be in touch in the coming days.

Luke Hall: I am grateful to Ministers for taking the time to meet me this morning to discuss the £40 million bid for a new health centre in Thornbury, which is a growing town that desperately needs this new facility. The health centre will provide more GP appointments, more mental health support and, crucially, more out-patient services. Can the Minister update me on the timescales for the announcement on funding for Thornbury health centre so we can get this crucial facility open as quickly as possible?

Will Quince: My hon. Friend makes a powerful case, and I know how passionate and determined he is to deliver the new Thornbury health centre. I can assure him that my officials will continue to work closely with him, with the integrated care board and with the NHS to progress the scheme. We will be in contact in the coming days, following the meeting he had earlier today with Lord Markham.

NHS Dentistry

15. **Mark Menzies** (Fylde) (Con): What recent steps his Department has taken to increase the availability of NHS dentistry services. [906558]

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Health and Social Care (Neil O'Brien): We are making NHS work more attractive to dentists. We have started to reform the contracts and create more UDA bands. We have introduced the minimum UDA value to help sustain

practices where values are lower, and we are allowing dentists to deliver 110% of their UDAs. We are also reforming the rules to empower both clinicians and commissioners, for example by enabling therapists to start delivering medicines such as anaesthetics. We are rebasing contract values where they are underperforming, and we are growing the workforce with a record commitment to grow the number of dentists in training by 40%—a commitment never made by the Opposition.

Mark Menzies: UDA rates, the sum paid to NHS dentists for each unit of dental work undertaken, have long been deemed insufficient. Being based on figures from 2005, there are huge differences in rates between practices, with some receiving less than the NHS charges patients for the service. A recent 5% uplift was based on the Government estimate of a 3% rise in costs, a figure that local dentists tell me is more like 10% to 15%, compounding the losses that NHS dentists are already making. What steps is my hon. Friend taking to reform the UDA system and to stop the flow of dentists leaving the NHS?

Neil O'Brien: That is exactly why we have started to reform the UDA system. As well as the introduction of the first ever minimum UDA rate, which will help constituencies such as my hon. Friend's, we have changed the rules nationally so that commissioners can take UDAs away from dentists who are underperforming and give them to those who want to do more NHS work. As a result, nearly a quarter more NHS dentistry is being done than a year ago.

NHS Dentistry: South-west England

16. **Chris Loder** (West Dorset) (Con): What steps he is taking to increase access to NHS dentistry services in the south-west. [906560]

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Health and Social Care (Neil O'Brien): In addition to the steps we are taking to drive up NHS dentistry everywhere, we are going further in the south-west, with NHSE commissioning additional urgent appointments. There are several hundred extra appointments every week.

Chris Loder: I thank my hon. Friend for his answer. It is not sustainable for the people of West Dorset who have needed dental care for some time when there is a £400 million national underspend in the dental care budget. The NHS and local dentists tell me that the incompatibility often relates to the national dental care contract, which is up for review. When does the Minister expect a solution to be found to this contract difficulty? Will he meet me and the NHS Dorset ICB to discuss the matter in detail to find a solution?

Neil O'Brien: Absolutely. I am keen to continue the conversation with my hon. Friend. These issues are exactly why, this summer, we legislated to allow rebasing and to end the inflexibility he describes. We are also in the process of ringfencing local dental budgets, because we do not want to see underspends. We want to see that money going to NHS dentistry.

Cancer Treatment Waiting Times

17. **Mrs Paulette Hamilton** (Birmingham, Erdington) (Lab): What steps he is taking to improve waiting times for cancer treatment. [906561]

20. **Jeff Smith** (Manchester, Withington) (Lab): What steps he is taking to improve waiting times for cancer treatment. [906564]

The Minister for Health and Secondary Care (Will Quince): Improving cancer treatment waiting times is a top priority for this Government, and it is a key focus of our elective recovery plan, backed by an additional £8 billion in revenue funding across the spending review period. In August 2023, cancer treatment activity for first treatments stood at 105% of pre-pandemic levels on a per working day basis, and the 62-day backlog has fallen 30% since its peak in the pandemic.

Mrs Hamilton: Pancreatic cancer is the deadliest type of common cancer, killing more than half of those diagnosed in England within three months. I know the pain of losing close friends and family to pancreatic cancer and how important it is that people are diagnosed and treated quickly. Under this Government we have seen NHS waiting lists go up, not down. What is the Minister doing to ensure that people with pancreatic cancer are seen, diagnosed and treated quickly?

Will Quince: I thank the hon. Lady for her question, and, of course, I recognise the importance of early diagnosis and treatment. Cancer checks are up by a quarter on pre-pandemic levels, and in August more than 91% of patients started their first cancer treatment within a month of a decision to treat. We have opened 123 additional community diagnostic centres and an additional 94 surgical hubs, but I accept, of course, that there is much more that we need to do.

Jeff Smith: The Minister has again been referring to “pre-pandemic levels”. Ministers have a tendency to blame covid for increased waiting times, including in respect of cancer. I presume they are aware that the number of cancer patients not getting care on time rose in every year since the Conservatives came to power before the pandemic. How can the Government defend that dreadful record?

Will Quince: We are continuing to support NHS England in increasing cancer treatment capacity. As I say, I recognise the importance of early diagnosis and treatment of cancer. NHS England has instructed integrated care boards to increase and prioritise the diagnostic and treatment capacity for cancer. As of the middle of this year, we have 93 additional surgical hubs that are currently operational and 123 additional community diagnostic centres, which have delivered more than 5 million additional tests since July 2021, but we know and recognise that we need to do more.

Dr Caroline Johnson (Sleaford and North Hykeham) (Con): Members will know from my entry in the Register of Members’ Financial Interests that I am an NHS consultant and a member of the British Medical Association. I congratulate the Minister on the work he is doing to reduce waiting lists, but BMA strikes have led to the loss of more than 1 million appointments,

have delayed the reporting of scans, including scans for cancer, and have disrupted people’s chronic long-term condition treatment. What is he doing to ensure that there are no further strikes? What talks is he having on minimum service levels to expand the provision if further strikes do take place?

Will Quince: I thank my hon. Friend for her question, which is better directed at the BMA. However, she is right to suggest that we are taking action on minimum service level legislation. We recognise that industrial action means that services are under increased pressure, with appointments and treatments being cancelled because of the strikes. The NHS is taking action, prioritising urgent and cancer care, and will of course continue to do so. It will do its best to maintain appointments and elective procedures, wherever possible, but she is right to say that these strikes and the actions of the BMA are having a devastating impact on patients.

Saqib Bhatti (Meriden) (Con): My constituent Elaine Lynch was diagnosed with stage 4 lung cancer in September 2021. The drug she needs, Enhertu, is available free on the NHS to treat breast cancer, but not lung cancer, so it is costing my constituent £10,000 a month to get the treatment, without which she will die. The public petition on this matter has received more than 200,000 signatures, so it is very much in the public interest. As the company Daiichi Sankyo does not offer the drug on compassionate grounds, will the Minister meet me to see how we can make this drug available for Elaine as soon as possible, because this is literally a matter of life or death?

Will Quince: I have huge sympathy and empathy with the case that my hon. Friend raises. The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence is rightly independent, and strict and robust processes are in place on drug repurposing and clinical trials. Nevertheless, I would of course be happy to meet him to see what can be done.

Topical Questions

T1. [906584] **Aaron Bell** (Newcastle-under-Lyme) (Con): If he will make a statement on his departmental responsibilities.

The Secretary of State for Health and Social Care (Steve Barclay): First, may I welcome Opposition Front-Bench Members to their new roles, as there have been changes since we last met? Since then, we have launched a new £30 million fund to speed up the adoption of tech across the NHS. Even when local pilots prove their effectiveness, it often takes too long for those innovations to be rolled out nationally. This fund can change that, giving integrated care systems across England the chance to invest in tech that is proven to improve care, for instance in detecting cancer sooner. These investments will be made this financial year, getting patients care faster. We are also making more than 200 more medical school places available for universities from next September, accelerating a commitment that we made in the NHS long-term workforce plan and delivering more doctors to areas that need them most.

This Government are listening to patient voices too, particularly on the importance of biological sex in healthcare. That is why, following a consultation later

this year, we will amend the NHS constitution to make sure that we respect the privacy, dignity and safety of all patients. The Prime Minister has also unveiled plans to introduce a new law to prevent children who turn 14 this year from ever legally being sold cigarettes, creating the first smokefree generation. Last week, my Department launched an expedited consultation to crack down on youth vaping.

Aaron Bell: I thank the Secretary of State for his statement, particularly what he said about tech. On dental provision, I recently met with Dr Khan of Westbury Park dental practice in my constituency to discuss access to NHS dentistry, which is becoming more difficult for many of my constituents. I welcome the plans we have to increase the number of dentists and I reiterate my support for a dental school at Keele University, but those plans will take time. In the short term, there is a huge backlog of overseas clinicians waiting to take the registration exam so that they can practise here. What steps is the Secretary of State taking to expedite this?

Steve Barclay: He is right that we are taking both long-term and short-term actions. A key part of the long-term workforce plan is to boost the number of dentists being trained. In the more immediate term, earlier this year we made legislative changes that give the General Dental Council the flexibility to improve the way professionals are registered, giving more flexibility in terms of the skills mix and, for example, tripling the number of people sitting part 1 this year, so that more overseas professionals can be recognised and qualified to practise in the UK.

Mr Speaker: I call the shadow Secretary of State.

Wes Streeting (Ilford North) (Lab): In Mid Bedfordshire last year, 165 children—[*Interruption.*] I do not know why Government Members are laughing; perhaps they should listen, as it is not our party that has let down the people of Mid Bedfordshire. Last year, 165 children in Mid Bedfordshire had teeth removed due to tooth decay. Some 800 patients were forced into A&E for the same reason and 100,000 people across the region cannot get access to an NHS dentist. Instead of laughing, the Government might like to adopt Labour's plan to provide 700,000 extra dentistry appointments every year.

Steve Barclay: Since 2010, we have had 6.5% more dentists, a quarter more appointments and, as we have just touched on, increasing flexibility in regulation and boosting overseas recruitment. It is striking that one area of the country that the shadow Secretary of State does not want to talk about is Wales, which has a record of what a Labour Government will deliver. Indeed, the Leader of the Opposition says that he wants Wales to be the "blueprint" for what the NHS would be in England. There, this week, we have seen a fiddling of the figures on health. Even without that fiddling, we know people are twice as likely to be on a waiting list in Wales as in England—

Mr Speaker: Order. One of us has got to sit down and it is not going to be me. I let you have a good crack at the beginning, Secretary of State. Your opening statement took quite a long time, which I do not mind. I do not mind your having a go about Wales, but I am certainly

not going to open up a debate between the Government and Opposition Front Benches. Topical questions are for Back Benchers and about short questions with short answers. I want it to be kept that way, so please understand that. There must be too many by-elections, because Members are getting carried away.

Wes Streeting: It is not just Mid Bedfordshire. Across the country, the No.1 reason children aged six to 10 are admitted to hospital is tooth decay. Given that, will the Secretary of State at least adopt the modest measure that Labour has proposed to introduce national supervised tooth brushing for small children—low cost, high impact—to keep their teeth clean and keep children out of hospital?

Steve Barclay: We are reforming the NHS workforce more fundamentally, looking at how we expand the roles that dental hygienists and dental therapists can perform. We are looking at how we can boost training, which is why we have made the commitment for more dentists in the long-term workforce plan, backed by £2.4 billion. How does that help? It increases the number of dentists being trained and we have a quarter more activity compared with last year.

T2. [906585] **Philip Dunne** (Ludlow) (Con): Can the Minister confirm that the £312 million capital investment to transform the Shrewsbury and Telford Hospital NHS Trust acute hospitals is on track through the NHS approval process, with its outline business case, to enable a full business case to be concluded in the coming months so that construction can commence during this financial year?

The Minister for Health and Secondary Care (Will Quince): My right hon. Friend has long championed this cause. I hope it is good news that I am able to confirm that enabling works have recently been approved for the Shrewsbury and Telford Hospital NHS Trust hospital transformation programme and are expected to commence this financial year. I can also confirm that funding has been provided for the development of the full business case and is expected to be submitted in the coming months.

Mr Speaker: I call the SNP spokesperson.

Amy Callaghan (East Dunbartonshire) (SNP): New research by UNICEF UK has made clear how badly the cost of living crisis has hit the mental health of families with young children. Rising prices and services gutted by austerity have left 60% of parents feeling overwhelmed, anxious, unsupported and lonely all or most of the time. What representations has the Secretary of State made to his Cabinet colleagues ahead of the upcoming autumn statement to support families and to improve health outcomes?

Steve Barclay: That shows just how divorced the SNP line of questioning is from the reality of funding. The funding for mental health is £2.3 billion more this year than it was four years ago. We are funding 160 mental health crisis cafés and we have a programme of mental health support teams being rolled out in our schools, all of which is subject to Barnett consequentials on which the Scottish Government receive money. This Government

are committed to investing in mental health. That is what we are doing. The question for the Scottish Government is why they are not getting the same results that we are.

T3. [906586] Suzanne Webb (Stourbridge) (Con): Most supermarkets practise place-based and price promotions mainly on ultra processed food—food that plays a key part in feeding the obesity crisis. How can the Government best ensure that supermarkets promote affordable, unprocessed and sustainable foods, not foods high in fat, sugar and salt, and, importantly how can we ensure that supermarkets comply with the regulations?

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Health and Social Care (Neil O'Brien): We have already brought in restrictions on the places that unhealthy food can be sold to stop pester power. That is on top of other measures that we are taking on obesity such as the sugar tax, calorie labelling, the extra money for school sport, and the extra facilities for young people. It is a serious issue and one on which we are taking urgent action.

Clive Lewis (Norwich South) (Lab): I was going to ask a question about the shocking statistic of 85,000 people on the waiting list at Norfolk and Norwich University Hospital, but so poor was the Secretary of State's response to the question of my hon. Friend the Member for Ilford North (Wes Streeting) about the dental desert that I will tell him a quick story. Ukrainian refugees who come to my constituency are travelling back to war-torn Ukraine to have their teeth seen to because there is a better dental service there than in Norfolk and Norwich. What does he have to say to that?

Steve Barclay: As I have said, we have 6.5% more dentists now than when we came to power. There is also a quarter more dental activity this year compared with last year. I understand why the hon. Gentleman does not want to talk about the investment that we are making on the elective programme in Norfolk, because it includes funding for two new hospitals in Norfolk through our new hospitals programme and significant funding into diagnostic capacity, with a number of diagnostic centres being opened in Norfolk, which he does not want to mention.

T4. [906587] Matt Vickers (Stockton South) (Con): My local hospital, North Tees, is tired, dated and well beyond its life expectancy, with operating theatres too small to meet modern requirements, so I was hugely disappointed that my NHS trust failed even to apply for Government funding that could have built a new state-of-the-art surgical hub on the site. Will my hon. Friend work with me to ensure that the people of Stockton get the healthcare facilities that they need?

Will Quince: We will always work with my hon. Friend and the trust on capital improvements where needed, but I am pleased to note that the trust has been allocated significant investment from national programmes in recent years, which my hon. Friend fought hard for, including £32.2 million from our community diagnostic centres programme, which will provide vital testing to local residents close to home, and £3 million from our A&E upgrade programme. We will of course continue

to work closely with colleagues in the NHS and the local trust to continue delivering for the people of Stockton.

Rachael Maskell (York Central) (Lab/Co-op): Ten years on from the Francis report, the National Guardian's Office—for freedom to speak up—reports that last year there were 937 cases where whistleblowers were not listened to and experienced detriment. If we add that to 170,000 complaints, with 30,000 reaching the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman, we can see that the complaints system across the NHS is defensive and dangerous. Will the Secretary of State review the NHS complaints system, and embed a listening and learning culture and early intervention?

Steve Barclay: I discussed this with Henrietta Hughes, the patient safety champion, just yesterday as part of the sprint that we have commissioned in the Department in response to Martha's rule. We are doing considerable work with NHSE colleagues on how we better respond to the concerns of patients, whether it is through the work on Martha's rule or the complaints process, and a significant amount of work is ongoing as part of that.

T5. [906588] Mr Philip Hollobone (Kettering) (Con): The Secretary of State has seen for himself the dilapidated steam generators at Kettering General Hospital. The new £34 million net zero energy plant designed to replace them faces challenges from rising costs and new design requirements. Will he ensure that the final business case approval process for this new power plant is completed as soon as possible, so that spades can hit the ground on time in spring 2024?

Steve Barclay: Yes I will. I pay tribute to my hon. Friend for the way he has championed this issue. I have visited the hospital; I have seen it for myself. As he will be aware, the full business case was received by the Department this morning. While the cost has increased, it is still within the wider funding envelope for the scheme on that site and I will do everything I can to expedite the process as he asks.

Paula Barker (Liverpool, Wavertree) (Lab): In recent months, there was a concerted campaign from the public to prevent the closure of Park View Medical Centre in Liverpool, which was subsequently closed by the Merseyside and Cheshire integrated care board. Not long after the conclusion of the campaign, during which members of the public were turning up to board meetings, the ICB announced that 50% of its meetings would now be held exclusively in private. I for one do not believe that that is a coincidence. What would the Secretary of State's advice be to Merseyside and Cheshire ICB on transparency and accountability, and is it not time we looked at strengthening the guidance?

Steve Barclay: The hon. Lady raises an important point. I was not aware of that decision by the local ICB. As a principle, I think we can agree across the House that greater transparency on such meetings is important, so I will follow up on that. The Government are making significant investment into Merseyside; both Alder Hey Children's Hospital and the Royal Liverpool University Hospital have been rebuilt at significant cost as part of this Government's commitment to investing in the NHS estate in that area.

T6. [906589] **Chris Loder** (West Dorset) (Con): Will the Secretary of State join me in thanking the outgoing chief executive of the South Western Ambulance Service, Will Warrender? He came to join the service in the middle of covid, during very difficult times, and did a lot of work to help, and that comes after his 32 years of public service in the Royal Navy.

Steve Barclay: I am happy to join my hon. Friend; indeed, I am sure the whole House is happy to pay tribute to the exemplary public service Mr Warrender has provided, both in the Royal Navy and with the ambulance trust, and to wish him a very happy retirement.

Daisy Cooper (St Albans) (LD): Immunocompromised patients are facing their fourth winter without adequate protection from covid, despite a new study showing that they now comprise approximately 25% of all covid hospitalisations, intensive care unit admissions and deaths. In the last few days, some hospitals have been giving guidance to their staff that they should not even test for covid unless they are working on specific wards. After three and a half years, what are the Government going to do to put an end to this appalling situation, where some of the most clinically vulnerable patients are scared of accessing the healthcare they need for fear it could literally be a death sentence?

Steve Barclay: During the pandemic, as the hon. Lady knows, the Government prioritised the clinically extremely vulnerable and significant investment went in there. We follow the guidance from the UK Health Security Agency about the right level of infection control. More widely, we need to look at what medicine is

effective. If it relates to immunosuppressants, there was a big debate in summer 2022 about that issue and we keep the science under active review.

T7. [906590] **John Penrose** (Weston-super-Mare) (Con): I thank Ministers for their earlier helpful replies about NHS dentistry, but I am afraid the situation in Weston-super-Mare remains extremely worrying. Local residents regularly say there is not a single local dentist accepting new adult NHS patients, and many practices have actively reduced NHS work since the pandemic. I have pushed both NHS England and the local integrated care board, but all we have so far are PowerPoint presentations rather than bookable appointments. What hope can the Secretary of State offer to Westonians who have paid their taxes, but are not getting any NHS dentistry in exchange?

Neil O'Brien: My hon. Friend is right. The amount of NHS dentistry being delivered in his ICB has gone up in the last year, but we want to go further. The NHS has recently commissioned additional children's orthodontic capacity within his ICB, but through the actions we are going to take, we will go further.

Mr Speaker: I call Judith Cummins with the final question.

Judith Cummins (Bradford South) (Lab): Having 100% fracture liaison services coverage in England would prevent an estimated 74,000 fractures, including 31,000 hip fractures, over five years. Will the Minister finally commit to 100% FLS coverage across England?

Steve Barclay: In the interests of brevity, I will actively look at that issue and write to the hon. Lady about it.

Core School Budget Allocations

12.34 pm

Bridget Phillipson (Houghton and Sunderland South) (Lab) (*Urgent Question*): To ask the Secretary of State for Education if she will make a statement on the 2023-2024 core school budget allocations.

The Minister for Schools (Nick Gibb): As the Government confirmed in a written ministerial statement yesterday, the Department for Education has corrected an error in the notional allocations of the schools national funding formula for 2024-2025. Those allocations were originally published and notified to the House on 17 July 2023. However, the Department has subsequently uncovered an error made by officials during the initial calculations of the national funding formula. Specifically, there was an error processing forecast pupil numbers, which meant that the overall cost of the core schools budget for 2024-25 would be 0.62% greater than allocated. The Department therefore issued new national funding formula allocations on 6 October to rectify that error as quickly as possible.

The permanent secretary has apologised for the error in writing to both the Chair of the Education Committee and the Secretary of State. The Secretary of State has instructed the permanent secretary to conduct a formal review of the quality assurance process surrounding the calculation and quality assurance of the NFF, with external and independent scrutiny. Peter Wyman CBE, the chair of the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales, will lead the review. Improvements have already been identified to ensure that similar mistakes are not made.

I would like to reassure the House that the error does not affect the overall level of school funding, which remains at £59.6 billion for 2024-25. The Government continue to deliver, in full, the core schools budget, which includes funding for mainstream schools and for high needs. As I said, it will remain at £59.6 billion in 2024-25—its highest ever level in real terms and, of course, in cash terms. That is a percentage increase of 3.2% compared with the current year of 2023-24. Through the schools national funding formula, average funding is £5,300 per primary school pupil and £6,830 per secondary school pupil in 2024-25, up from £5,200 and £6,720 respectively in 2023-24.

Schools have not yet received their 2024-25 funding, so the correction of this error does not mean adjusting any funding that schools have already received. Likewise, the error will not impact on the publication of a dedicated schools grant in December, or on when schools will receive their final allocations for 2024-25. The 2024-25 high needs national funding formula allocations, which fund provisions for children with complex special educational needs and disabilities, are also unaffected by the error, as are other funding streams outside the NFF, including the teachers' pay additional grant announced in the summer.

I also clarify that the recalculation of the NFF for 2024-25 does not affect the affordability of the 2023 teachers' pay award. There has been no change to the funding that was promised as part of the pay settlement in July and which the unions agreed meant that the pay award is properly funded. The Government recognise that the

correction of the NFF error will be difficult for local authorities and frustrating for some school leaders, which is why the Department has rectified the error as quickly as possible.

Mr Speaker: Order. The Minister has taken three, nearly four, minutes. I hope that he is coming to the end of his remarks.

Nick Gibb: This is my final sentence, Mr Speaker.

The Department is working closely with school stakeholders, including unions, to communicate this change and support schools and local authorities.

Bridget Phillipson: Thank you for granting this urgent question, Mr Speaker. Since the House returned from the summer recess, Ministers have been forced to come here twice, first to explain how this Government left school buildings in such a parlous state that many are now at risk of collapse, and now to explain that the Conservatives are taking £370 million out of schools' budget allocations for next year. It is shambolic, it is chaotic, and our children deserve a lot better. I am glad that Ministers have listened to Labour's call for an independent investigation, but what is the timeline for this review? How will the review be reported to the House, and how will Members have a chance to scrutinise its findings?

We need to know much more, too. We need to know why, when the mistake was first identified in September, it was not until after the Conservative party conference in October that headteachers were finally notified. What support will schools now receive to ensure that children's education does not suffer as a result of Conservative incompetence? Rather than blaming officials, will the Secretary of State—wherever she is today—finally take some responsibility?

We all know that mistakes happen, but this is not a one-off; this is part of a much bigger pattern of Conservative mismanagement right across the Department and right across Government for 13 long years, and it is our children who are paying the price. It is Conservative mismanagement that brought us the RAAC—reinforced autoclaved aerated concrete—crisis in our schools, that kept children at home as Ministers failed to resolve industrial action for months on end, and that is now seeing record numbers of teachers leaving the profession, attainment gaps widening and standards falling. It will fall to the next Labour Government to reset the relationship between Government, families and schools, to show once again that it is Labour that is the party of high and rising standards in our schools.

Nick Gibb: The hon. Lady refers to RAAC. We took the only decision that any responsible Government would take when the evidence changed on RAAC in school buildings that surveyors had previously assessed as not in a critical condition and we discovered it was not safe for pupils to stay in those schools. There are 174 schools so far confirmed with RAAC, which we have published details of, and we are taking urgent action to make sure that no child or member of staff in our school buildings will be at risk from this reinforced autoclaved aerated concrete—which, by the way, has been around through successive Administrations, both Labour and Conservative, since the 1950s and 1960s.

The hon. Lady refers to £370 million being taken out of the school budget. No money has been taken out of the school budget. It is £59.6 billion next year, and it will remain at £59.6 billion. What would be irresponsible would be to increase funding for schools by 0.62% solely as a result of an error by officials. That is not how Government spending systems work. It has to go through the proper value for money procedures, and that is how we always conduct our allocation of taxpayers' money.

The hon. Lady talks about standards in schools. We are rising in the international tables. We are fourth in the world for the reading ability of nine-year-olds, according to the recent progress in international reading literacy study, or PIRLS, of pupils of that age. We are rising in TIMSS, the trends in mathematics and science study, and we are rising in PISA, the programme for international student assessment. That is in direct contrast with what happened under the last Labour Government, when we were falling in those PISA tables.

Mr Speaker: We come to the Chair of the Select Committee.

Mr Robin Walker (Worcester) (Con): I am grateful for the apology and the letter that the Select Committee received on this issue, which we have published today. Clearly, it is deeply unfortunate that this error took place. It is a result of a complex and very difficult to understand funding system that provides schools with a lack of transparency as to how their funding works in the long run.

We were elected on a manifesto to deliver a fair national funding formula. There were plans in place to legislate for the direct funding of schools. While I welcome my right hon. Friend's confirmation that this does not in any way affect the high needs block or take money out of the overall school budget, can he update the House on plans to deliver that direct funding formula, which, along with multi-year funding settlements, the Select Committee and the sector have been calling for over many years?

Nick Gibb: Yes, it is unfortunate, for which officials and Ministers have apologised. It is frustrating, particularly for local authorities that have to conduct their calculations—it was an error based on the coding of the pupil numbers.

My hon. Friend mentioned moving to the direct funding formula. That is the intention of the Government, and the latest edition of the national funding formula and high needs technical briefing does say that we want ultimately to get to direct funding. Many local authorities are moving their local funding formula ever closer to the approach taken in the national funding formula.

Mr Barry Sheerman (Huddersfield) (Lab/Co-op): I saw a tweet to the Minister earlier this morning saying that one man's error is another man's total cock-up—I do not know whether that is technical language, Mr Speaker. The fact of the matter is that he is the longest-serving Minister in any Department in any Government for many years, and on his watch we have seen the demoralisation of the education sector in our country, with good people leaving. It is the Gibb factor. Why does he not resign and talk to people?

Nick Gibb: If I may say so, Mr Speaker, that was an extraordinary outburst. Today, we have the highest number of teachers in the profession—some 468,000—which is, by the way, 27,000 more than when we came to office in 2010. In Labour-run Wales, we are not seeing that rise in the number of teachers.

Sir David Evennett (Bexleyheath and Crayford) (Con): Naturally, this error is very disappointing, but I welcome that the Department has rectified it speedily. What steps is my right hon. Friend taking to work with school stakeholders to communicate the change and to support schools and local authorities?

Nick Gibb: My right hon. Friend is absolutely right: it was unfortunate. As a Minister, when officials gather outside my office to tell me great news about an error that has been made, my instinct is always to find out what the error is and rectify it as quickly as possible. That took about four weeks, compared with the normal six weeks to calculate the NFF, and we then published the figures as rapidly as possible. That is the approach that the Department and I have taken.

Barbara Keeley (Worsley and Eccles South) (Lab): Earlier this year, the Sutton Trust reported that half of school leaders said that they had already been forced to cut back on trips and outings. That includes cultural trips to concerts and plays, which often have a profound effect on young people who would not otherwise be able to attend those events. The average secondary school is now being told that it will have around £58,000 less to spend than was announced in July—whatever the Minister says, those schools will have planned on the basis of that money. I am concerned that even fewer young people will now be able to access the benefits of cultural trips. What is the Minister doing to make sure that young people in state-funded schools still have access to cultural experiences that enrich their education?

Nick Gibb: The figures published in July were indicative figures. They are used by local authorities. Once the October census comes out with the pupil numbers, they then apply their local formula to those figures. That is the allocation that schools use for their budgeting, and that happens around December.

Over the period between 2021-22 and 2024-25, school funding has increased by 20%, so there has been a very significant increase. I agree with the hon. Member about the importance of cultural activities in schools, which is why we have a cultural education plan that is being worked on at the moment.

Sir Julian Lewis (New Forest East) (Con): One reason why this Minister has been in his post so long is that successive Prime Ministers have judged him to be rather good at his job. For the benefit of the House, can he confirm that the civil servants who discovered the mistake made it known to Ministers at the first possible opportunity, and that Ministers made it known to the public at the first possible opportunity? Does that not reflect credit on our parliamentary democratic system?

Nick Gibb: I am grateful to my right hon. Friend for his kind comments. He is absolutely right: as soon as we knew about the error, I wanted to make sure that we were doing everything we could to rectify it and find a solution to the problem that officials and the Department

[Nick Gibb]

had caused. That was my approach, and that is why we recalculated the whole of the national funding formula notional allocations as soon as we could and published that detail on 6 October.

Daisy Cooper (St Albans) (LD): For far too long, the Department for Education has been plagued by a litany of failures that have had a devastating impact on children, their parents and teachers. We have had the mutant algorithm and the RAAC roofs, we have a crisis in our SEND system, and now we have a bit of good old-fashioned incompetence. Does the Minister agree that it is high time that the Secretary of State offered an apology to the British public for all this, or does he think that—in her words—we should thank her for doing a flipping good job?

Nick Gibb: The last flippant comment was not necessary; these are all serious issues. Issues such as RAAC have been around in our school system since the 1950s and 1960s. When we discovered new facts and new evidence, we took swift action. There will always be almost no notice; when we have evidence, we cannot just sit on it until a more convenient time to announce it. We had to announce it straightaway. Every school with confirmed RAAC has a caseworker allocated to make sure that we are keeping children safe and keeping them in face-to-face education. So far, we have identified 174 schools with RAAC and in the vast majority of those—all but 23 schools—all the children are still in face-to-face education.

In terms of special educational needs, we published a Green Paper and an implementation plan to improve the experience of parents and children with special educational needs in our school system.

Bob Blackman (Harrow East) (Con): I thank my right hon. Friend for the update. Clearly, when formulas such as this are being used, it is important that they are tested first to see the results, before those are issued to the schools and other people are involved. Will he confirm that the position is that, even after this error has been corrected, all schools in this country will have enough money to fund the teachers' pay award agreed by the Government?

Nick Gibb: My hon. Friend is right. I have to say that my experience of this particular team in the Department is that they are one of the best teams I have dealt with. This was an error made by officials. They have owned up to it and we have corrected it. It does not affect school funding at all, and it relates to the next financial year, 2024-25. It certainly does not affect this financial year, 2023-24, and the funding of the pay award. Incidentally, it is the highest pay award for 30 years. The 6.5% pay award for teachers is fully funded, with an extra teachers' pay grant of £525 million this year and £900 million next year. It is totally unaffected by this error.

Daniel Zeichner (Cambridge) (Lab): Cambridgeshire schools are some of the lowest funded in England, and they will now receive £4.4 million less than they expected. The Minister will know that local authority officials

and schools will now have to spend time recalculating their budgets. What will he do to compensate them for the time they are spending on that?

Nick Gibb: The situation is unfortunate for local authorities, which will have been spending time calculating their school budgets on a local authority basis. That is why we wanted to get the recalculation of the figures done as soon as possible and out to local authorities. Cambridgeshire is funded in the way it is because we base funding on the level of deprivation in our communities. We have targeted a greater proportion of the schools national funding formula towards deprived pupils than ever before. In total, about £4.4 billion, or 10% of the formula, will be allocated according to deprivation factors in 2024-25. If an area has fewer children from disadvantaged backgrounds than other areas, that will of course be reflected in its overall ranking for local authority funding.

Vicky Ford (Chelmsford) (Con): Last week I visited Meadgate Primary School, which is one of the many good and outstanding schools in my constituency. I am sure the Minister will recall precisely how many good and outstanding schools there are today, compared with 13 years ago. Meadgate Primary School is part of an academy trust of seven schools, and across the schools this situation could account for a £70,000 difference between what they had calculated they might expect and what they will receive.

That is obviously concerning, but also concerning is the number of children now coming in who would have had an education, health and care plan done when they were at pre-school, but did not get one because of the pandemic and now face delays. Given that high needs funding has doubled, will the Minister raise this backlog in assessments with the children's Minister, my hon. Friend the Member for Wantage (David Johnston), to try to make sure that our primary schools are getting the support they need today for those children with SEND?

Nick Gibb: I pay tribute to my right hon. Friend for the great work that she did as children's Minister in the Department for Education. She is right that the proportion of schools judged good or outstanding has increased. In 2010, it was 68%, and today that figure is 88%. We are not happy with that—our focus is on the remaining 12%. Every local school in our country should be a good or outstanding school.

My right hon. Friend makes an important point about education, health and care plans. She is right that the funding of the high needs budget has increased considerably over the past few years, and I will raise the issue of the backlog in EHCPs with my hon. Friend the children's Minister. I should say that we are building significant numbers of new free special schools, so that there are more places available for children with severe special educational needs.

Tony Lloyd (Rochdale) (Lab): We know that a child growing up in an area of deprivation is on average likely to do less well through our school system. I take the point that the Minister made about extra funding for deprivation, but will he accept from me that we know that money makes a difference? When will this Government get a grip on the problem of deprivation?

Nick Gibb: Deprivation and disadvantaged children have been the core driving force of all our reforms since 2010. We are spending record amounts of money on school funding—£59.6 billion is the highest ever in cash terms, in real terms and in real terms per pupil. Before the pandemic, we had closed the attainment gap between disadvantaged children and other children by 13% in primary schools and by 9% in secondary schools. That has been undone by the pandemic, but we are determined to close that gap again. All the reforms that led to that closure are still in place, and we are confident, particularly with the £5 billion of recovery funding and the tutoring programme, that we will close that gap once again.

Aaron Bell (Newcastle-under-Lyme) (Con): I welcome my right hon. Friend's answers today, and I thank him for his leadership and his ownership of this issue, which is not his fault. He has approached it in exactly the right manner, as my right hon. Friend the Member for New Forest East (Sir Julian Lewis) said. I welcome that we are continuing to deliver the core schools budget in full, not just for mainstream schools, but for high needs. Will my right hon. Friend the Minister set out what the percentage increase for those areas will be in 2024-25, compared with this year?

Nick Gibb: On the increases in funding last year and this year, funding is increasing by £3.9 billion in 2022-23 and by £1.8 billion in 2024-25. When we combine that with the £4 billion increase we had between 2021-22 and 2022-23, that is a 20% increase in cash terms over that period.

Gareth Thomas (Harrow West) (Lab/Co-op): I wrote to the Secretary of State at the beginning of August, asking for a meeting to discuss a series of special educational needs funding issues in Harrow. The Minister will be aware that special educational needs are one of the many pressures on school budgets across the country. They certainly are a significant issue in Harrow. Can he explain specifically how much schools in Harrow will now not receive, compared with what they had expected to receive? Will he encourage the Secretary of State to respond to my letter, and to do so with generosity?

Nick Gibb: I say first to the hon. Member that no funding is being reduced in Harrow. All areas will be receiving significant increases in school funding. The error is about the allocation figures—the notional figures—for 2024-25, and those have been corrected. On special educational needs, we have increased special educational needs funding significantly over the past several years, because of the pressures that local authorities are facing with increased numbers of EHCPs. We are taking a number of measures to help address that, and I will of course ensure that the hon. Member has his meeting in the Department as soon as possible.

Mr Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi (Slough) (Lab): This is yet another error and case of incompetence under this Government. The average primary school is expected to be more than £12,000 worse off next academic year and the average secondary school £57,000 worse off than

under the July publication. How will the Government help headteachers in Slough and across the country deal with the extra stress and pressure on account of this error, especially when they have to make difficult decisions on staffing and additional support for those pupils who need it?

Nick Gibb: The actual allocations to schools happen in December each year in the normal way, so this situation will not affect the figures that local authorities have informed schools they will be receiving. Those are based on the October census of pupil numbers and the application of the local formula. We then fund the local authorities on the basis of the national funding. The record funding of £59.6 billion equates to an average of £5,300 per primary school pupil and £6,830 per secondary school pupil.¹

Andrew Gwynne (Denton and Reddish) (Lab): The Minister's argument in a nutshell is, "You didn't have the money, so you've not lost it." But the point is that local authorities received the notional funding allocation and were beginning to plan based on that figure given by the Government. In places such as Stockport, Tameside and Manchester, the figures that are going to be withdrawn from those areas are not insubstantial. I politely say to the Minister that his argument is incoherent—I will grade him D-minus. And his maths is appalling—I will grade him U. Can I suggest he goes into detention and fixes this matter, because schools in Tameside, Stockport and Manchester desperately need that cash?

Nick Gibb: The funding allocated for local authorities is ringfenced. This is an allocation and calculation issue—it is not that they have received the money—and we corrected it as soon as the error was made. Any Labour Members in the same position would have reacted in precisely the same way that I have.

Rachael Maskell (York Central) (Lab/Co-op): This blunder is going to cost schools in York dear. We are already in the bottom 20 in the country for school funding and in the bottom third for high needs. I had a meeting with parents on Friday night, and 150 of them were in tears and on their knees about the SEN funding. The formulas are just not working in areas where there is low funding. Will the Minister bring forward the fair funding formula to ensure that children in my constituency with SEND have fair funding allocated to them?

Nick Gibb: I understand the hon. Lady's points, and I share the concern of parents with children with special educational needs and disabilities. We do want to make sure that local authorities are properly funded for children with those special needs, which is why we have increased funding for high needs very significantly over the past few years. Over £10 billion is now allocated to local authorities for those children. If we look at the national funding formula, we see that 10.2% of the formula—£4.4 billion—is on the basis of deprivation factors, and 17.8% is allocated on the basis of additional needs. These are very significant sums both in the national funding formula for mainstream schools and the extra money we are giving to local authorities for high needs.

1. [Official Report, 23 October 2023, Vol. 738, c. 3MC.]

Devolution (Employment) (Scotland)

Motion for leave to bring in a Bill (Standing Order No. 23)

1.2 pm

David Linden (Glasgow East) (SNP): I beg to move,

That leave be given to bring in a Bill to amend the Scotland Act 1998 to grant legislative competence for employment matters to the Scottish Parliament.

At the outset, I draw the House's attention to my entry in the Register of Members' Financial Interests, as a member of the SNP trade union group and in relation to my own membership of Unite.

As this Parliament begins to draw to a close, many of us are left wondering why the much-vaunted Employment Bill never materialised. After all, we were promised that Brexit—now supported enthusiastically by the Tories and Labour—would not lead to a diminution of workers' rights, but would instead be an opportunity to enhance employment protections. Despite countless fire and rehire incidences—many of which have been referenced by my hon. Friend the Member for Paisley and Renfrewshire North (Gavin Newlands)—ever more maternity discrimination and an assault on trade union rights by a Tory Government acting like Thatcher on steroids, the very opposite has happened.

The fact is that employment rights under this British Government are under attack. Far from dealing with workplace discrimination on issues such as the menopause, we have a Government actively and increasingly hindering the rights of workers with their Strikes (Minimum Service Levels) Act 2023. It is a piece of legislation that even the International Labour Organisation has expressed concern about. As the world of work continues to evolve and we seek to build back better from the pandemic, Brexit Britain is now on a steep decline when it comes to employment protections. However, this is an issue that extends far beyond the immediate rights available to workers, because it is fundamentally a matter of equality. The way in which we value workers in our legislative framework sets the expectation of what we should expect workplace cultures to emulate, and legislation must help build the foundations of a fair and equal labour market.

Let us take, for example, some evidence published in July by the charity Pregnant Then Screwed. Of 24,000 parents surveyed, it was found that 7% of women lost their job through redundancy, sacking or feeling forced to leave due to a flexible working request being denied. The charity estimates that, if scaled up, this would mean that over 41,000 pregnant women or mothers could be sacked or made redundant every year. Under-represented groups continue to face significant inequalities in the workplace, and I and many of my colleagues have stood here time and again calling for the enshrinement of flexible working as a day-one right, as well as mandatory gender and ethnicity pay gap reporting.

Given the powers, these are just some of the examples of workplace injustices that the Scottish Government would seek to remedy. However, it is an inescapable truth that Westminster's crackdowns on workers' rights—not to mention the assault on unions—have seen the UK's global rating on workers' rights fall. Indeed, the UK has dropped in the International Trade Union Confederation's annual report on workers' rights from a

rating of three, which is for countries where ITUC considers there to be “regular violation of rights” to four, which is for those where it says there are “systemic violations”. Sadly, that puts the British Government on a par with the likes of Qatar and Oman. The latter is an absolute monarchy, where criticism of the Government is illegal. If that is the message the Government want to send out as Brexit Britain, it is certainly a bold move, but ITUC's recent report is damning. It says:

“In the United Kingdom, union busting, attempts to introduce legislation curtailing the right to strike and protest, and violations of collective bargaining agreements have become systematic and led to the country's rating dropping from three to four.”

Perhaps it is no wonder that the devolution of employment law is backed by some of the biggest trade unions in these islands, including the Scottish Trades Union Congress and the TUC itself. Only recently, the Trades Union Congress passed a motion calling for the repeal of current anti-union legislation and the devolution of employment law to Scotland. Roz Foyer, the outstanding STUC general secretary, is on record as saying:

“It's clear, especially to any incoming UK Labour Government, that the voices of workers across the country now support the Scottish Parliament having full autonomy over labour and employment rights.”

That poses a question for our colleagues on the Labour Benches: why not Scotland? In his rush to out-Union Jack even the Secretary of State for Scotland, the hon. Member for Edinburgh South (Ian Murray) has said no, nay, never—no further devolution. Today's vote is also a first test for the new hon. Member for Rutherglen and Hamilton West (Michael Shanks). It poses a question for him when the Division bells ring shortly: whose side is he on? Is he on the side of the Scottish Trades Union Congress, or the side of his Westminster boss in Camden?

On blocking the devolution of employment law, the right hon. Member for Ashton-under-Lyne (Angela Rayner) has come in for criticism from Michael Sharpe, a former general secretary of Scottish Labour, who has said that ruling out the devolution of employment law was a “huge blow” and

“a slap in the face to the trade unions who have campaigned for this for many years.”

Since taking over the reins as Labour leader, the Leader of the Opposition has moved ever more to the right, distancing himself from trade unions and, ironically, deciding to go on strike from attending picket lines himself. We have even had the spectre of shadow Ministers being sacked simply for having the temerity to support workers on a picket line.

The blunt reality is that Scotland is already missing out on Europe's enhancement of workers' rights, thanks to a Brexit we did not vote for and do not support. Post pandemic, we could have been taking opportunities to empower trade unions, increase statutory sick pay, ban fire and rehire, and do so much more for workers, but it appears once more that the Labour party and the Conservatives have landed in the exact same space.

It is clear to us that a Westminster Government of whatever colour do not have workers' rights as a priority. It is only by giving Scotland powers over employment law that the Scottish Government can entrench workers' rights in law and build a fair work society for all our citizens. We can and we must do so much better for our

workers and our trade unions. If Westminster is not up to the job, Holyrood will take this on, and working people will be better off as a result. It is for that reason, and with the support of our trade union colleagues, that I commend this motion to the House.

Question put (Standing Order No. 23).

The House divided: Ayes 22, Noes 33.

Division No. 328]

[1.9 pm

AYES

Bardell, Hannah	Lake, Ben
Bonnar, Steven	Law, Chris
Callaghan, Amy (<i>Proxy vote cast by Marion Fellows</i>)	Linden, David
Cherry, Joanna	Lucas, Caroline
Docherty-Hughes, Martin	Nicolson, John (<i>Proxy vote cast by Marion Fellows</i>)
Dorans, Allan (<i>Proxy vote cast by Marion Fellows</i>)	O'Hara, Brendan
Eastwood, Colum	Qaisar, Ms Anum
Edwards, Jonathan	Saville Roberts, rh Liz
Fellows, Marion	Stephens, Chris
Flynn, Stephen	Thompson, Owen
Grady, Patrick	Tellers for the Ayes:
Hanna, Claire	Kirsty Blackman and
	Gavin Newlands

NOES

Aldous, Peter	Loughton, Tim
Benton, Scott	McCartney, Karl
Brereton, Jack	Mills, Nigel
Bridgen, Andrew	Mortimer, Jill
Buckland, rh Sir Robert	Nici, Lia
Clark, rh Greg	Offord, Dr Matthew
Colburn, Elliot	Pawsey, Mark
Duguid, David	Penrose, John
Fox, rh Dr Liam	Richardson, Angela
Goodwill, rh Sir Robert	Smith, Greg
Grayling, rh Chris	Smith, Royston
Hart, Sally-Ann	Stewart, Iain
Hollobone, Mr Philip	Swayne, rh Sir Desmond
Jenkin, Sir Bernard	Syms, Sir Robert
Jones, Andrew	Tuckwell, Steve
Jones, rh Mr David	Wragg, Mr William

Tellers for the Noes:

Hywel Williams and
Alan Brown

Question accordingly negated.

LEVELLING-UP AND REGENERATION BILL (PROGRAMME) (NO. 4)

Motion made, and Question put forthwith (Standing Order No. 83A(7)),

That the following provisions shall apply to the Levelling-up and Regeneration Bill for the purpose of supplementing the Order of 8 June 2022 (Levelling-up and Regeneration Bill: Programme), as varied by the Orders of 22 September 2022 (Levelling-up and Regeneration Bill: Programme (No. 2)) and 23 November 2022 (Levelling-up and Regeneration Bill: Programme (No.3)):

Consideration of Lords Amendments

(1) Proceedings on consideration of Lords Amendments shall (so far as not previously concluded) be brought to a conclusion at 5.00pm at today's sitting.

(2) The Lords Amendments shall be considered in the following order: 117, 231, 237, 369, 1, 2, 4, 3, 6, 10, 13, 14, 18, 22, 30, 31, 44 to 46, 80 to 82, 90, 102, 103, 133, 134, 137, 139, 142, 156, 157, 172, 180, 199, 239 to 243, 288, 244, 249, 273, 280, 285, 327, 329, 5, 7 to 9, 11, 12, 15 to 17, 19 to 21, 23 to 29, 32 to 43, 47 to 79, 83 to 89, 91 to 101, 104 to 116, 118 to 132, 135, 136, 138, 140, 141, 143 to 155, 158 to 171, 173 to 179, 181 to 198, 200 to 230, 232 to 236, 238, 245 to 248, 250 to 272, 274 to 279, 281 to 284, 286, 287, 289 to 326, 328, 330 to 368, 370 to 418.

Subsequent stages

(3) Any further Message from the Lords may be considered forthwith without any Question being put.

(4) Proceedings on the first of any further Messages from the Lords shall (so far as not previously concluded) be brought to a conclusion two hours after their commencement.

(5) Proceedings on any subsequent Message from the Lords shall (so far as not previously concluded) be brought to a conclusion one hour after their commencement.—(*Andrew Stephenson.*)

Question agreed to.

Levelling-up and Regeneration Bill

Consideration of Lords amendments

Madam Deputy Speaker (Dame Rosie Winterton): I must draw the House's attention to the fact that financial privilege is engaged by Lords amendments 46, 73 to 75, 78, 82, 231, 241, 249, 301 to 327 and 349 to 367. If any of these Lords amendments are agreed to, I will cause the customary entry waiving Commons financial privilege to be entered in the *Journal*.

Clause 148

GUIDANCE

1.23 pm

The Minister of State, Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (Rachel Maclean): I beg to move amendment (a) to Lords amendment 117.

Madam Deputy Speaker: With this it will be convenient to consider:

Government amendments (b) to (d) to Lords amendment 117.

Lords amendment 231, and Government amendment (a).

Lords amendment 237, and Government amendments (a) and (b).

Lords amendment 369, and Government amendments (a), (c), (b) and (d).

Lords amendment 1, and Government motion to disagree.

Lords amendments 2 and 4, Government motions to disagree, and Government amendments (a) and (b) in lieu.

Lords amendment 3, and Government motion to disagree.

Lords amendment 6, Government motion to disagree, and Government amendments (a) to (d) in lieu.

Lords amendment 10, Government motion to disagree, and Government amendments (a) and (b) in lieu.

Lords amendment 13, and Government motion to disagree.

Lords amendment 14, Government motion to disagree, and Government amendments (a) to (p) in lieu.

Lords amendment 18, Government motion to disagree, and Government amendments (a) and (b) in lieu.

Lords amendment 22, and Government motion to disagree.

Lords amendments 30 and 31, Government motions to disagree, and Government amendments (a) to (d) in lieu.

Lords amendment 44, Government motion to disagree, and Government amendments (a) and (b) in lieu.

Lords amendment 45, and Government motion to disagree.

Lords amendment 46, and Government motion to disagree.

Lords amendment 80, and Government motion to disagree.

Lords amendment 81, Government motion to disagree, and Government amendments (a) to (c) in lieu.

Lords amendment 82, and Government motion to disagree.

Lords amendment 90, Government motion to disagree, and Government amendment (a) in lieu.

Lords amendments 102 and 103, Government motions to disagree, and Government amendments (a) to (d) in lieu.

Lords amendment 133, and Government motion to disagree.

Lords amendment 134, and Government motion to disagree.

Lords amendment 137, and Government motion to disagree.

Lords amendment 139, and Government motion to disagree.

Lords amendment 142, and Government motion to disagree.

Lords amendment 156, and Government motion to disagree.

Lords amendment 157, and Government motion to disagree.

Lords amendment 172, and Government motion to disagree.

Lords amendment 180, and Government motion to disagree.

Lords amendment 199, and Government motion to disagree.

Lords amendment 239, Government motion to disagree, and Government amendments (a) to (c) in lieu.

Lords amendment 240, Government motion to disagree, and Government amendments (a) to (c) in lieu.

Lords amendment 241, and Government motion to disagree.

Lords amendments 242, 243 and 288, Government motions to disagree, and Government amendments (a) to (d) in lieu.

Lords amendment 244, and Government motion to disagree.

Lords amendment 249, and Government motion to disagree.

Lords amendment 273, Government motion to disagree, and Government amendment (a) in lieu.

Lords amendment 280, and Government motion to disagree.

Lords amendment 285, Government motion to disagree, and Government amendment (a) in lieu.

Lords amendment 327, and Government motion to disagree.

Lords amendment 329, Government motion to disagree, and Government amendments (a) and (b) in lieu.

Lords amendments 5, 7 to 9, 11, 12, 15 to 17, 19 to 21, 23 to 29, 32 to 43, 47 to 79, 83 to 89, 91 to 101, 104 to 116, 118 to 132, 135, 136, 138, 140, 141, 143 to 155, 158 to 171, 173 to 179, 181 to 198, 200 to 230, 232 to 236, 238, 245 to 248, 250 to 272, 274 to 279, 281 to 284, 286, 287, 289 to 326, 328, 330 to 368 and 370 to 418.

Rachel Maclean: The Levelling-up and Regeneration Bill has had a lengthy passage. I take this opportunity to pay tribute to all my predecessors in my role and to colleagues across the Department who have shepherded the Bill to its position.

The Bill reflects the huge importance of levelling up for the future of the country. For decades, successive Governments have failed to address the inequality of opportunity in our country. Economic growth has for too long been concentrated in a select few areas. The Bill will ensure that this Government and future Governments set clear, long-term objectives for addressing entrenched geographic disparities.

The Bill will expand and deepen devolution across England. It will devolve powers to all areas in England where there is demand for it, allowing local leaders to regenerate their towns and cities and restore pride in places by creating a new institutional model more suitable for devolution to whole-county areas outside city regions that have more than one council: the combined county authority.

Sir Desmond Swayne (New Forest West) (Con): I do not know what the Minister is going to say about Lords amendment 14, but if she is agin it, will she reassure me that the voice of district councils will not be lost in combined county authorities, which would create a disparity of the type that she is out to remove in the Bill?

Rachel Maclean: I thank my right hon. Friend for his view. I will come on to address that point substantially in my remarks.

We are modernising our planning system, putting local people at its heart so that it delivers more of what communities want. The reformed system will champion beautiful design in keeping with local style and preferences and ensure that development is sustainable and accompanied by the infrastructure that communities will benefit from.

The Bill further strengthens protections for the environment so that better outcomes are at the heart of planning decisions. I am pleased to be able to inform the House that we have reached agreement with both the Welsh and Scottish Governments on a UK-wide approach to environmental outcomes reports in part 6 of the Bill.

Chris Grayling (Epsom and Ewell) (Con): May I welcome the amendment that the Government tabled in the other place that will have the effect of addressing the issues I raised on Second Reading about the propensity of developers simply to clear a site in advance, with no regard for the wildlife on it at all? We had a controversial case of that happening only last week. I think the amendment will make a real difference and stop that terrible practice happening. It is a good example of the Government's commitment to wildlife and the environment. I am grateful to the Minister.

Rachel Maclean: I thank my right hon. Friend from the bottom of my heart for all the work he has done to protect wildlife both in his constituency and across the country. Hedgehogs will be a lot safer for his determined work—and not only hedgehogs but all other species of our beloved wildlife.

Caroline Lucas (Brighton, Pavilion) (Green): Will the Minister give way?

Rachel Maclean: I will give way shortly.

We have committed to resolving a related anomaly by reinstating a devolved regulation-making function for the Scottish Government on Electricity Act 1989 consents. That was lost following the repeal of the European Communities Act 1972. Our Governments will work together to transfer functions so that powers lost in the repeal of that Act can be reinstated, using existing processes under the Scotland Act 1998.

Since the Bill left this House, the Government have made a number of amendments to improve it. For example, we have addressed the issue of the payment of compulsory purchase hope value compensation by removing hope value from certain types of schemes where there is justification in the public interest. Part 11 of the Bill has been refined in response to concerns raised by the House about the need to specify the purposes for which the new information-gathering powers may be used. To bolster the Bill's benefits for the environment, we have reduced opportunities for incentives for site clearance before development, just as we heard from my right hon. Friend the Member for Epsom and Ewell (Chris Grayling), and included a clear requirement for plan makers to take into account the content of local nature recovery strategies.

I turn to the changes added by peers in the other place. Part 1 of the Bill provides the foundations to address entrenched geographic disparities across the UK. We have heard calls to be clearer on the third round of the levelling-up fund and tabled an amendment that adds a duty to lay a statement before each House of Parliament within three months of Royal Assent about the allocation of levelling-up fund round 3. Our views differ from those in the other place. We do not think that there is any connection between that further clarity on the levelling-up fund and the publication of the statement of levelling-up missions. Therefore, we do not think it is necessary to bring forward the laying date of the statement of levelling-up missions as proposed in Lords amendment 1.

We have been clear that the first statement of levelling-up missions will contain the missions from the levelling up White Paper. Missions may need to evolve over time and, if the detail of missions appears in the Bill, the process to adjust them in the future will become unhelpfully rigid and time-consuming. Therefore, in response to Lords amendments 2 and 4, seeking missions on child poverty and health disparities, the Government have tabled an amendment that requires the Government to consider both economic and social outcomes in deciding their levelling-up missions. That means that we retain that vital flexibility for future Governments to set missions according to the most important pressing issues of the day, while recognising that social outcomes such as child poverty and health inequalities are essential factors when deciding missions.

We are not able to accept Lords amendment 3, which would define criteria for assessing the success of levelling up, because those criteria will inevitably change as the data we have evolves. However, given the strength of feeling, I am pleased to announce that the Government can commit to publishing an analysis of geographical disparities alongside the first statement of missions. Linked to that, there have been calls for more specific reporting on levelling up and rural proofing in Lords

[*Rachel Maclean*]

amendment 6. We strongly agree that levelling up must work for all types of communities, not just those in urban centres.

Dehenna Davison (Bishop Auckland) (Con): Will my hon. Friend give way on that point?

1.30 pm

Rachel Maclean: I will just finish this remark, and I will certainly give way to my former ministerial colleague.

The Department for Environment, Food, and Rural Affairs already publishes an annual rural proofing report, which reflects the Government's consideration of rural challenges across policymaking.

Dehenna Davison: As someone proud to represent a predominantly rural community, does my hon. Friend agree that one of the best ways to level up in rural areas is by ensuring that those areas get strong devolution deals with strong local leadership?

Madam Deputy Speaker (Dame Rosie Winterton): Order. Just a little reminder that if Members intervene on a speaker, it is customary to stay until the end of their speech.

Rachel Maclean: I want to reiterate my thanks to my former colleague, my hon. Friend the Member for Bishop Auckland (Dehenna Davison), who did so much to shepherd the Bill to its current position. I completely agree with her. The best way to ensure levelling up across the country is by voting Conservative, because we have done more than any other Government to spread opportunity around the country.

To avoid anything that would duplicate the work I just mentioned, we have tabled an amendment that will require the Government to have regard to the needs of rural communities in preparing the statement of levelling-up missions. That is consistent with the approach we have taken in other areas, including with respect to the devolved Administrations.

We have heard the concerns highlighted through Lords amendment 199 on access to banking facilities for communities, and we share those concerns. Branch closures are commercial decisions for banks, and we do not believe that a blanket requirement on local authorities to produce strategies to inhibit that would be effective or proportionate. Instead, the Treasury will continue to support the roll-out of alternative services, such as banking hubs, which will ensure that communities across the country have access to the facilities they need.

Margaret Greenwood (Wirral West) (Lab): On Lords amendment 199, a lot of constituents have written to me with their concerns about bank closures. In West Kirby in my constituency, when the last bank closes next year there will be a banking hub, but it will not meet the needs of everyone across the constituency. Does the Minister agree that banks, post offices and so forth are incredibly important, particularly for those who are not able to or do not have the facility to access the internet and do their transactions online? Will she reconsider that position?

Rachel Maclean: The hon. Lady makes some good points. As I said, we agree on the importance of those services, particularly for the rural communities that we represent. That is why we are pushing through with the other work being done by our colleagues in the Treasury, and with the banking services model.

Turning to combined county authorities, the Government have heard the strength of feeling in both Houses about combined county authority associate member voting rights, and the combined authority boundary changes. The Government are therefore content to remove the ability to vote from associate members of both combined authorities and combined county authorities, the latter of which is called for by Lords amendment 14. We are also content to accept the requirements that must be satisfied before local government areas are added to an existing combined authority for the first nine months after Royal Assent, as proposed in Lords Amendment 18. The Government have accordingly tabled amendments in lieu, which we hope the House will support.

The core feature of combined county authorities is that only upper tier local authorities can be constituent members. That principle is essential to ensuring devolution, and its benefits can be expanded to two-tier areas. The House will not need reminding of several previous devolution deal negotiations for combined authorities that have failed in these areas, despite majority support for the deal. Allowing non-constituent members of a combined county authority to become full members would undermine our efforts to address the problem in future and would reduce the effectiveness of devolution in those areas. We remain of the view that combined county authorities must engage all relevant stakeholders, and wish for district councils to have voting rights on issues pertaining to them, but they must be established at local level. Let me reassure the House that the Under-Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, my hon. Friend the Member for Redcar (Jacob Young), who is next to me on the Front Bench, is having detailed discussions with districts on that point.

John Redwood (Wokingham) (Con): Given the Minister's enthusiasm for devolution and the wish to spread investment more sensibly around the country, what extra powers will local communities have to decide what is a realistic number of new homes in any given area?

Rachel Maclean: I will address that matter in due course, so I hope my right hon. Friend will allow a little patience.

Sir Julian Lewis (New Forest East) (Con): I would like to reinforce what my right hon. Friend the Member for New Forest West (Sir Desmond Swayne) said about the concern at district council level that they may be sidelined in combined authorities. We have received a persuasive letter from New Forest District Council, and I would like the Minister to reassure the House that her pledge that they can vote on areas relevant to them will be honoured.

Rachel Maclean: New Forest MPs are definitely speaking up for their residents today. My right hon. Friend will have seen the Levelling Up Minister next to me; he has heard that vital point. These matters must be decided locally, but I can reassure both my right hon. Friends the Members for New Forest West (Sir Desmond Swayne)

and for New Forest East (Sir Julian Lewis) that their voices have been heard and those points will be considered in future arrangements.

It is our strong view that one of the core principles of local democracy is that citizens can attend council meetings to interact in person with their local representatives. There are no limits placed on authorities broadcasting their meetings online and we do not agree that councillors should be able to attend those meetings and cast their votes remotely. It is important that they are present, active participants in local democracy. Therefore, the Government are not able to support Lords amendment 22.

The Bill removes a key barrier to transferring police and crime commissioner functions to combined authority Mayors, a long-standing Government commitment. Those powers do not permit the removal of a police and crime commissioner in favour of a mayor mid-term, as some have suggested. The powers simply allow the May 2024 mayoral elections to elect the Mayor as the next police and crime commissioner for an area, where Mayors request that the election be conducted on that basis. It is to allow the proper preparation for, and administration of, those elections that the Government are seeking to commence the provision upon Royal Assent, and so we are unable to support Lords amendment 273.

Turning to planning, we have heard the strength of feeling across both Houses about the need for national development management policies to be produced transparently, with clear opportunities for scrutiny. We have therefore strengthened the consultation requirements in the Bill, to make it clear that consultation will take place in all but exceptional circumstances, or where a change has no material effect on the policies. Draft policies will also need to be subject to environmental assessment, which in itself will require consultation. That will give everyone with an interest in these important policies—the public and parliamentarians alike—the opportunity to scrutinise and influence what is proposed.

Housing provision has been raised by my right hon. Friend the Member for Wokingham (John Redwood).

Theresa Villiers (Chipping Barnet) (Con): Will the Minister give way?

Rachel Maclean: Will my right hon. Friend allow me to finish my point, and then I will gladly give way?

As our existing policy makes clear, it is important that every local plan is founded on a clear understanding of the housing needs in the area. In response to Lords amendment 82, we have tabled an amendment that puts that important principle into law: plans should take into account an appropriate assessment of need, including the need for affordable homes. Any assessment of need is only a starting point for plan making; it will remain the case that local planning authorities will make their own assessment of how much of that need can be accommodated.

Theresa Villiers: Will the Minister assure the House that the compromise set out in the Secretary of State's letter to colleagues of 5 December last year will be implemented? It is an important way to amplify local control over what is built in a neighbourhood, while still delivering the volume of new homes that we need.

Rachel Maclean: I thank my right hon. Friend for raising that point, which I think is a matter of interest to all colleagues. She will know that we have had an exceptionally high level of interest in the consultation on the national planning policy framework, with over 25,000 respondents across the country. That demonstrates the keen interest of parliamentarians and their constituents in this important issue. She will know that officials need to work through those responses, as they are doing directly with her and others, before we make proposed changes. Officials will continue to work with her and other colleagues, and we look forward to publishing the updated document shortly. To be clear, the position remains as outlined in the Secretary of State's letter of December 2022.

Dominic Raab (Esher and Walton) (Con): The Minister is endeavouring to strike the right balance in a tricky area. Does she agree with me, as a former Housing Minister—there are one or two in this place—that actually the most important thing beyond what happens in Westminster is that local authorities get their local plan in place? We have a Liberal Democrat-run council in Elmbridge. It does not have a plan in place and has not for years. That is what exposes the green belt and unwanted developments such as the Jolly Boatman site which local communities do not want.

Rachel Maclean: I thank my right hon. Friend and esteemed predecessor in my role. I will come on to speak a bit more about the “banana” policies of the Liberal Democrats later in my remarks. For the avoidance of doubt, that stands for—

Daisy Cooper (St Albans) (LD) *rose*—

Rachel Maclean: No. The hon. Lady will have her chance to speak later. It stands for “build absolutely nothing anywhere near anyone”. That is their policy. The whole House and the whole country know it. We on the Conservative Benches are building the homes that the country needs. My right hon. Friend the Member for Esher and Walton (Dominic Raab) is absolutely right to say that where local authorities have a local plan more houses are built, and that where local authorities do not produce a local plan they are failing their residents and letting down future generations who will live in those areas. I will not take any more interventions now; I need to make some more progress.

The Government agree that it is vital for local planning authorities to have the resources they need to deliver an effective planning service. On 20 July, we laid draft affirmative regulations that, if approved by Parliament, will increase planning fees by 35% for major applications and 25% for all other applications. This is a national fee increase that will benefit all local planning authorities in England. We are also undertaking a programme, with funding, to build capacity and capability in local planning authorities. The Government do not believe that enabling authorities to vary fees and charges is the way to answer resourcing issues. It will lead to inconsistency of fees between local planning authorities and does not provide any incentive to tackle inefficiencies. It would also create significant financial costs to the taxpayer. We do not require the fee income to be formally ringfenced, as there is already a requirement through primary legislation for planning fees to be used for the function of determining

[*Rachel Maclean*]

applications. We have been very clear that local planning authorities should use the income from planning fees to fund their services. That will allow them to build their capability and capacity, and improve their performance. Therefore, the Government are not able to support Lords amendment 82.

On the environment, the Government agree that the planning system must support our efforts to meet our legal net zero commitments by 2050 and to tackle the risks of climate change. We have committed to updating the national planning policy framework to ensure it contributes to climate change mitigation and adaptation as fully as possible. What is crucial, however, is that we address climate change in a way that is effective without being unnecessarily disruptive or giving rise to excessive litigation for those seeking to apply the policies once they are made. That is why we cannot support Lords amendment 45.

Sir Michael Ellis (Northampton North) (Con): I congratulate the Minister on her stewardship of the Bill. It is clear that it will be to the further benefit of the environment and devolve power democratically in terms of local decision making. Does she agree that it is this Conservative Government that are best for levelling up, whereas the other political parties in this Chamber constitute no progress at all and will bring no progress in the unlikely event they are ever put in that position? Is not the fact of the matter that, both democratically and transparently, it is the policies she is setting out and the position of this Government that will be for the benefit of the whole country?

Rachel Maclean: I thank my right hon. and learned Friend. I think Northampton North speaks for the whole House on this issue. With that, I will give way to my right hon. Friend the Member for North Somerset (Dr Fox).

Dr Liam Fox (North Somerset) (Con): My hon. Friend says, very importantly, that we will be getting an update to the NPPF to reflect the changes made in the Bill. Can she give us an idea when we will get it? We were promised it before the summer and then we were promised it in September. When will the House and the country actually see the updated NPPF?

1.45 pm

Rachel Maclean: I recognise that there is a keen appetite to see the update. As I set out earlier, there has been a huge amount of work to analyse the very significant volume of responses. We will be bringing forward the update as soon as the Bill receives Royal Assent.

Caroline Lucas: Will the Minister give way?

Rachel Maclean: I am not going to give way at the moment, I am afraid.

The Government agree that the quality of our homes is vital, but we do not agree that further legislation is needed to achieve that. The healthy homes principles contained in Lords amendments 46, 327 and 249 cut across building safety, building standards, building

regulations, planning policy and design. They are already considered and addressed through those well-established systems.

Caroline Lucas: I am truly grateful to the Minister for giving way.

In its latest progress report, the Climate Change Committee was clear that planning policy needs what it calls “radical reform” to support net zero. Will the Minister therefore say more about her bewildering decision not to accept Lords amendment 45, which would simply ensure that all national planning policy decisions, local planning making and individual development decisions are in line with net zero? If the Government are serious about wanting net zero to be a priority, why would they not ensure that all their planning decisions support net zero, rather than undermine it?

Rachel Maclean: I have set out that, of course, the planning system puts the environment and net zero at the heart of all its work.

Wendy Morton (Aldridge-Brownhills) (Con): I am grateful to my hon. Friend for giving way. I just want to go back to the point about the Government coming forward with the NPPF. She indicated that it would appear very quickly after Royal Assent. Presumably the Bill will receive Royal Assent very quickly, so surely that piece of work must be almost ready. Why can we not see it sooner rather than later?

Rachel Maclean: My right hon. Friend is absolutely right. We very much hope we will, with the consent of the House after these debates, see the Bill receive Royal Assent. We are working at pace to bring forward the long-awaited detail that she and others are rightly pressing for.

Steve Brine (Winchester) (Con): Will the Minister give way on healthy homes?

Rachel Maclean: I will come to colleagues very shortly. I want to say a few words about healthy homes, which I think my hon. Friend may want to speak about. The Government do not agree that an additional regulatory framework to promote healthy homes, including a schedule setting out the principles and process for providing a statement, is necessary, because it is already considered and addressed through well-established systems.

Steve Brine: I understand why the Government are resisting Lords amendment 46, a cross-party amendment from Lord Crisp, Lord Young of Cookham and Lord Blunkett. I understand what the Government are saying. At the moment, a big Select Committee inquiry is under way into prevention and we are looking at healthy homes. Is the Minister satisfied that the Government are addressing the fact that poor-quality housing is a major determinant of ill health that cuts across inequalities and is directly comparable to that? Is the Minister satisfied that all the stuff in the letter yesterday from the Secretary of State to all Members is in place to address that inequality?

Rachel Maclean: I thank the Chair of the Health Committee for all the work he is doing on this issue. I will read his report with great interest. I draw the

House's attention to the work that the Government and the Department are doing to tackle the damp and mould that is in so many houses and that caused the tragic death of Awaab Ishak. It is always right that we look to see what more we can do.

Rachael Maskell (York Central) (Lab/Co-op): Will the Minister give way?

Rachel Maclean: I need to make progress.

On the important issue of building in flood risk areas, which was raised in the other place, amendment 80 is well intentioned but would have wholly impractical implications. Under the amendment, a ban on residential development in land identified as flood zone 3 would take no account of flood defences and where, in reality, it is safe to build. For example, some 60% of the London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham lies in flood zone 3, as do many parts of Westminster. Planning policy and guidance make it clear that residential development is not compatible with functional floodplain, and should not be approved.

There is strong policy and guidance in place to prevent residential development where that would be genuinely unsafe. In high-risk areas, such development is only acceptable when there are no reasonably available sites with a lower risk of flooding, when the benefits of development outweigh the risk, and when it can be demonstrated that the development can be made safe for its lifetime without increasing flood risk elsewhere and, where possible, will reduce flood risk overall.

Tom Randall (Gedling) (Con): I appreciate that the wording of Lords amendment 80 is not suitable given its likely scope, but flooding is a big issue in my constituency. It has affected a number of building sites, the Linden Grove development being just one example. Can the Minister assure me that the wide panoply of powers available to the Government, including the forthcoming planning policy framework, will create the infrastructure and apparatus necessary to ensure that a robust system will be in place to prevent flooding from affecting future housing developments?

Rachel Maclean: I can, with pleasure, give that assurance to my hon. Friend's constituents, and to those in other flood-risk areas. We have considered this matter very carefully. We have strengthened planning policy and guidance, and put capacity into local authorities to enable them to assess risks properly. We believe that the policy strikes the right balance between allowing house building where it is safe and, of course, protecting homes from flooding in the future.

We are grateful for the constructive discussions that have taken place on the important topic of ancient woodland. We are content to accept the principle of Lords amendment 81, which means that within three months of Royal Assent we will amend the Town and Country Planning (Consultation) (England) Direction 2021 to require local planning authorities to consult the Secretary of State if they want to grant planning permission for developments affecting ancient woodland. That clause will ensure that a Government commitment made during the passage of the Environment Act 2021 is enacted to a specified timeframe.

Mrs Natalie Elphicke (Dover) (Con): Ancient woodland is already highly protected. Will the Minister consider how this will interact with major infrastructure delivery in line with the commitment that she has given? I am particularly mindful of the fact that in Dover we are seeking an upgrade of the A2, which has already been planned to take account of ancient woodland. I am keen for that to progress, taking account of the existing environmental considerations.

Rachel Maclean: My hon. Friend is an excellent champion of infrastructure and housing in her constituency and, of course, throughout the country. She has made an important point, and I should be pleased to meet her and, possibly, her local representatives to talk about it in more detail.

Last month, in response to the concerns of Members of both Houses, the Government made changes to the national planning policy framework in relation to onshore wind, which were designed to make it easier and quicker for local planning authorities to consider and, where appropriate, approve onshore wind projects when there is local support. We need to allow time for those changes to take effect, so we will keep the policy under review, and will report in due course on the number of new onshore wind projects progressing from planning application through to consent. We also intend to update planning practice guidance to support the changes further, and to publish our response to the local partnerships consultation for onshore wind in England. The response will set out how, beyond the planning system, the Government intend to improve the types of community benefits that are on offer for communities who choose to host onshore wind projects, including local energy bill discounts.

Sir Alok Sharma (Reading West) (Con): Conservative colleagues and I, along with the Minister's Department, worked together to end the de facto banning of onshore wind, and I am grateful for that. However, as the Minister has acknowledged, we need to see whether this policy is working, and a key determinant of that will be whether onshore wind really has meaningful community benefits. The consultation closed three and a half months ago; will the Minister tell us when we will see its conclusions? I am not suggesting that she should pre-empt those now, but could she also specify some of the likely monetary benefits that might flow to communities, so that we could have an indication that the Government are moving in the right direction?

Rachel Maclean: I thank my right hon. Friend for what he has said, and for all the vital work that he did in his previous role in taking forward the country's reaction to climate change. This is a key plank of our policy. Our commitment to renewables is beyond question, and we have done more to drive forward that agenda with the help of my right hon. Friend and others. I have been discussing some of the questions he has raised today with my colleagues in the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero, because I think people want to see what this means in practice for their communities. We have some exciting work planned, and I can assure him that, as I have said in response to earlier interventions, we will provide the response to the NPPF—which covers this and other matters—as soon as we can.

[*Rachel Maclean*]

The Government remain committed to repealing the antiquated Vagrancy Act 1824 as soon as replacement legislation can be introduced, and once that has happened there will be no need to publish a report. Lords amendment 240 would require a Minister to publish, within 90 days of Royal Assent, an assessment of the impact of the enforcement sections of the Vagrancy Act on levelling up and regeneration. Given our commitment to the repeal and replacement of the Act, and because identifying and gathering the information would take significant time, we propose that a year should be provided rather than 90 days.

To ensure that the leaseholder protections on remediation work as originally intended in the Building Safety Act 2022, we have tabled an amendment to remedy a gap in the Act so that a qualifying lease retains its protection if extended, varied, or replaced by an entirely new lease. We do not, however, agree that Lords amendment 242, which would secure parity between non-qualifying and qualifying leaseholders, and exclude shares in a property of 50% or less from being counted as “owned” for the purposes of calculating whether a lease qualifies for the protections, should be accepted. There are a number of defects in the amendment; in particular, it would remove the protections once remediation work was complete, which a number of stakeholders have described to us as a potentially worrying change.

The Government made amendments to the Bill—clauses 239 and 240—which will allow us to transfer the building safety regulator out of the Health and Safety Executive in the future. That will ensure that we are ready, and have the flexibility in place, to respond to the Grenfell Tower inquiry report when it is published. When the regulator is moved, the essential committees established under sections 9 to 11 of the Building Safety Act will need to be transferred. We are therefore unable to accept an amendment that prevents us from removing the references to the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 in relation to the committees. I should, however, make it clear that the Government have no intention of amending the make-up or role of those committees.

The Government take the condition of school and hospital buildings very seriously, which is why we already have extensive, well-established and transparent data collection arrangements for schools and hospitals. In addition to annual funding and central rebuilding programmes, we provide targeted support for schools and hospitals with specific problems such as reinforced autoclaved aerated concrete. The creation of a new register, collecting new data and following up relatively minor issues easily managed locally, will take limited resources and focus away from the most serious issues which require additional support to keep our schools and hospitals safe, undermining overall safety. That would carry unavoidable significant financial implications for both the NHS and the school system. The Government have listened to the arguments about local authorities opening their own childcare provision. While we did not feel that there was a legislative gap, we are willing to concede that point in full, and an amendment will be added to the Bill.

You will be delighted to know, Madam Deputy Speaker, that I am nearing the end of my remarks, but I have no doubt that you will hear from the Opposition Front

Bench a torrent of complaints and criticisms of the Government’s entire policy. Before we hear from them, however, let me make a few things clear. Despite having listened to numerous speeches from Opposition Front Benchers, I have no idea what their plans are for this vital policy area—apart from the rare instances in which they have simply repeated, and passed off as their own ideas, what the Government are already doing. They claim that they would magically make all these things happen without any additional public spending. Oh, I am sorry; perhaps I have missed their saying where they will spend the VAT charge on private schools, for possibly the ninth or 10th time. We can all see that for the fantasy it is.

2 pm

Let us look at the Opposition’s record. Just last month, the Leader of the Opposition claimed that Labour was the party of the builders, not the blockers, yet in the next breath he ordered his Labour Lords to stick to defective EU laws, blocking 100,000 homes and voting down Government plans to unblock nutrient neutrality and protect the environment, meaning that desperately needed affordable homes, care homes and brownfield regeneration projects in town centres still languish unbuilt—[*Interruption.*] From a sedentary position, the shadow Levelling Up Secretary, the right hon. Member for Ashton-under-Lyne (Angela Rayner), asks why we did not accept their amendments. She never put forward any proposals. She did not put forward any amendments. Labour Members voted ours down without a single plan of their own. No surprises there.

Rachael Maskell: Will the Minister give way?

Rachel Maclean: I am not giving way.

The Leader of the Opposition says that his is now the party of the yimbys. We all want housing for our own children and grandchildren—I am a mother of four; my second grandchild, Henry, was born just last night—so this Government stand squarely behind the aspiration of families across the country to buy a home of their own and get on the housing ladder. But what have we seen from Labour? At least 19 members of the shadow Cabinet have conspired to block houses being built in their own constituencies, including the right hon. Member for Ashton-under-Lyne and the Leader of the Opposition himself, who just two years ago voted to protect the right of communities to object to individual planning applications. That is what he voted for in this place, yet he now says that local communities will be completely ignored. Presumably what he means is that what is okay for him is not okay for anyone else. He wants to rip up the protections for precious green spaces, not just on the green belt but on the brownfield sites. Of course these are a vital aspect of our brownfield-first planning policies, but they often also form a vital green lung in heavily urbanised areas—[*Interruption.*] There is an awful lot of chuntering from Labour Front Benchers. They do not like what I am saying, but I will not be shouted down in standing up for house building across the country.

I would like to refer to a quote:

“Green space is vital in our communities to give children a safe place to play and to enhance community well-being.”

Not my words but the words of the right hon. Member for Ashton-under-Lyne, who went on to say:

“I wanted residents to know they have my support in their bid to stop contractors entering the site to start building.”

I hope that the Leader of the Opposition has explained his position clearly to the residents of Mid Bedfordshire and Tamworth, who I am sure will be interested to know exactly which sites on their green belt, urban brownfield and rural farmland the Labour party would like to determine, at the stroke of a north London lawyer’s pen, should be built over with zero regard to local communities.

Karin Smyth (Bristol South) (Lab): Will the Minister give way?

Rachel Maclean: I will not give way.

There is no credibility at all on the Labour Front Bench. You do not have to take my word for it; just look at housing delivery in London and in Wales, where Labour has been in government, with all the powers, funding and levers, for many years. It has an atrocious record on house building, housing delivery and affordable house building. It is hardly surprising, when house building fell to the lowest level since the 1920s the last time Labour was in government. That, along with everything else, is something that the Conservatives had to sort out when we took office.

We are on track to deliver our manifesto pledge to build 1 million homes during this Parliament, with housing delivery at near-record 30-year highs. We are not complacent, and we need to deliver more of the right homes in the right places. That is why the Prime Minister and the Housing Secretary set out our long-term plan for housing in July—a plan based on the principles of building beautiful, with homes built alongside GP surgeries, schools and transport links, where communities are listened to and where we enhance the natural environment and protect our green spaces. It is a plan where we will build beautiful neighbourhoods modelled on the streets of Maida Vale, the crescents of Bath or the rural and suburban vernacular of Poundbury, not on soulless dormitory towns.

Now I shall turn to the Liberal Democrats. Even by their own standards, we have seen the most extraordinary fiasco unfolding within their party. I have to hand it to them: their balancing act is pretty impressive. They are taking the high-rise tightrope walk art of holding two entirely different positions at the same time to newly dizzying heights. Historically, the Lib Dems have been the BANANA party—build absolutely nothing anywhere near anyone—but amid incredible scenes, their youth wing has thrown out the yellow bendy fruit and forced on the party a top-down Whitehall-driven target of 380,000 houses a year.

Daisy Cooper: Will the Minister give way?

Rachel Maclean: No, I will not give way. The hon. Lady can speak later.

This policy has been described by the Lib Dems’ own former leader—

Madam Deputy Speaker (Dame Rosie Winterton): Order. Just a little reminder that we are on Lords amendments. I am sure the Minister will be referring her remarks back to the relevant ones.

Rachel Maclean: Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. We did discuss the matter of housing targets in the Lords debate.

The Lib Dems’ policy to have 380,000 houses a year—that is certainly this week’s policy—has been described by their own former leader as Thatcherite. So anyone contemplating voting Liberal Democrat needs to know what this means. I am afraid that they can no longer sustain a position of objecting to every single house being built in their area, or avoid making local plans to give communities a proper say over housing and the green belt. As we have seen with so many Liberal Democrat local authorities, they have kicked the can down the road and failed their residents.

I shall finish by expressing my gratitude to all my colleagues, both here and in the other place, for their continued and dedicated engagement with this complicated and complex Bill during its passage. We have listened carefully to the views of Members on both sides of the House, stakeholders and members of the public. The amendments we have made to the Bill as it has progressed to the Lords have further enhanced it and I commend it to the House.

Madam Deputy Speaker (Dame Rosie Winterton): I call shadow Minister.

Matthew Pennycook (Greenwich and Woolwich) (Lab): Well, what can one say about that last 20 minutes, apart from that it must have felt far more persuasive when the Minister practised it in the mirror this morning, but I do congratulate her on the birth of her grandson.

I will start by thanking their lordships for the extensive and forensic scrutiny to which they have subjected this complex and demanding piece of legislation. I put on record the appreciation felt on these Benches for the tireless work of our noble Friends, Baroness Hayman of Ullock and Lady Taylor of Stevenage, ably assisted as ever by Ben Wood and the whole Labour Lords team.

This Bill has been with us for some time now. First published in May 2022, it has progressed slowly against the backdrop of significant political and economic turbulence, the responsibility for which lies squarely with the Conservatives. It has survived an unprecedented degree of ministerial churn: three Prime Ministers; four Secretaries of State, albeit one a retread; four Housing and Planning Ministers; and four Levelling Up Ministers. With so many minds on the Government Benches having grappled thoughtfully with the implications of each of the Bill’s many provisions, one might have hoped that it would have been significantly improved and that its worst features would have been substantially mitigated, if not removed altogether. Sadly, despite the addition of scores of new clauses and a large number of new schedules to the extensive number it already contained, the Bill remains not only eclectic but deeply muddled. It is a rag-tag mix of measures—some sensible, but many more ill-considered or downright damaging—that attempt but fail to render coherent a Tory levelling up, devolution and planning agenda that is anything but.

In the eight months that the Bill was considered in the other place, the Government were forced to give way on a variety of fronts. I am glad that, in a range of areas, the arguments that my hon. Friend the Member for Nottingham North (Alex Norris) and I made in Committee last year have been partially accepted.

[Matthew Pennycook]

However, although the Government's concessions have rendered the Bill slightly more palatable, they have not resolved the fact that it still contains a range of measures, from the new infrastructure levy to community land auction arrangements, that are riven with flaws. We regret the fact that Ministers did not reconsider their inclusion entirely. It will now fall to a future Labour Government to halt, review or rescind each of them.

We do not have an opportunity today to attempt, again, to address many of the more problematic parts of the Bill but, as a result of the prodigious efforts of noble Lords in the other place, we have a chance to make a number of important changes that would modestly improve the Bill and, in so doing, enhance outcomes for local communities across the country. It is with that objective in mind that I turn to a selection of the unusually large number of amendments that the other place has sent to us for consideration.

Lords amendments 1 and 10 relate to the levelling-up mission set out in part 1 of the Bill and the distinct, but related, third round of the levelling-up fund. They seek respectively to ensure that the missions and the fund application process are properly integrated and that round 3 of the fund takes place not only in a timely manner but on the basis of a reformed application process. We support both.

The Opposition's views on the Government's levelling-up missions are well known, but, if we are to give statutory force to a statement setting such missions for a period of no less than five years, it is right not only that it comes into effect soon after the Bill receives Royal Assent but that it is accompanied by a statement detailing the application process for round 3 of the levelling-up fund, including transparent criteria so that the two can be fully aligned.

Similarly, our criticisms of the levelling-up funding process are a matter of public record, but, if the fund is to be the primary means of delivering priority local infrastructure projects for the foreseeable future, it is right that steps are taken prior to the opening of round 3 to simplify the application process and to reduce the onerous requirements and resources it presently involves.

We recognise that, by tabling an amendment in lieu of Lords amendment 10, the Government have sought to enshrine in the Bill an assurance in respect of round 3 of the levelling-up fund. However, not only is the content of the proposed statement left completely undefined, but the proposed amendment in lieu fails to achieve one of the central objectives sought by their noble Lords, namely that such a statement be published within the same timescale as a statement on the levelling-up missions so that the two processes, which are clearly connected, fully complement each other. For those reasons, we cannot support the Government amendment in lieu and we will support Lords amendment 10, along with Lords amendment 1.

The question of whether the Government's proposed levelling-up missions are comprehensive enough to reduce inequalities between and within regions has arisen since the White Paper was first published in February 2022. Lords amendments 2 and 4 seek to augment the 12 missions set out in that document by requiring the addition of separate missions relating to child poverty and health disparities. We welcome the Government's acceptance

that addressing the impact of economic and social disparities warrants a greater focus in respect of levelling-up missions and that they have tabled amendments in lieu of Lords amendments 2 and 4 to that end. However, in our view, the requirement that Ministers "must have regard" to these disparities in the preparation and review of all the missions falls some way short of the implications that establishing dedicated new missions on child poverty and health disparities would have for life chances across the country. For that reason, we cannot support the Government amendment in lieu and will support Lords amendments 2 and 4.

We also support Lords amendment 22. We remain firmly of the view that there are circumstances in which virtual or hybrid meetings are necessary or useful, and that their use could help to reduce barriers to public engagement, particularly in relation to the planning process. As we argued in Committee last year, a number of organisations, including the Planning Inspectorate, already enjoy the freedom to offer such meetings as they deem necessary, and there is widespread support for putting local authority remote meeting arrangements on a permanent footing, including from the Local Government Association, Lawyers in Local Government and the Association of Democratic Services Officers. The Government have offered no compelling reason why this amendment should not be incorporated into the Bill, and we therefore urge the House to support it.

As the Minister will know, the establishment of a new tier of national planning policy in the form of national development management policies, and their precise relationship and standing in respect of local development plans, has been a point of contention throughout the Bill's passage. The Opposition feel strongly that it cannot be right that national policies that will have a far greater impact on local communities than any existing national policy statement and that have significant implications for the status and remit of local planning can be developed without an obligatory and defined public consultation and parliamentary approval process. Lords amendment 44 stipulates such a process, including minimum public consultation requirements and a mechanism for facilitating parliamentary scrutiny based on that which currently applies to designating a national policy statement.

2.15 pm

In tabling amendments in lieu of Lords amendment 44, the Government have made it clear that consultation in respect of the designation and review of an NDMP must take place in all but a limited set of circumstances. We welcome that subtle shift in the Government's position. However, if the Government amendment in lieu were accepted, the form of consultation would remain, as in the original drafting of the Bill, whatever the Secretary of State "thinks appropriate". In short, the Government's amendment in lieu will replace a precise set of requirements, namely those set out in clauses 38ZB and 38ZC, with an ambiguous and loosely worded clause that will allow Ministers to determine the nature of the consultation to take place and give them the freedom not to consult in instances where they feel it is necessary, or expedient, to act urgently, however they choose to interpret that phrase. In our view, that is problematic. As such, while we welcome the willingness of Ministers to move on this issue, we do not feel they have gone anywhere near far enough. For that reason, we will support Lords amendment 44.

The need to do more to ensure that there is genuine coherence between the planning system and our country's climate commitments has been a recurring theme throughout consideration of the Bill. It is abundantly clear from the evidence, including from recent detailed research undertaken by the Climate Change Committee, that the existing plethora of duties, requirements and powers that set out how the planning system should help to achieve net zero are not producing the required results. Not only are they insufficiently robust to produce consistency when it comes to the decisions taken by local planning authorities and the Planning Inspectorate, but the system regularly throws up decisions that are incompatible with the need to make rapid progress towards net zero emissions by mid-century or to deliver resilient and climate-proofed places.

The Government previously made vague commitments to revise the national planning policy framework to include a number of changes designed to respond to the climate crisis, but when they had the opportunity to act in the new version of the NPPF published last month, they failed to include any references to our net zero targets. As for the more far-reaching review of national policy that is promised, this will not take place until next year, if at all. It is simply not good enough.

We urgently need clear and unambiguous national policy guidance in relation to climate change, a purposeful statutory framework to align every aspect of the planning system with net zero, and an overarching duty on the Secretary of State, local planning authorities and those involved in neighbourhood plan making to achieve climate change mitigation and adaptation when preparing plans and policies or exercising their functions in planning decision making. The latter is what Lords amendment 45 would achieve, and we support it.

Lords amendment 239 quite reasonably proposes that, in addition to managing and shaping the overall childcare market in their area, local authorities should be allowed to deliver their own childcare provision, if they wish to do so. The amendment would expand on existing powers in the Childcare Act 2006 that allow local authorities to establish their own provision in circumstances where they identify a childcare need that cannot be met by any other means, or where they deem it more appropriate to provide that provision themselves.

The Government resisted this amendment in the other place on the basis that there was no appetite among local authorities to deliver childcare directly, that it would not make a material difference to childcare availability across the country and that it might risk an actual or perceived conflict of interest for local authorities as both market shapers and direct providers. Those arguments were utterly unconvincing. The huge gaps that exist in the affordability and availability of childcare across the country are denying children opportunities, limiting parental choice and holding back our local economies. Local authorities have a statutory responsibility to ensure that there are sufficient childcare places available to families within their local community. We believe that if they deem it necessary to directly deliver their own provision to meet that responsibility, they should have the freedom to do so.

We are therefore pleased that the Government have accepted our argument that local authorities should not simply be a childcare provider of last resort but should be allowed to deliver childcare directly if they believe it

can help meet local need. We welcome the full concession made via an amendment in lieu of Lords amendment 239.

As the Minister will know, we took strong exception to the provisions in the Bill, as first published, that would have had the effect of disregarding the full repeal of the Vagrancy Act 1824 that the House approved via amendments to the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2022. Having resisted our urgings in Committee to voluntarily withdraw the relevant placeholder clause, the Government were forced to do so in this place on Report.

However, nearly a year on from that concession, and 20 months after the then Policing Minister, the right hon. Member for North West Hampshire (Kit Malthouse), made a commitment from the Dispatch Box that it would be repealed in full within a maximum of 18 months, it remains the case that the 1824 Act—an embarrassing remnant of Georgian England's approach to the poor and destitute—remains on the statute book. We welcome the concession the Government have made in essentially accepting, albeit with a slight variation in respect of timing, Lords amendment 240. In so doing, the Government will at least be required to produce a statement detailing the impact of enforcing the most pernicious sections of the Vagrancy Act that criminalise sleeping rough and begging. But the Government really do now need to honour their word on this matter, bring forward the necessary replacement legislation and repeal the Vagrancy Act in full, as the House has clearly insisted that they do.

Lords amendment 241 relates to public buildings that are in a state of disrepair—an issue that has gained prominence in light of the revelations in recent months about the risks posed by RAAC. The amendment would simply require the Government to keep a register of schools and hospitals that are in serious disrepair. The Government maintain that extensive data on the condition of both schools and hospitals is already publicly available and that a requirement to maintain such a register, and update it regularly, would place an unnecessary burden on schools and NHS trusts in a way that would detract from their ability to address the most serious building safety issues. We note and appreciate those concerns. However, there is clearly a need for greater transparency and more accessible reporting on public buildings that are in a state of disrepair.

I stand to be corrected, but it is my understanding that there is no statutory requirement to release all the data in question. To the extent that data has made its way into the public sphere, it has emerged in an ad hoc and unplanned manner, and it is often presented in formats that are virtually inaccessible. Given the strong case for measures to increase transparency and improve reporting in relation to this important issue, it is disappointing that the Government have not felt it necessary to provide any concessions. We urge them to give further thought to whether some kind of compromise might be reached.

Lords amendment 242 seeks to remedy a glaring defect within the Building Safety Act 2022: that qualifying leaseholders who have been required to extend or vary their lease subsequent to the Act's coming into force in June last year have found themselves ineligible for the leaseholder protections it provides, because a lease extension is technically a new lease, not an extension of the same lease. The fact that this defect was allowed to arise is a source of serious concern, particularly given that the

Leasehold Reform (Ground Rent) Act 2022, passed only a few months before the Building Safety Act, included provisions designed to ensure that the same problem could not arise under it. This is a salutary warning of the problems that arise when a Government choose to legislate in haste on an issue and do not provide the House with adequate time to scrutinise a Bill.

The Government, to their credit, have accepted that this problem needs to be remedied. The amendment in lieu that they have tabled to Lords amendment 242 achieves that end, and does so with retrospective effect. Although many more issues relating to the building safety crisis require the Government to think again—not least the plight of non-qualifying leaseholders the Government chose to exclude from protections under the Building Safety Act—we welcome the concession that has been made, albeit with one proviso: Ministers must take steps to ensure that leaseholders who paid service charges over the past 15 months in the belief that they were not eligible for the leaseholder protections under the Act, because of the Government's mistake, are reimbursed. Those individuals should not suffer financially as a result of a drafting error that should not have been allowed to occur in the first place. If the Minister—I hope she is listening to this point—can provide us with some reassurance on that point, we will happily accept the Government's amendment in lieu.

The issue of onshore wind has arisen at several points during consideration of the Bill. In response to demands from a sizeable group of Conservative Back Benchers, the Government committed on Report in this House to make changes to the NPPF to facilitate more onshore wind deployment, subject to local approval. Although it was made clear that the precise method by which community consent would be determined would emerge from consultation, a clear deadline of April this year was given for changes to be made. That deadline came and went without the NPPF being amended. As a result, a group of disgruntled Conservative Members threatened to amend the Energy Bill to ensure that the harmful effective moratorium imposed on onshore wind since 2015 was finally ended. To stave off a rebellion, the Government agreed to update footnote 54 of the NPPF. However, the revised wording of that footnote still leaves onshore wind projects subject to a uniquely restrictive consenting regime. It therefore remains easier to build an incinerator or a landfill site than an onshore wind farm in England. As RenewableUK stated in responding to the changes:

“We will still face a planning system stacked against onshore wind that treats it differently to every other energy source or infrastructure project... There has been a slight softening at the edges but nothing more.”

Lords amendment 244 seeks to remedy this anomaly once and for all and to ensure that onshore wind projects are treated in the same way as any other form of infrastructure. It would reinstate onshore wind projects of more than 50 MW as nationally significant infrastructure projects, just like all other onshore forms of electricity generation; remove the obligation for pre-application consultation that currently exists only for onshore wind projects of two or more turbines; and require associated planning guidance to be brought back in line with that for other forms of generation. We strongly support it and urge the House to finally resolve this matter by doing the same.

Lords amendment 273 concerns mayoral control of police and crime commissioner functions. The Government have sought to ensure that metro Mayors are given the power to unilaterally take on those functions themselves without the consent of the constituent authorities of the relevant combined authority, and to do so from the point at which this Bill is given Royal Assent.

Mrs Paulette Hamilton (Birmingham, Erdington) (Lab): Does my hon. Friend agree that people deserve to have their voices heard and to decide for themselves who they want to represent them as their police and crime commissioner?

Matthew Pennycook: My hon. Friend is right. As I was about to say, we believe that this change is clearly driven by political expediency and is intended to facilitate the transfer of the PCC functions in the west midlands to its Mayor prior to the elections that will take place in May 2024. This is the latest attempt to achieve that end—a provision enabling the Mayor to expand the boundary of the West Midlands Combined Authority without the consent of the constituent authorities, having been defeated in the other place on 13 July. Lords amendment 273 does not engage with the substantive issue of whether a transfer on this basis is appropriate. All it seeks to do is to delay the point at which the measures contained in clause 59 come into force, so that this not insignificant change can be enacted in a considered manner after the next set of elections take place. The amendment has our support.

Finally, Lords amendment 329, which was tabled by Lord Best, would require local plans to identify the scale and nature of local housing need and to make provision for sufficient social rented housing so that homelessness and the use of temporary accommodation can be ended. The importance of this matter cannot be overstated. As a result of the reduced supply of genuinely affordable homes over the past 13 years, more than 1.2 million households languish on local authority waiting lists; millions of families are trapped in overcrowded or unsuitable properties; and, to our shame as a nation, the number of households in temporary accommodation, many of whom contain young children, surpassed 100,000 for the first time this year. National planning policy is clear that local plans should, as a minimum, provide for objectively assessed needs for housing, but we know that the true extent of local housing need, and in particular the need for social rented housing, is not often reflected in them.

We strongly support the principle that underpins Lords amendment 329: that local planning authorities should be required, rather than encouraged, to properly identify local housing need and plan to meet it. We recognise that the Government have made an important concession with their proposed amendment in lieu of Lords amendment 329, which would ensure that local plans must take account of an assessment of local housing need, including affordable housing need. However, the Government amendment in lieu falls short, in failing to require local planning authorities to plan to accommodate that identified need. For that reason, we are minded to support Lords amendment 329 today, with a view to encouraging the Government to consider whether they can move a little further on this matter.

Rachael Maskell: Having served on the Bill Committee for six months, I have to say to the Minister that I found it really disrespectful that she would not take my intervention; I am here to scrutinise the legislation. I say to my hon. Friend—the future Housing Minister—that I welcome our adoption of these measures to ensure that we get the right tenure, not least because of the housing crisis that I see in my constituency. Let me push him further by asking whether we will accept the principles of Lords amendment 46 on healthy homes and the built environment, because we know that housing is about not just bricks and mortar, but the environments in which people live.

Matthew Pennycook: I thank my hon. Friend for her intervention, and I thank her again, as I did at the time, for the many months of work that she did on the Bill Committee. She is right to raise the point about healthy homes; we fully support the principles of that campaign. We disagree with the Government's suggestion that the issue is already well addressed, and I gently encourage the Minister to continue the conversations that I believe the Government are having with Lord Crisp and the other proposers of that amendment in the other place.

To conclude, while we welcome a small number of the concessions that the Government have felt able to make to the Bill, we believe that most do not go far enough. This unwieldy and confused piece of legislation is flawed on many levels. We have an opportunity today to make modest but important improvements to it. On that basis, we urge the House to support the many reasonable amendments that the other place has sent to us.

Madam Deputy Speaker (Dame Rosie Winterton): I call the Father of the House.

2.30 pm

Sir Peter Bottomley (Worthing West) (Con): I congratulate the Minister on the way she presented the Government's approach to these over 100 amendments—on heaven knows how many pages, if one tries to read through them. I also congratulate the Opposition spokesperson, the hon. Member for Greenwich and Woolwich (Matthew Pennycook), on marshalling the points and presenting them in a way that the House can understand. In particular, I join him in saying to the Government that Lord Crisp's proposals have much that should be incorporated.

Amendment 327, which would be inserted before schedule 7, talks about houses designed

“to provide year-round thermal comfort for inhabitants”;

to have reduced opportunities for the “risk of crime”; to be free, as far as possible,

“from adverse and intrusive noise and light pollution”;

and to ensure that

“living areas and bedrooms...have access to natural light”.

The amendment addresses a whole series of issues that did not get as much attention as they should have done. When developers are able to convert office blocks into homes, some of those homes are, frankly, substandard.

Caroline Lucas (Brighton, Pavilion) (Green): I very much agree with the point that the Father of the House has just made. Does he agree that healthy homes should incorporate the idea of green space and more equitable

access to good-quality green space within reach of those homes, as set out in the Lords amendment? We know about the improvements to physical and mental health that can come as a result of access to green space.

Sir Peter Bottomley: The hon. Lady reminds me that I meant to say that when Dr Christopher Addison became the first Minister for Health in 1919, the first action he took was to help build social housing on a scale that would allow people's health to be improved by living in far better environments, inside and outside their homes.

Yesterday, in levelling-up questions, the Secretary of State very kindly spoke clearly about the approach to the development at Lansdowne Nursery, on the A259 in my constituency, and the threat to Chatsmore Farm, in what is known locally as the Goring gap.

It is important that the words that the Secretary of State spoke yesterday should be passed on to planning inspectors, including the one in Arundel today, who is considering the appeal against the properly justified refusal of planning permission to put homes on the Lansdowne Nursery site.

I invite Ministers from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities to come to my constituency—and to the constituents of my hon. Friend the Member for Arundel and South Downs (Andrew Griffith) and my right hon. Friend the Member for Bognor Regis and Littlehampton (Nick Gibb)—to see how every bit of grass is under threat from opportunist developers.

Those developers have rightly been turned down by local authorities—boroughs and districts. They should be supported by planning inspectors, not at risk of what I would call “a rogue decision” by someone from Bristol.

Turning to amendment 22, after clause 70, the Government are wrong to ban parish councils from meeting remotely if they want to. Some parish councils cover a large area and many elderly people kindly serve on them. If they want to have a valid meeting, why can they not tune in, if they are ill, remote or for some other reason? It seems to me to be totally unnecessary for central Government to say to local councils, especially parish councils, “You cannot do that.” I hope that the Government will think again, if not in this Bill then in another one. Let people have autonomy and a degree of sovereignty. If their powers are limited, then how they use them should be up to them, in my view.

In amendments 242 and 243, Lord Young of Cookham has helped qualifying and non-qualifying residential leaseholders. I accept that the Government proposals are limited to residential leaseholders and do not cover commercial leaseholders.

What the House should not accept, and where the Government should think again, is why there has to be a distinction between qualifying and non-qualifying leaseholders. Many non-qualifying leaseholders have homes on which they cannot get a mortgage or sell, and on which they cannot avoid paying high annual costs, as well as remediation costs.

I repeat the question put by the Opposition spokesperson, the hon. Member for Greenwich and Woolwich, about what happens to people who have paid but who will now not qualify. Will the Minister give clear advice when she winds up, or in a later statement, on what

[Sir Peter Bottomley]

happens to leaseholders facing claims for payment that they think they should not have to pay? Can people get out of this dilemma, which is caused by too many people in Government not understanding the legal status of residential leaseholders?

I do not believe that Dame Judith Hackitt understood it when she put forward her fire safety proposals, and I do not think the Government understood in the early days. Now that they do understand, will they please remove the distinction? The idea that if people live in homes below 11 metres they are not facing an un-mortgageable and unsellable home is wrong. Many people who have leasehold homes under that level are frankly in a dilemma that Government ought to be able to resolve.

I could go on for longer, but many other Members wish to speak. I congratulate those who have helped to improve the Bill. There are many elements that I support—the Government can take that for granted—but on issues where they are allowing injustice or ineffective approaches to continue, let us change that.

Let us be on the side of the 5 million to 6 million residential leaseholders whom we have ignored for too long, whose situation has been understood poorly. Now that it is understood better, we ought to allow them to have better, healthier, happier and more financially secure lives.

Madam Deputy Speaker (Dame Rosie Winterton): I call the SNP spokesperson.

Ms Anum Qaisar (Airdrie and Shotts) (SNP): This is my first scrutiny of Lords amendments as the SNP's levelling-up spokesperson, so I would like to start by thanking my hon. Friends the Members for North Ayrshire and Arran (Patricia Gibson) and for Glasgow South West (Chris Stephens) for their work scrutinising the Bill so far.

The hon. Member for Somerton and Frome (Sarah Dyke) is making her maiden speech today—I made mine just two years ago. With your indulgence, Madam Deputy Speaker, if I were to give her any advice, it would be this: watch out for the grey hairs—you will get lots of them. Work in a collegiate manner—the public think that we in this place all hate each other, but we really do not. And wear trainers where possible.

I felt a tad left out earlier, because when the Minister went on her bizarre monologue about Labour and the Liberal Democrats, she left out the SNP. Does that reflect the fact that she does not think Scotland matters? That remains to be seen. The intention behind the Bill—to help areas across the four nations—is admirable. However, as per usual with this Tory Government, their aim is commendable but their journey towards that aim is terrible. The Bill is muddled, confused and not fit for purpose.

The Tory track record on levelling up is weak at best and politically motivated cronyism at worst. On the SNP Benches, we have been clear from the start that the Bill is simply not good enough. But, because of the approach that the Government have adopted, it is now doomed to fail, arguably like most of their policies. It pushes funding, which is so desperately needed in struggling

areas across the four nations, to be allocated to boost support in politically beneficial regions.

Take Scotland, for example. The second round of levelling-up funding in January 2023 saw only £177 million distributed to a nation that was promised very much more. In Scotland we are continually told that we are in a Union of equals, yet that figure is only 8.4% of the possible £2.1 billion, meaning many local authorities, including North Lanarkshire in my Airdrie and Shotts constituency, have been left behind and forgotten by this Government. The Conservative Government cannot be trusted to level up Scotland. They have neither the will nor the desire to do so.

John Redwood *rose*—

Ms Qaisar: I wish to make some progress, but I shall give way in a bit.

It will shock no one that the UK Government have sought to reduce the measures that are designed to increase scrutiny of levelling up. Lords amendment 1 would require the Government to produce a statement on their initial plans for levelling up within 30 days of the Bill becoming law. If levelling up is such a fundamental aim, then I do not quite understand why the Government are unable to produce such a statement to the House. The Minister's opposition to Lords amendment 1 is, to my eyes, another example of this Government trying to evade scrutiny.

It should be noted that the Bill aims to tackle issues of the UK Government's own creation. They say that they want to level up, but it is their policies that have resulted in years of austerity that have run infrastructure and services into the ground. There is little doubt that the situation has been made worse by the gross mismanagement of the economy by successive Conservative Governments since 2010.

I am also not surprised that the Government have sought to change Lords amendment 2, which would have ensured that reducing child poverty was a levelling-up mission. Instead of seeing this as an opportunity to expand the impact of levelling up, the Minister seeks to drop this amendment. The Lords amendment was narrow in scope, seeking only to reduce the proportion of children living in poverty rather than seeing its complete eradication. Tackling child poverty is desperately needed. The Government's action in this area stands in stark contrast to the efforts of the Scottish Government, for whom tackling child poverty and inequality more generally remains their main priority, with £4 billion being spent on targeted social security support. The Tory Government could look to copy the lead of the Scottish Government and prioritise tackling child poverty through levelling up, but they have made a conscious decision not to do so.

Politics is all about choices. The public should be aware that the Government had an opportunity, through Lords amendment 2, to include a mission to reduce the proportion of children in poverty as part of their levelling-up agenda, but they chose not to do so. But am I surprised that the party of the two-child cap has chosen to oppose measures to reduce child poverty? No. Yet this is an issue within the Westminster establishment, and the Conservatives are not alone in their beliefs on this. The Tory-lite Labour party are also supporters of the two-child cap.

The provisions in Lords amendments 3 and 4 would tackle geographical disparities in housing, education, private sector investment, public spending and health. All are aims that should be at the core of an effective levelling-up strategy. The UK Government should follow the Scottish Government's approach of attempting to tackle geographical disparities and look to emulate their investment of more than £831 million in affordable and energy-efficient housing. The amendment in lieu put forward by the Government is a cop-out and barely pays lip service to countering geographical disparity and inequality.

Lords amendment 10 seeks to improve accountability and make it easier for councils to apply for funding. Additionally, it would put measures in place to prevent the Government from making politically motivated levelling-up decisions. It seeks to put in law that the Secretary of State sets out the application process and criteria for round 3 of levelling up. I do not understand why the Government are opposing that. The amendment seeks to set out measures in greater clarity to ensure that local authorities are in with a chance.

Over the last two rounds of levelling up, my constituency of Airdrie and Shotts has been unsuccessful, so ensuring that there is a requirement on the Department to set out the process and criteria would help my local authority—it is a Labour-run authority, but it would help them none the less—and, ultimately, my constituents in Airdrie and Shotts. If I were a cynic—I am not saying that I am—I would say that the UK Government have treated public funds for levelling up as an election tool, prioritising taxpayers' money for their own constituencies—a tactic that the Prime Minister was not even trying to hide when he was Chancellor, publicly bragging about taking money from deprived areas and handing it to better-off areas in England. That was, of course, during the Tory leadership election, so perhaps he was hoping that no one was listening.

The system and mechanisms for allocating funding are broken and Lords amendment 10 seeks to fix that. Wales and Scotland are getting less levelling-up funding per person than England. Once again, we are seeing the Tories spending money that should be for Scotland on improving their own areas. We know what the Tories think of spending in Scotland. Those of us on the SNP Benches remember Boris Johnson, former Prime Minister and champion of levelling up, saying that a pound spent in Croydon

“is of far more value to the country than a pound spent in Strathclyde.”

Once again, the Government's proposed changes to the amendment show the contempt that they have for scrutiny and allow them to continue their political cronyism when it comes to levelling-up funding.

2.45 pm

Despite promising to put power back in the hands of local people, the amendments show that the Bill in its entirety is nothing but a thinly veiled attempt by Westminster to roll back on the devolution settlement. The Bill adopts a top-down approach that cuts out the democratically elected Scottish Parliament and its Ministers, in favour of decisions made in Whitehall. In the last Budget, the Chancellor announced several direct funding programmes in Scotland through the Government's

levelling-up fund—projects that totalled £172 million in spending. Those projects violated the devolution settlement, spending in areas that are explicitly devolved and undermining money that should have come to Scotland in the form of Barnett consequentials. It is not enough for the UK Government to seek support from the Scottish Government in the implementation of projects selected by Whitehall; the Scottish Government must be consulted at all stages, as was the case with EU funding. If the UK Government are serious about levelling up, they must respect devolution.

Dr Fox *rose*—

Ms Qaisar: No, I will not take an intervention. If the right hon. Gentleman wants to speak, I am sure that he can put in a card.

It is not surprising, but incredibly concerning, that the Tories are attempting to water down issues that would quite literally improve the quality of people's lives. The Lords amendments could strengthen the Bill, but, at the end of the day, the Levelling-up and Regeneration Bill was underwhelming in its inception: it will not level up the areas that need it the most; it will not work towards eradicating child poverty; and it will not increase the Government's accountability. However, it will be another unsurprising Tory policy that hands more power to this untrustworthy Government and fails to deliver an ounce of what they promised. The reality for Scotland is that it is only through having the full powers of independence that we will truly unlock our ability to decide what is best for our diverse communities.

Derek Thomas (St Ives) (Con): It is a joy to have the opportunity to speak in the Levelling-up and Regeneration Bill, because I can see the direct benefit that it will have for West Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly, which I am proud to represent.

The ministerial team have been helpful in their dialogue with me on the needs of levelling up rural areas. I ought to say at this point that I chaired the all-party group on rural services. I want to refer to Lords amendment 6, which places a requirement on the Department to produce a rural-proofing report detailing ways in which the levelling-up missions have regard to their impact on rural areas and will address the needs of rural communities. As somebody who represents a large rural constituency of West Cornwall and Scilly, I cannot stress enough the importance of policy and measures actively designed to support the needs of rural communities. The House does not need me to remind it that the need to level up rural Britain is urgent and critical. Wages are lower, house prices are often higher, homes are more expensive to heat, delivering public transport and other services, such as social care, are more challenging, and the list goes on.

As I have said, I am grateful to my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State and the departmental team for their engagement with me. My right hon. Friend assures me that, rather than accept the Lords amendment, the Government will give greater force to the commitment to level up, and that they will be obliged to consider economic, social and other outcomes in setting up levelling-up missions, including the specific needs of rural communities. I welcome the acknowledgement that rural communities have a specific case worthy of consideration. In his concluding remarks, can the Minister

[Derek Thomas]

explain in practice how the needs of rural communities will be addressed and not sidelined in favour of more densely populated areas, especially in relation to Cornish people who need secure, affordable housing.

In conclusion, I pay specific tribute to my hon. Friend the Member for Bishop Auckland (Dehenna Davison), who, in her time in the Department, proved to be a good friend to Cornwall in our ambition to secure meaningful devolution and sought to address important gaps in the spreading of levelling up funding. Lords amendment 10 seeks to address areas that have been left behind and those gaps in levelling up and other regeneration funding. Such areas are looking to the Government to set out their approach to the third round of the levelling up fund.

One such area is Helston, an important town serving the Lizard peninsula and many other rural communities. Some 42,000 people live in and around Helston, which is famous for Flora Day and the Flora Dance, but is also known as one of the few towns in Cornwall that has missed out on much-needed levelling up and regeneration funding. A fantastic team, including Helston Town Council and many other important organisations in the town, have identified some critical projects designed to revive the town and make it a safer, healthier and wealthier area in which to live and work. I hope that the town will be successful in its future bids for levelling up funding, particularly in the very near future.

Mr Speaker: We now come to a maiden speech and, as we know, there is no interruption. I welcome the new Member, Sarah Dyke, to make her maiden speech.

Sarah Dyke (Somerton and Frome) (LD): Thank you, Mr Speaker, for granting me the opportunity to make my maiden speech today. I begin by paying tribute to my predecessor. The hon. Gentleman served his constituents over his tenure in Parliament, and I thank him for his service. He also spoke up for one of the major cultural exports in our region, cider.

Written records of cider production in Somerset exist from as early as the 12th century. Somerset has become synonymous with the cider industry and is proud to be its ancestral home. Cider is so important to our region that until the passing of the Truck Act 1887, which prohibited the practice, labourers were often paid in cider, with some of the top labourers often earning eight pints a day in payment. Although prohibited, I understand that the practice was slow to dry up in Somerset and continued well into the 20th century.

The industry today sustains thousands of jobs and hundreds of farmers. Our cider is renowned for its quality and I will champion the industry during my time here. Somerton and Frome is also a large agricultural base and is home to many of the country's finest farmers and rural businesses, all producing food for our tables to high environmental and animal welfare standards. Farmers are essential to the UK economy and our way of life. We must back our hard-working farmers and provide them with a fair deal to ensure that we have food security long into the future.

I herald from a family that has been farming in the area for more than 250 years, so I will always stand up and fight for our farmers, who not only produce delicious

and healthy food and drink, but protect our precious environment. The importance of improving the environment is critical to a rural area such as Somerton and Frome, because we face the effect of climate change first-hand and the damage it can cause will be devastating for our local communities. I am committed to campaigning on the issue and I call for the positive changes that we need to see.

It is an honour to be elected as the latest Liberal to represent the area, and I am proud to follow in the footsteps of Thomas Hughes and, more recently, David Heath, the last Liberal Democrat to represent the constituency. David is a true champion of this area who fought for 18 years for the people of Somerton and Frome. I thank him for all he has done in Somerset during his career. If I am able to achieve half of what he was able to do, I am confident I will have done a good job.

Leading women are often overlooked, and I would therefore like to recognise some of the pioneering women from my area. I am the second woman to represent the town of Frome, following on from Mavis Tate MP, who represented Frome from 1935 to 1945 and used Parliament to campaign for and champion women's rights. Alice Seeley Harris, a documentary photographer who helped to expose human rights abuses in the Congo Free State under Leopold II of Belgium, also lived in Frome. Finally, I would like to mention Emma Sheppard, another Victorian pioneer who called for workhouse reform.

From people to places: let us take a short tour of the seat that I am so proud to represent. We start in Somerton, the ancient capital of Somerset, from which the county gained its name. The old English name for Somerset means "the people living at or dependent on Somerton". The terms Somerton and Somerset derive from "the land of the summer people", as Somerset was marshy and wet during the winter months and only dry and useful in the summer—that is, until the Somerset levels were drained by the monks to farm there during the middle ages.

We move on now to Langport, which is aptly named as it was a port town. Langport is the natural crossing point on the River Parrett, and the Royalist soldiers fled through the town while being pursued by Cromwell's forces after the battle of Langport, held on Pict's Hill nearby. It is also home to the Langport Mummers, who perform the Alfred play, based on King Alfred and his battle with Guthrum, the Viking. Alfred is known to have been based close to Langport before his battle with Guthrum's great heathen army around the eighth century.

From the westernmost part of the constituency, we move to the south-eastern edge, to King Alfred's Tower, which was built by Henry Hoare on the county border with Wiltshire. The folly tower is sited where King Alfred rallied his troops before defeating Guthrum and, in so doing, regaining control of Wessex. We must not leave this part of the constituency without mentioning Wincanton, which is close by. In 2002, Wincanton was twinned with Ankh-Morpork from Terry Pratchett's "Discworld" series, making it perhaps the only place in the UK to be twinned with a place that does not exist.

Just north of Wincanton is the ancient Selwood Forest, which reaches north to Frome. Unfortunately, Selwood Forest is something of a rarity in Somerset, as the county only possesses 8% tree canopy cover. That figure signifies the urgent action needed for our

environment, as does the lack of tree cover across the country. At the last election, all political parties pledged to increase tree cover across the country. I will be working hard throughout my time in Parliament to restore our natural environment, and I hope that progress continues to be made.

We emerge from the Selwood Forest into Frome, the home of JW Singer & Sons art metal works, which represents the industrial legacy of the town. The foundry used to produce iconic monuments such as Lady Justice on top of the Old Bailey. Closer to this place, in 1902, the magnificent statue “Boudicca and her Daughters” was assembled on the Thames Embankment on the south-west end of Westminster Bridge, where it stands today—quite some feat, given that JW Singer cast his first brass candlesticks in 1848 using turnips as moulds.

Turning to the current debate, too often when we talk about levelling up we think of urban areas in the north of England. There is no doubt that those areas need support, but rural communities such as mine are often forgotten, and without action they risk falling even further back. I pay tribute to my hon. Friends the Members for North Shropshire (Helen Morgan) and for Westmorland and Lonsdale (Tim Farron), who have worked hard to ensure that rural areas are not forgotten in this Bill. They have tabled amendments to improve rural bus services, which are sadly neglected in Somerton and Frome and other rural constituencies, and to introduce new planning classes for second homes and holiday lets, so that local authorities have more power to limit the impact on local housing supply.

Rural areas such as Somerton and Frome are suffering deeply with the cost of living crisis. The cost of housing is often disproportionate to the level of wages available, and people have to use their cars to travel further for work or to access services such as dentists, GPs, hospitals or schools.

Off-grid fuels have been significantly more expensive than gas in the heating of homes. I will work to ensure that off-grid rural homes never have to face this crisis again. That is why amendment 6, on producing a rural proofing report, is so important. I need not say that the cost of delivering services in rural areas is greater than in urban areas, so it is vital that the Bill takes that into account, and I am delighted that my Liberal Democrat colleagues in the other place have tabled that amendment. Although I am disappointed that the Government have not gone so far as to support the amendment entirely, their concession is welcome.

3 pm

Finally, I would not be a Liberal Democrat if I did not mention the importance of local government. We desperately need more powers to be devolved to local government. However, I have deep concerns about the way in which that is sometimes done. Devolution should be implemented with an understanding of what the local area needs; just because it works well in one place in a certain way does not mean it will work in the same way across rural Somerset. I strongly urge the Government to give more powers to Somerset, but in consultation with the people of Somerset, so that we are given greater decision-making powers in our local area rather than just implementing what Westminster thinks we need.

I look forward to being a hard-working Member of this House and a great representative for Somerton and Frome. To all the people of Somerset: Sumorste ealle.

Dr Fox: It is an absolute pleasure to follow the hon. Member for Somerton and Frome (Sarah Dyke). We have all been through either the thrill or the ordeal of our maiden speech, and many of us will look back with different emotions—pride, affection or regret. Hers was certainly one to be proud of. I am sure that the whole House will recognise that we have in her a Member of great calibre when it comes to speaking in the House. She paid a very generous tribute to her immediate predecessor, which I am sure many of us would echo. She spoke in staunch defence of the cider industry, which is perhaps one area in which I can genuinely offer my personal help for the profitability that she seeks. She set out a wide range of rural matters that are extremely important to those of us who represent different parts of Somerset.

The hon. Lady, in placing herself in context with a range of well-known predecessors from the part of the country that she represents, who were accomplished in different walks of life, demonstrated a lack of self-absorption that she will find somewhat rare in the House of Commons. I hope that she retains the refreshing self-effacing attitude that she brought to the House today. In the light of her top-to-bottom description of her constituency, if she were ever to leave this House, voluntarily or involuntarily, she is certainly likely to get a place on the Somerset tourist board.

I thank all those who brought the Bill this far. During her speech, the Minister referred to local plans, which are extremely important for my constituency. She said that it is not just the assessed housing need that matters but how much of that need can be accommodated in any one area. That matters hugely to a number of us. In North Somerset, for example, 40% of land is green belt, 30% is floodplain and 12% is in an area of outstanding natural beauty. One reason we are so delighted that the Government are abolishing the national housing targets is that they cannot be applied equally to areas with a lot of land that can be built on and areas where there are natural constraints. Such constraints are imposed by Government, who say, “You cannot build on green belt and you cannot build on floodplain.” It makes a lot of sense to hand the power back to local areas so that they can make decisions for themselves.

The removal of the five-year land bank is also an important increase in freedom for local authorities. I am delighted that, throughout the passage of the Bill, including in the other place, the Government put the protection of the green belt at the centre of what they were doing to stop urban sprawl—which, of course, we face in North Somerset as we are so close to Bristol—to protect our environment, as has been mentioned in relation to a number of issues, and to stop inappropriate development. That is likely to become an important election issue given that the Labour party has said that it will build on the green belt, and the Liberal Democrats have said that they will reintroduce national house building target numbers if they are able to do so.

I echo what a number of my colleagues said about encouraging nature recovery strategies in the amendments, as well as about banking hubs, which have been raised on a number of occasions. It is important in rural areas

[Dr Fox]

and small towns, particularly for the elderly, for those who are not necessarily computer-literate, and for those who find it difficult to travel, that we maintain some form of connection with traditional banking. I fully accept the Minister's argument that these are market decisions to be taken by individual banks, but we cannot have banking deserts when our constituents need access to banking services.

Wendy Morton: We often think about rural communities when discussing banking hubs, but my right hon. Friend's point about banking deserts is equally important to constituencies such as mine, which now has only one bank left. Some in the banking sector think it is fine for my constituents to have to drive into Walsall or Sutton—it is not.

Dr Fox: My right hon. Friend makes an important point. It is incumbent on us all to work with Government and the banking sector to ensure that our constituents have access. She makes a good point: the lack of access was previously more pertinent to rural locations, but then it applied to smaller villages, then smaller towns, and now even larger towns face the situation that she describes.

I wish to make two points to the Minister, one of which I raised during an intervention when I asked, “When will we see the new NPPF?” She indicated that we will see it as soon as the Bill receives Royal Assent. I hope that means that we will have the new NPPF by the time we get to Prorogation, which is not far off. I am sure that we will all hold the Minister to account for the very welcome timeline that she placed on that today.

I would like the Minister to consider one issue above all else, and to respond to it during the debate. There will be a hiatus between the passage of the legislation and its implementation date, but planning permission requests for housing developments will still be made. Will the Minister make it clear that the Planning Inspectorate needs to take into account this legislation, rather than the previous NPPF, when considering such planning applications? It would be quite wrong and profoundly undemocratic if both Houses produced legislation along the lines that the Government have proposed but planning inspectors applied an older version of the NPPF, thereby allowing planning applications that are clearly against the expressed will of Parliament to be approved. We cannot have unelected inspectors making decisions against what this Parliament has clearly decided. I hope that the Minister will give an assurance in her wind-up that, for any planning applications in that hiatus, instructions will be given to the planning inspectorate that it is expected to follow what the Government have set out in the legislation.

Daisy Cooper: First, I associate myself with the remarks of the Father of the House, the hon. Member for Worthing West (Sir Peter Bottomley). I agreed with almost all his points, including on having the right measures in place to stop opportunistic developers, on supporting virtual meetings of local government, and especially on leaseholders.

May I reiterate my support for some of the comments made by the right hon. Member for North Somerset (Dr Fox), particularly his call for a timeline for the national planning policy framework update? The Minister

will be aware that I have tabled a number of written questions asking her to clarify for the record the status of that consultation. She has very kindly confirmed that it is just a consultation. There is a lot of confusion among my constituents, who believe that the NPPF has already been updated when it has not. I therefore associate myself with the other Members across the House who want to see the NPPF updated—in the Minister's words—“as soon as possible”.

I rise to oppose the Government's motion to reject Lords amendment 82, on planning application fees. Ministers will know that I originally tabled this amendment to the Bill 11 months ago, and in March I also tabled a presentation Bill that would have had the same effect. I had a number of meetings with the Minister to explain the reasoning behind this amendment.

My amendment, ultimately, is very simple. At the moment, a Government-imposed cap on planning fees means that local authorities cannot charge big developers the true cost of processing their applications, and the result of that is scandalous. In 2020-21, council tax payers across England effectively subsidised big developers to the tune of almost £2 billion. In St Albans district alone, the figure was a shocking £3.2 million. That's right: during the biggest cost of living crisis in recent history, taxpayers in St Albans district are subsidising big developers to the tune of £3 million a year.

The Government themselves have recognised this problem. They have run a consultation and agreed to raise the cap on planning fees, but they still refuse to scrap it altogether. According to a “Dear colleague” letter that was circulated yesterday, the reasons are twofold. The first is that the costs might become inconsistent between local authorities. All I would say to that is that planning fees are less than 5% of all professional fees, and that would not cause a huge problem. The second argument is that it would not provide any incentives to tackle inefficiencies in planning departments. I think it is fair to say that local authorities are not awash with cash at the moment, so that is a pretty spurious argument.

The fact is that planning services up and down the country are operating on a shoestring. Funding cuts mean that in many cases, planning departments can no longer even meet their statutory time limits to determine planning applications. Developers and householders find their proposals delayed, in some cases for many months, as councils lack the resources to process them. The Local Government Association says that the current Government caps are

“resulting in significant capacity and skills challenges”

and “undermining” councils' ability to deliver the quality housing and infrastructure that communities desperately need. It also says that

“councils must have the ability to set planning fees at a level which cover the true costs of processing applications”

if they are to improve the system to the benefit of both communities and developers.

This amendment would allow local councils to put an end to developer subsidies and take steps to pass on the costs of planning applications to those who submit them. Let us look at one specific example. As it stands, a multibillion-pound developer with an incredibly complex development is not obliged to contribute any more than £116 to have each of its planning conditions discharged.

In 2014, the Conservative Government decided that a freight terminal the size of 480 football pitches should be built in my constituency of St Albans.

Where the Government decide to build a big piece of infrastructure in a constituency, it is up to the developer to decide whether it wants to enter into a voluntary planning performance agreement and to agree to pay non-statutory fees—effectively volunteering to pay additional fees—for the delivery of a larger site. Some developers do enter into such agreements, but some do not, and there is currently no obligation for them to do so. Where they do not, there are considerable resource implications for local authorities that are trying to discharge planning conditions imposed by Whitehall. Many constituents can face years of misery and chaos due to the construction of a large site and end up paying the developers' planning costs. It is absurd, and it is unfair.

This vast underfunding also leaves effective planning enforcement activity a distant memory for most people in England. I am sure colleagues across the House will recognise that portrait. What is more, as planning departments across the country struggle with fewer qualified planning officers, developers and applicants say they are willing to pay what it costs to ensure they get a better service. In the light of big developers being prepared to pay this money, it is inconceivable that the Government would tie local authorities' hands behind their backs by rejecting the amendment.

Government's refusal to allow local councils to pass on the true costs to developers is lumbering local people with poor planning services and delaying the delivery of sustainable housing, with unscrupulous developers not brought to account for breaching planning conditions in a timely way. All the while, local residents are subsidising big developers. There is no excuse for that to continue. I urge Members across the House to support Lords amendment 82 and oppose the Government's attempts to vote it down.

Wendy Morton: There are many amendments to consider this afternoon, but I assure you that I will keep my comments very brief and specific, Madam Deputy Speaker. I rise to speak about Lords amendment 44, which was clearly designed to address what some of us see as a deficit when it comes to scrutiny.

3.15 pm

Given that national development management policies are about how land is used in England and are a cornerstone of the planning reforms in the Bill, it is really important that we look at them carefully. I, like many others in this place, have long been concerned that NDMPs run contrary to localism. They reduce transparency and, importantly, local participation in plan making. I fear that they will take priority over local plans, with no guarantees of public consultation. For me, that is what really matters.

In a constituency such as mine, Aldridge-Brownhills, on the edge of Birmingham, local people need and expect to have their voices heard, particularly through parliamentary scrutiny. We saw that only last year with the "Black Country Plan". I see that there is another Member from the Black Country in the Chamber, my hon. Friend the Member for Dudley South (Mike Wood), and he will know exactly where I am coming from. That plan was designed to pull all the local authorities together

to look at housing need across the west midlands. Areas such as mine were at serious risk of having swathes of houses built on our precious green belt. Thankfully, thanks to scrutiny, transparency and the voice of local people and locally elected councillors and parliamentarians, the plan was dropped, and our local council is now able to continue working on the local plan.

On Lords amendment 44, I am pleased that the Government have listened and tabled an amendment that will place consultation on a legislative footing, but I would like to press the Minister on this. Government amendment (b) to Lords amendment 44 states:

"The only cases in which no consultation or participation need take place... are those where the Secretary of State thinks that none is appropriate".

I would like to understand exactly what we mean by that. It is vital that we get this right. We have one opportunity to get it right and, if we do not, I fear that areas such as mine and the edges of the communities that I represent will continue to be under threat.

Our much loved green belt and our green spaces mean so much to us. We are not anti-housing, but we want houses in the right places, and we want a mix of housing. As the Minister will be aware, we have lots of brownfield across the west midlands. She spoke about the brownfield-first approach. I think it was the West Midlands Mayor, Andy Street, who championed brownfield first. I, among others, have spoken many times in the Chamber in favour of that.

Finally, I want to touch on the duty to co-operate, which is often at the heart of the problems that constituencies such as mine face. I seek clarity from the Minister today, or in writing from the Secretary of State after the debate, as to what we mean when we refer to the alignment policy. I sincerely hope that this is not simply a relabelling of the duty to co-operate.

Helen Morgan (North Shropshire) (LD): I draw Members' attention to my role as a vice-president of the Local Government Association.

I congratulate my hon. Friend the Member for Somerton and Frome (Sarah Dyke) on her excellent maiden speech; I know she is going to join her Liberal Democrat colleagues in being an excellent champion for rural communities. There is a lot to get through, so I am going to restrict my comments to a specific number of amendments that I think are particularly important. However, it is important to acknowledge that 418 amendments were made to this legislation in the Lords, which is testament to the fact that it was a confused piece of legislation and possibly poorly drafted in the first place.

As we have just heard, Lords amendment 44 requires national development management policies to be reviewed through public consultation and parliamentary scrutiny. NDMPs offer a bold change to the planning system, and the Bill grants them primacy over local plans if they are in conflict. However, there was no provision in the initial Bill for NDMPs to be scrutinised by Parliament or the public. The Government have tabled an amendment in lieu, but that amendment still allows the Secretary of State to avoid parliamentary and public scrutiny and block any community intervention in the implementation of policy. We on the Liberal Democrat Benches strongly believe that Government should be scrutinised by Parliament, rather than just

[Helen Morgan]

being able to dictate planning policy from the top, and that Lords amendment 44 was superior to the Government's amendment in lieu.

I would also like to highlight Lords amendment 82. Earlier this year, the National Audit Office found that local authority planning services have been cut by £1.3 billion over the 10-year period to 2020. The Government have acknowledged the issue and agreed to increase planning fees by 35% for major applications and 25% for all other applications, but there is an issue with that: those percentage increases do not account for regional differences in cost. Who is left to pick up the bill for all these costly planning applications? As we have just heard from my hon. Friend the Member for St Albans (Daisy Cooper), it is council tax payers. Setting a national percentage increase in planning fees is a pretty sloppy solution: it will not cover the cost of the applications, but it will burden council tax payers who are already struggling with the cost of living crisis. As such, I urge the Government to consider adopting amendment 82, which would allow local authorities to set appropriate fees for planning applications.

On Lords amendment 241, quality education and quality healthcare require quality facilities. Since the start of this academic year, 147 schools across England have been forced to close because their buildings have been found to include reinforced autoclaved aerated concrete, or RAAC. That has impacted well over 100,000 students, with many being forced into e-learning at home. This is a generation whose education has already suffered during the pandemic; it is not really good enough to keep them away from classrooms now because the buildings they learn in are at risk of falling down. Of course, it is not just schools that have been found to be in a state of disrepair: multiple NHS trusts have confirmed that hospitals are crumbling around their staff and their patients. For that reason, the Liberal Democrats support Lords amendment 241, which requires the Government to keep a register of schools and hospitals that are in serious disrepair and update that register regularly, so that there is full transparency about the problem and Government can be held to account for ensuring its speedy rectification.

I move on to the proposed removal of subsection (5) of the new clause in Lords amendment 231, which prevents regulations under that clause from amending provisions in the Building Safety Act relating to building safety committees and building safety reporting. That is particularly relevant to the condition of electrical installations, stairs and ramps, emergency egress for disabled people, and automatic water fire suppression systems in relevant buildings. We do not need to be reminded that the Building Safety Act was passed only last year. I am at a bit of a loss as to why the Government would want to start undermining its provisions so soon, particularly since lots of buildings have not yet been made safe in the wake of the Grenfell disaster, despite that being so many years ago. I welcome the Minister's reassurances from the Dispatch Box that those provisions would not be used in practice, but that begs the question: if they are not intended to be used, why are they included in the legislation? Again, I urge the Government to keep subsection (5) of the new clause in amendment 231.

I also want to talk a bit about Lords amendment 6, which a number of Members have already spoken about. Levelling up was meant to spark life across the whole country: not just the south-east or northern towns, but rural parts of Britain that sometimes conceal their deprivation behind a veil of beautiful greenness. Others have already highlighted this issue. I know as a rural MP that, while it is a privilege to live in a rural area, it does not come without drawbacks. Some 13% of my constituency of North Shropshire has hardly any mobile connection, and only 46% of rural businesses have a decent 4G broadband connection. There is only one bus on a Sunday, as Members will have heard me say on multiple occasions, and poor connections throughout the week mean that young people are missing out on opportunities to access further education and, critically, businesses are missing out on the skilled labour they need to thrive and expand.

As the hon. Member for St Ives (Derek Thomas) pointed out, the logistics of living in the countryside mean that council services cost more. Council taxes are up to 20% higher than in urban areas, while rural workers are paid 7.5% less on average than their urban colleagues and are faced with house prices that—if we exclude London—are often over eight times higher. Sadly, those differences were not recognised in the original drafting of the Bill. I support the concessions the Government have made in relation to amendment 6: they are taking steps in the right direction, and I think those concessions have been entered into in good faith. While I support them, I would have preferred Lords amendment 6 to have been retained in its entirety.

Finally, I will speak to Lords amendment 329, which deals with local housing. The amendment specifies that

“The local plan must identify the local nature and scale of housing need...and must make provision for sufficient social rent housing, to eliminate homelessness”

and provide a home for the more than 1 million people who are currently on social housing waiting lists. Again, the Government's amendment in lieu is a positive step, but it does not go far enough in tackling the scourge of homelessness.

I am sure the Minister was avidly watching Liberal Democrat conference at the beginning of conference season, but I am afraid she has slightly misunderstood Lib Dem policy, which offered to deliver 150,000 social homes a year for people who are facing homelessness and temporary accommodation. However, despite our very Lib Dem debate about whether we should set targets from the bottom up or the top down, that policy also emphasised the importance of bringing the local community with us—of building those needs and requirements into the local plan and ensuring that we build the right housing in the right place, with the right infrastructure and the consent of the local community. It is a shame that the Government are criticising us for providing a way for young people to aspire to home ownership and to get people out of the terrible situation of not having a safe and secure home to go to. Amendment 329 needs to be retained in full, and we will therefore be supporting the retention of the original Lords amendment.

In conclusion, the Bill is so long and complex; it has not been a masterpiece of legislation, and there is much confusion involved in it. I urge the Minister to take on board some of the comments that have been made today by colleagues on both sides of the House, who

have made some excellent recommendations and suggestions, so that we can improve the Bill a bit before it goes to its next stage.

John Redwood: First, I wish to address the question of housing supply in the national planning policy framework, amendment 44 and others. I support the Government in rejecting the Lords amendments—in most cases, those amendments make the Bill worse—but we need greater clarity from the Government about how the national planning policy framework and the definition of needs in any national intervention relate to what is done locally. The Minister has been a clear advocate of more devolved power, and the one power my local community would like is more power to decide how many houses we can fit in and where they could be built. That is not clear yet, and I look forward to further clarification and further documentation.

I am pleased that the five-year supply of land calculation has been amended, because that was causing considerable trouble. Wokingham Borough Council was more than hitting the five-year target, but we were constantly told by inspectors that we were not, because they calculated the numbers in a different, and we thought rather perverse, way. We never got any credit for greatly outperforming the average that we were meant to be building under the local plan, with all the difficulties that were being created by people living on many building sites in the local area.

That brings me on to the amendments and the debate, and the commentary that we have been hearing on the general issue of levelling up—the subject of the Bill—and how that relates to devolved government. I remind all parties in the House who have a fit of enthusiasm for the proposition that more devolved government will naturally lead to levelling up to look at the experience so far. They should understand that there are many occasions on which devolved powers are created or granted when levelling up does not occur or when things even go backwards. I will not argue with the decisions of the many local communities who have voted fairly in a referendum to have various types of devolved government. I am a great supporter of referenda and a great respecter of their results. I am not urging changes to the current complex structure of devolved government, but that should not stop us analysing whether it is working and whether it can be improved within its own terms and in how it operates.

3.30 pm

The biggest example of devolved government is the devolved Government of Scotland. It is now a good time to review how well that has been working, because we were told that devolution would boost the Scottish growth rate and improve Scottish public services relative to public services elsewhere. So far this century—the period in which we have experienced devolved government with considerable powers—Scotland has always had considerably more money per head for public services than England, yet the Scottish growth rate has been lower than the English growth rate.

Scotland comes into the House today to demand bigger levelling-up moneys, because clearly more than two decades of Scottish independent government in many areas has not levelled Scotland up yet. We need to ask why that has failed. What was wrong with the conduct of the SNP Government and, before that, were

there defects in the Labour-led Government in Scotland? How could future Governments in Scotland use those powers and the considerable sums of money granted to better effect?

What matters is which parts of the country attract most of the private investment. For all the public investment that Governments have put in, it will always be greatly exceeded by the total amount of private sector investment, because in our more free enterprise society, our private sector economy is still larger than the public sector economy, unlike in true socialist or communist states. That private investment is often the driver of many of the better-paid jobs and levelling-up opportunities that can then be created.

I am keen that we get a better balance in where new housing is built not so much because of the impact that I see of too much housing being put up in a hurry in my area, but because I think that more of that investment should go to places that want levelling-up moneys and that need a better balance of development. Those places could do with a lot of the private investment that all too often comes to parts of the country that do not qualify for levelling-up money.

Every time I get a new housing estate in Wokingham, I have to go to a Minister and say, “We need a new primary school.” After we have had half a dozen new housing estates, as we regularly do, I have to go and say, “We need a new secondary school.” Those are big ticket items, and that is big public sector investment that has to go to a part of the country that does not need to be levelled up. More difficult is trying to get money for roads, because we have this strange idea that we can put as many housing estates as we like into a place like Wokingham and magically our existing road network will take it when people buy those houses and practically all of them have cars; well, it cannot. We then need bypasses, extra road capacity or extra train capacity. We need the utilities to put in more water and electricity capacity, otherwise we have the embarrassment that we have lovely new houses, but it is difficult to hitch them up to a grid that works. There are great pressures and huge amounts of consequential investment from the new housing that comes into a congested area of the country that does not qualify for levelling up.

I urge all parties to do a little more thinking about how we level up areas and to ask why it is that so many people wish to visit huge amounts of private sector housing investment in places that are levelled up, while starving the rest of the country of it, when it is often the motor of the levelling up that they seek.

Greg Smith (Buckingham) (Con): It is always a pleasure to follow my right hon. Friend the Member for Wokingham (John Redwood), who as ever spoke with sense and clarity. I have been heavily involved with this Bill throughout its passage, not least when sitting on the Bill Committee for six months. The Bill has been materially improved as we have gone through the process. I am not saying that it is all the way there yet, but it has been materially improved along the way. I thank my hon. Friend the Minister for the time she has given me and right hon. and hon. Friends over recent days and weeks to engage on the substance of the Bill.

I start with Lords amendment 239 and the Government amendments in lieu that will remove the restrictions that have perversely persisted in the childcare system

[Greg Smith]

and local government for some time. I will not rehearse the arguments that were well made in the House last night in a general debate led by my hon. Friend the Member for Worcester (Mr Walker) about the supply and demand challenges in childcare, but I genuinely believe that the Government amendments in lieu will make a big difference to the provision of childcare, which presents challenges in many of our communities.

I want briefly to add my voice to the debate about Lords amendment 22 on the challenging question of virtual meetings in local government. I have said before and I maintain my position that I hate virtual meetings. I cannot stand them and would always much rather meet someone in person. However, the Bill talks much about local decision making, devolution and letting people decide, and there is overwhelming demand—the evidence from the National Association of Local Councils shows that some 90% of town and parish councils want the ability to hold virtual meetings in some way to expand the ability of people to participate—so it is beyond me why we cannot in some way permit such local decision making to take place.

Helen Morgan: The hon. Member is making a very good point, and I agree with him entirely. It is really important to expand the range of people who have access to becoming a local councillor. People are not paid to be a full-time councillor, so they need to be given lots of opportunities to get to meetings and participate fully. Does he agree that this is a really important point about expanding representation?

Greg Smith: I do agree with the fundamental principle of expanding accessibility and the ability for people to take part in local government, particularly those heroes who are completely unpaid and unremunerated for the many hours they put in to town and parish councils around the country. Like the hon. Lady, I represent an entirely rural constituency, where parishes are often quite big. To look back to my own local government days in my 20s, I was a councillor in a London borough that was smaller, at 6.1 square miles, than every parish in the 335 square miles I am lucky enough to represent today. We have to look at the distances, even within a parish, that some people have to endure to go to a planning meeting or to get their voice heard on the very local issues that their town or parish council is determining. I urge my hon. Friend the Minister to reflect on whether there is a way the Government can meet local demand for allowing, at least in part, some virtual access to local democracy.

The bulk of the Bill is about planning reform, and the lion's share of the amendments we are considering relates to planning reform. It is a Bill that will affect every community across our entire United Kingdom, and the lens through which I look at a number of the amendments is to ask: do these amendments support, do nothing to, or hinder the so-called December compromise? That is the compromise that my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State agreed with me and a number of right hon. and hon. Friends last December, not least my right hon. Friend the Member for Chipping Barnet (Theresa Villiers) and my hon. Friend the Member for Isle of Wight (Bob Seely).

I shall start with Lords amendment 6 on the question of rural proofing. I absolutely and totally support locking into the Bill the concept of rural proofing, but there are a number of points I would ask the Minister to reflect on while making this particular commitment. Of course, anybody can say that they are going to “have regard to” anything at all. When I find myself in the supermarket with my children, I could have regard to their demand to put only chocolate, crisps and ice cream into the trolley. It does not mean that I am necessarily going to follow through on that, in my view, unreasonable demand. Much of the legislation we pass in this place can be judged upon, and under a legal challenge it is not unknown for the judiciary to look back at what was said at the Dispatch Box. I would therefore find it incredibly helpful if the Minister, in summing up, expanded a little on how the Government see that rural proofing. What are the defining principles of the rural proofing that the amendments in lieu of Lords amendment 6 talk about?

Inextricably linked to that has to be the content of the new national planning policy framework. It is a frustration that we are unable to see the final text of the NPPF until after the Bill achieves Royal Assent, not least because there are a lot of points that some of us fought hard for in the earlier stages of our consideration of the Bill that we were promised would be in the new NPPF and that will help to define this question of rural proofing. In particular, I was pleased to secure an amendment to the NPPF through the Under-Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, my hon. Friend the Member for Kensington (Felicity Buchan) that explicitly changes the old language around “best and most versatile agricultural land”

to the very tightly defined and binary question of land used in food production. That is because “best and most versatile” was always a lawyers’ paradise—a subjective test that could be argued to the nth degree. Changing the wording to protections for land used in food production makes it binary: it either is or is not. That will give clarity to planning authorities up and down the land when considering applications within our rural communities. I fear that food security is playing second fiddle to energy security when we see the vast swathes of solar applications and, likewise, the level of commercial and housing planning applications on agricultural land—on land used for food production. I include in that category 3b land, which is what most of my constituency is. It still manages to produce 10-tonne-a-hectare wheat yields, to graze cattle and sheep, and to produce the food we all like to eat.

The point I am getting to is that it is incumbent on the Government to recognise within rural proofing that rural needs to remain rural. Without farming—without agriculture, without farmers—there is no rural, because it is the farmers who maintain the landscape: it is the farmers who cut the hedges and keep our countryside as beautiful as it is. If we do not have that, there will be knock-on consequences on everything else that happens in the countryside, not least on the backbone of many rural economies: tourism. If it is not beautiful and it has all become solar farms, housing or commercial warehouses, we will not have the tourism offer either. I therefore encourage the Minister, when summing up, to reassure the House that in respect of the amendments in lieu of Lords amendment 6, rural proofing really does mean keeping the rural rural.

Turning to Lords amendment 44, I have considerable concern that when so much of the December compromise was about vesting local decisions in the hands of local authorities—in the hands of local people, where I believe decisions on planning matters absolutely should be taken, whether on housing need, commercial development or developments to do with energy security—the national development management policies are explicitly listed in the Bill as having primacy over those local decision-making mechanisms. I welcome the amendment in lieu that the Government have tabled to extend consultation to some degree; my initial preference was that the full parliamentary scrutiny lock that the Lords suggested would have been the preferable measure.

I ask the Minister and the wider Government to find a way of absolutely ensuring that when we say that local decision making is paramount, we really mean it and that there are not those get-out clauses that sometimes a statutory consultation simply cannot answer. Otherwise, we will set a dangerous precedent where people put in place their local plans and neighbourhood plans and believe that they are in control, but then a national monster—in whatever form it takes—comes along and walks all over that. The people of Buckinghamshire are all too aware of that with certain infrastructure projects being built through the county right now—I never miss an opportunity to get that in, Mr Deputy Speaker.

3.45 pm

I associate myself with the comments made by my right hon. Friend the Member for North Somerset (Dr Fox), although he has left his place, about the Planning Inspectorate. I urge the Minister to consider his comments on that carefully.

Lastly, I turn to Lords amendment 80, on flooding. Across Buckinghamshire and my Buckingham constituency, there have been countless examples of houses in particular built in the floodplain. These are houses that the local authority turned down but the Planning Inspectorate granted. Then—surprise, surprise—when flooding issues have come along, the developer has raised the level of the houses, in some cases by in excess of a metre, so that, when the land does flood, it floods not the new homes that it has sold for in excess of £1 million but the existing houses that surround it.

I think of one example in the village of Ickford in my constituency where that very thing happened—I even stood in my wellies in the flood waters before the foundations were dug on the development. The houses were then built with whopping great slopes in the back gardens leading to the existing homes, and when the new owners move in and try to dig their gardens to plant flower beds, doing all the things people love to do in their gardens—surprise, surprise—they find that they quickly hit layers of rubble and stone where the developers have raised the land by that height. I urge my hon. Friend the Minister to consider how we can look at Lords amendment 80 much more carefully and properly stop the perversity of house builders being allowed to build in these floodplains, often hiding behind expert evidence they paid for and controlled, which it is difficult for others to give proper scrutiny to and disprove, even though everyone in the neighbourhood—that village, town or wherever it might be—will tell them straight down the lens, “That land floods, and if you build houses on it, those houses will flood too.”

The Bill is materially better than when we started with it last year. I repeat my thanks to my hon. Friend the Minister for the engagement she has given and urge her to push that little bit further in order to iron out those final gremlins and get it to being a Bill that communities can be really confident will protect them.

Theresa Villiers: It is a pleasure to follow my hon. Friend the Member for Buckingham (Greg Smith). I rise to give my general support to the Bill and to speak to that, as well as to reflect on some of the housing and planning issues, which are relevant to many of the amendments, including Lords amendment 44 on national development management policies, which several hon. Members have referred to.

But I will first say a quick word of welcome and support for additional protections for ancient woodland, which are much needed for conserving valuable habitats. I also add my voice to those urging Ministers to consider in their discussions with the other place whether they could accept some flexibility in allowing councils to meet remotely in certain circumstances. During the covid emergency, we saw how, in some ways, the ability to meet virtually did have advantages. We see the Planning Inspectorate using virtual meetings very well—and it is not often that I say positive things about the Planning Inspectorate. That is something for the Minister to reflect on in relation to Lords amendment 22.

Turning to the general issues on housing delivery that are envisaged by a number of amendments, excessive housing targets have been making it harder and harder for councils to turn down bad development proposals. That is leading to the loss of agricultural, greenfield and, in some cases, green-belt land, and to increasing pressure to urbanise the suburbs. Plans for blocks of flats, including some massive tower blocks, are appearing all over my constituency and the surrounding area. To name just a few of the problematic proposals, there is the North London Business Park, Victoria Quarter, The Spires, Whalebones, High Barnet tube station, Cockfosters tube station, Barnet House and, last but not least, Edgware town centre, where the centrepiece is proposed to be a 29-storey apartment blocks. It is just relentless.

Where councils refuse applications, planning inspectors can often overturn the decision on the basis that the development is needed to meet the target. That was why, along with my hon. Friends the Members for Buckingham and for Isle of Wight (Bob Seely), I tabled new clause 21 on Report, which obtained the backing of 60 Members of the House. In response, the Secretary of State brought forward important concessions to give communities greater control over what is built in their neighbourhood, in what has become known as the December compromise. But I am afraid that the battle is not over. We need to see the reform delivered. The extent to which the compromise fixes current problems depends on how it is implemented in the new national planning policy framework, which has yet to be published. I join others in calling for that to happen as quickly as possible, although I put on record my thanks to the Secretary of State for today's briefing from officials on what the new NPPF is likely to contain.

The consultation on the NPPF promised that brownfield development would be prioritised over greenfield, but we need more detail, and certainty on how that “brownfield

[Theresa Villiers]

first” approach will be delivered in practice. Even on brownfield sites, it remains crucial to respect matters relating to local suburban character and density. Brownfield first does not mean a brownfield free-for-all. The Secretary of State crucially promised that if meeting the top-down target involves building at densities that are significantly out of character with the area, a lower target can be set in the local plan. If the Bill is to deliver real change, we need to know that a substantial proportion of councils are likely to be able to benefit from that new flexibility, and depart from the centrally determined top-down target. That is the only way to ensure that the centrally determined target will become, as the Secretary of State has promised, an advisory starting point rather than a mandatory end result.

The Secretary of State also promised to clip the wings of the Planning Inspectorate. That means firm and clear instructions need to be given to the inspectorate to accept local plans from councils based on reasonable evidence. Scrapping the duty to co-operate was another promise but, according to the consultation document, the NPPF envisages that it will be replaced by an unspecified alignment policy. We do not yet know whether the duty to co-operate is being scrapped or just re-labelled. We need to understand what that alignment policy will involve.

Turning to Lords amendment 44 on national development management policies, local development management policies provide a bulwark of defence against overdevelopment, for example by constraining height, preventing family homes being replaced by blocks of flats or providing extra protection for green spaces. What is proposed in the Bill is central control over these policies by replacing them with national development management policies. That is quite a radical change—probably one of the most radical planning changes in the Bill. It undermines the long-standing principle that the local plan has primacy. Ministers say that is not intended, but NDMPs could still be used, in theory, to re-write more or less the entire planning system, which would significantly restrict local decision making.

I welcome the Government’s amendment to ensure that NDMPs are consulted on, but I urge them to consider going further and accept that there must also be parliamentary scrutiny. NDMPs, as the shadow Minister was correct to point out, will have a more widespread impact than national policy statements, which tend to be focused on a single sector or even a single project. It is therefore only reasonable to apply standards of scrutiny to NDMPs that are equivalent to those applying to NPSs, and that is what amendment 44 would do. It would be useful for the Government to look further at that point.

Finally, I welcome the indication by Ministers that the flexibilities contained in the December compromise will apply in London, but there is still an urgent need to curb the power of the Mayor to impose targets on the boroughs. He has used the London plan to try to load additional housing delivery obligations on to the suburbs, especially on boroughs, such as Barnet, that have already built thousands of new homes. We are the party that promised to scrap regional targets, but regional targets are alive and kicking in our capital city.

Crucial progress on rebalancing the planning system has been made as a result of the engagement between Ministers and Back Benchers on new clause 21 on Report and engagement throughout the parliamentary scrutiny process. If properly implemented, the December compromise will give communities a greater say on what is built in their area, while also accelerating the delivery of new homes, especially on the inner-city brownfield sites referred to by the Secretary of State in his long-term plan for housing published in July.

But all that would be at risk if there was a Labour Government. They want to rip up the rules that have protected green-belt land for decades, leaving us vulnerable to urban sprawl and jeopardising precious habitats. Moreover, the Leader of the Opposition is clear that local voices will be “ignored” in the planning system if he ever gets the keys to Downing Street. That is a grave threat to the local environment in my constituency and it is one of many reasons why I will be campaigning so hard to return another Conservative Government and a fifth historic election victory next time around.

Ben Bradley (Mansfield) (Con): I am really pleased to see the Bill finally back in this place—it has been a while. I remember saying to a former Housing Minister a year or so ago—one of several former Housing Ministers—when the planning elements were introduced to what was previously quite a tightly written regeneration and devolution Bill, that it might cause some challenge and delay that was perhaps not entirely necessary. But here we are. I will leave it to your judgment, Mr Deputy Speaker, whether I have been proven right or not.

I do not want to talk about planning, actually. I want to talk about the key thing in the Bill for my part of the world, which is the element of levelling up, regeneration and devolution. There are a number of elements and amendments I want to touch on. First, I want to mention something that is slightly aside from that, which is Lords amendment 22. The Levelling Up Minister, my hon. Friend the Member for Redcar (Jacob Young), will not be surprised—I have already had this conversation with him—that I agree with the Father of the House, my hon. Friend the Member for Worthing West (Sir Peter Bottomley), who is no longer in his place.

When we have a Bill that seeks to devolve powers down to local government, it seems a little bit mad to be so prescriptive from Westminster on whether and how they hold their meetings, for example on whether they could do so in a hybrid way. A number of colleagues on the Government Benches have expressed reservations about that, perhaps on the basis that local government leaders might all go off and hold their annual budget meeting entirely on Teams, but I do not think that would happen. As the Father of the House said, it would give small rural parish councils, which are manned largely by volunteers, the flexibility to be more accessible. My deputy leader is currently unwell and cannot drive, but he would still be able to attend hybrid meetings if that were allowed. Flexibility in a Bill that aims, overall, to pass more powers down to local government would be a welcome and consistent thing.

That said, many of the elements of the Bill are really positive and important. The devolution element in particular and the creation of the county combined authorities is the thing that unlocks devolution and investment for the east midlands, and for Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire,

for the first time. That is a really exciting prospect. We saw in the Prime Minister's conference speech last week £1.5 billion of additional transport funding for my constituency, county and region in the next term of the combined authority, with elections to be held, subject to the passage of the Bill, in May 2024.

4 pm

That £1.5 billion for two counties the size of ours over such a short period—it is a five-year settlement—is a huge amount of money and presents a huge opportunity by bringing into scope many of the road and rail projects for which our area has been waiting a very long time. As a result of all the local nuances, such as low land values, we have never managed to get those projects to the top of the Treasury's Green Book list—we have never managed to make them into national priorities—but they are local priorities, and for the first time they will be deliverable at a local level, which is very exciting. My constituents will take heart from the fact that, for instance, the Robin Hood and Maid Marian lines, which we have been talking about for a decade, will now be in our gift, subject to the passage of the Bill.

I entirely agree with the Government's stance in rejecting Lords amendments 13 and 14. I am directly involved in the negotiations on the delivery of the structure and voting rights of district councils in our proposed East Midlands combined county authority, and we have had a very constructive relationship. They have lobbied me to vote in favour of Lords amendment 13, and, because of the importance and value of that relationship, I want to explain my reasoning very clearly.

I think the Government are doing the right thing in rejecting the amendment because of the premise of creating combined county authorities. In previous iterations, we have not been able to secure the unanimity across 18 districts and boroughs that would allow us to deliver devolution. If they had all agreed to be full members of the combined authority we could have done that eight years ago, at the time when the West Midlands and Greater Manchester did it, but because we have not been able to find the necessary consensus we have missed out on more than £6 billion during that period, relative to Greater Manchester. For the last eight years we have looked enviously over the border at the west midlands—and at the Teesside constituency of the Under-Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, my hon. Friend the Member for Redcar (Jacob Young)—at all the investment and support that they have had and that we could have had. The combined county authority principle gives us the opportunity to deliver that, in a slightly different way with a slightly more flexible approach.

Preventing the inclusion of Lords amendment 13 does not mean excluding the voices of districts and boroughs. In our combined authority, they will have voting rights on issues that affect their powers and their remit. It will be impossible not to include them in the decision-making process when they are the planning authority, and, indeed, the combined authority will be unable to deliver a great deal without their consent. It is important to emphasise that saying that they cannot be full constituent members does not mean they will not have a say, and those rights and those powers. In fact, if they could all agree to be full constituent members, even now, we could still deliver a consensual version under the current statute without the need for the Bill.

As for Lords amendment 14, which concerns associate members, we had already decided and agreed locally that there was not enough legitimacy in voting rights for non-elected members of the combined authority who would not be ultimately accountable to the public through elections. I am pleased that the Government agree with that principle.

Let me finally say something about locally led urban development corporations. We in the east midlands have had one of those, in an interim form, for some years. Covid delayed its powers, but it has done some fantastic master-planning in significant parts of our region, seeking to secure the maximum public good from private sector investment in, for example, our freeport and sites such as Ratcliffe-on-Soar and Toton. The urban development corporation provides a great opportunity—particularly when working in conjunction with the combined authority—to take a long-term, strategic approach to planning and delivery, whether that means business and commercial investment or housing, and to do so in a more long-term and joined-up way. The planning powers in the corporation mean that that can also be delivered more swiftly and easily. This is another exciting prospect, so I am pleased that after being an interim vehicle for a number of years, the east midlands development corporation will finally acquire its full range of powers and opportunities.

I really welcome the Bill returning. I am excited about the opportunities that it brings to Mansfield and to Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire in the new county combined authority through significant new investment in our transport network, in our economic development and in major flagship projects. I have used the example of STEP Fusion in Bassetlaw on a regular basis to describe the impact that this can have on our region. We have a £20 billion investment in clean energy and exciting new jobs in the nuclear industry in north Nottinghamshire, and a new combined authority that can wrap around that, working with providers of skills and training to ensure that my constituents can access those jobs. We can also wrap the transport infrastructure around that, whether that involves bus, road or rail, to ensure that they can get in and out to those jobs.

We have never had the opportunity to deliver this at local level before, and those changes will be really meaningful in the long term. Children growing up on estates in Mansfield now will have job opportunities in 10, 15 or 20 years' time that they could never previously have dreamed of, so this is a huge opportunity. My one ask of the Government—in addition to what I have said in my short speech—is that this must be delivered in the next fortnight in order for us to have our regional election next year. This must be delivered before Prorogation; otherwise, we will run out of time and my constituents will have to wait for months or even a year for access to these powers and funds, so I urge the Minister to ensure that we get this delivered in time.

Sir Julian Lewis (New Forest East) (Con): I begin by adding my congratulations, in her temporary absence from the Chamber, to the hon. Member for Somerton and Frome (Sarah Dyke) on her maiden speech, which strongly impressed the House with her environmental commitment and credentials and which included generous tributes to some of her predecessors—not least to David Heath, whom many of us remember with affection and

[Sir Julian Lewis]

respect, and also to the late Mavis Tate, who may not be so well known to hon. Members of the House. She was a Conservative Member of Parliament during the war years, and indeed before the war. Unfortunately, she was a member of the team of 10 parliamentarians who went to visit the Buchenwald concentration camp, and what she saw there so undermined her mental health that she took her own life two years later in 1947. It is sad to reflect that, nearly 80 years later, comparable atrocities are still being carried out, for not dissimilar reasons, in parts of the middle east.

As a leaseholder myself, I would like to associate myself with the comments of the Father of the House, my hon. Friend the Member for Worthing West (Sir Peter Bottomley), on the vulnerability of leaseholders to abuse of power by freeholders. That is something on which he has campaigned most effectively for a number of years. I also share the concern of my hon. Friend the Member for Buckingham (Greg Smith) about building work that is allowed to proceed in the face of accurate predictions of future flooding. I know of more than one case of that happening in my own constituency.

My primary reason for making a brief contribution to the debate is to flag up the concern that I referred to earlier about the decision of the Government not to accept Lords amendment 13. I am to a degree reassured by what I heard from the Front Bench, which was reiterated quite effectively by my hon. Friend the Member for Mansfield (Ben Bradley) a few moments ago—namely, the assurances that district councils will in fact be able to make a contribution when decisions are made that directly affect them. Yet if there is an opportunity for further elaboration on that, I would like to hear it. I have probably heard enough to prevent me from rebelling against the Government, but whether I feel I can go all the way and vote against what the New Forest District Council chairman Jill Cleary, a Conservative chairman of a Conservative District Council, feels is so important is another matter.

For the record, this is what those concerns amount to. Lords amendment 13 states that, for combined county authorities:

“A Minister of the Crown may by regulations establish a process for non-constituent members to become full members.”

The district council feels this is a vital addition to the Bill, otherwise power will steal away from communities and be concentrated at county level without sufficient active district involvement. Indeed, the district council points to a survey of people in shire areas earlier this year, which shows high levels of trust in and satisfaction with district councils—higher levels than for other parts of local and national Government.

I conclude by quoting directly from Jill Cleary’s letter:

“District councils hold levers which are indispensable in creating jobs, improving economic opportunity, addressing skills shortages, tackling inequalities and reviving local pride—precisely the outcomes at the heart of levelling up agenda that the Bill seeks to reinforce. District councils are the housing and planning authorities in two-tier areas. We drive economic development in our places. We have strong links to local businesses, big and small, and a track record of attracting inward investment. It simply makes no sense that districts should be excluded from these new devolution deals.”

I appeal to the Minister, once again, to make it clear both to this House and to my concerned and esteemed local district council that it will not be sidelined or excluded by the Government’s refusal to accept Lords amendment 13.

Mr Deputy Speaker (Mr Nigel Evans): I call Peter Aldous to make the last Back-Bench contribution, so anybody who has contributed to the debate should start making their way to the Chamber. We are expecting a large number of votes.

Peter Aldous (Waveney) (Con): I will speak to three amendments, to highlight some concerns about why the Government are opposing changes made in the other place that, at face value, appear to have some merit, and to seek further clarification as to what they are doing to address those concerns.

A number of my hon. and right hon. Friends have mentioned Lords amendment 22, which relates to local authorities holding virtual meetings. I am a vice-president of the Suffolk Association of Local Councils, and the feedback I have received from all tiers of local government in Suffolk is that they support the Lords amendment, which the Government oppose. I acknowledge the Government’s view that a core principle of local democracy is that citizens should be able to attend local council meetings to interact in person with their local representatives. However, instead of an absolute bar on virtual attendance, I would suggest that allowing local discretion, pursuing a common-sense approach, is more appropriate for the following reasons.

First, 90% to 95% of councils at all levels, based on their own individual experiences, support such an approach, which is endorsed by the Local Government Association, the National Association of Local Councils and the Society of Local Council Clerks.

Secondly, many town and parish councils have difficulties in retaining a full slate of councillors. They regularly have to co-opt new members, and contested elections are invariably the exception rather than the rule. Allowing some local discretion with regard to the holding of council meetings would remove barriers to becoming a councillor for such groups as the disabled, parents, carers and full-time workers. These groups all have a great deal to contribute to their local communities, but many of them are put off by the straitjacket of being expected to attend all council meetings in person.

4.15 pm

Thirdly, some local councils, such as Suffolk County Council and the Broads Authority, which straddles Suffolk and Norfolk, cover large geographical areas, and one has to ask whether it is appropriate to require councillors to drive up to an hour and a half for a meeting. I am thinking, for example, of a journey from Bungay in north Suffolk, in my constituency, to Ipswich, which is a three-hour round trip. We are seeking to encourage less use of our cars, as we strive towards net zero. Attending these meetings on that basis is expensive, time-consuming and inappropriate when we should be looking to lessen our carbon footprint.

Dr Fox: Does my hon. Friend think there is an inconsistency here: company board meetings can be conducted virtually and during covid Parliament was attended virtually, yet parish council meetings cannot be?

Peter Aldous: I agree entirely with my right hon. Friend on that point. Coming out of covid, a lot of parish councils have raised that issue with me. From their perspective, they have made well-reasoned cases. They are not going to go daft. There is perhaps a nightmare scenario of local councillors never leaving their homes and, as a result, being abstract from the communities they represent. But they will not do that. They will be very mindful of their responsibilities and they would use this provision sensibly. At a time when we are talking about cascading down responsibilities to local authorities, it appears slightly perverse to be saying, “No, you’ve got to do it this way.”

My next point relates to Lords amendments 46 and 327, which would require the Secretary of State to promote healthy homes and neighbourhoods through a regulatory framework for planning and the built environment. As we have heard, the Government are seeking to strike out those amendments, on the basis that they will cut across the actions the Government are already taking to improve the quality of new homes, will create uncertainty and risk legal challenge and delay. I would readily accept that argument if the existing policy was working well, but it is not; it is complex and focused only on risk reduction. We should bear it in mind that from a high-quality home a host of benefits ensue and cascade down: better health and less pressure on the NHS; and an enhanced environment for learning, doing homework and passing the exams and getting the qualifications that enable people to realise their life ambitions, thereby ensuring social mobility. That in turn leads to improvement in national economic productivity. If the Government are to strike out those amendments, they need to fast-track their reviews of the decent homes standard and future homes standard and to put them in a coherent, positive and ambitious framework.

Finally, Lords amendment 45 requires the Secretary of State to have special regard to climate change mitigation and adaptation in preparing national policy, planning policy and advice relating to the development or use of land. As we have heard, the Government oppose the amendment on the basis that it could trigger a slew of litigation, which would hinder action needed to safeguard the environment, and that it repeats existing policy and statutory requirements. They also say that the importance of the environment is already restated in the Bill. I take that on board, although I would highlight three concerns.

First, to achieve our net zero obligations, there is a need for an enormous amount of private sector investment. As the UK Green Building Council points out, pension funds, corporate investors and construction companies require clarity, consistency and certainty in the policy framework. At present, that is missing and the business and investment community is confused.

Secondly, the existing system has created an inconsistency whereby local authorities must take net zero into account in developing their local plans, but the Planning Inspectorate and the Secretary of State, as we heard on a number of occasions, do not have to give net zero the same level of consideration. If this Lords amendment does not stand, at the very least the Government need to remove that ambiguity as quickly as possible.

Finally, I am mindful that in Waveney, my own backyard, in Suffolk and across East Anglia, we are at the forefront of the challenges and opportunities arising from climate change. We have an exposed and vulnerable coast, we are low lying and prone to flooding, and we

are the driest region in the UK. That said, we have great economic opportunities arising from the low-carbon economy, in the form of offshore wind, nuclear and hydrogen.

Local authorities and local business in the eastern region have innovative plans to best address these threats and to maximise the benefits arising from these opportunities. However, as matters stand, they are constrained by the inconsistencies I have outlined. A greater emphasis on climate change mitigation would provide some certainty and would help to attract the private sector investment I mentioned that, as we are seeing, is globally footloose.

These are the concerns I have. I acknowledge that the Bill should not be seen as the panacea for all our ills and I have listened to the assurances that my hon. Friend the Minister has provided. I hope that she might be able to allay some of the concerns I have outlined in her summing up.

Rachel Maclean: It is a pleasure to be able to respond to the points made by colleagues across the House. This is a complex and important Bill, and it has been a thoughtful and well set out debate; everyone has contributed.

I thank colleagues across the House for their remarks. I can assure everyone that the Government have listened extremely carefully to those. Because I have limited time, I may not be able to give as full an exposition on every single point, but I hope colleagues will not be disappointed and my door is always open to colleagues—as are the doors of all my ministerial colleagues in the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities—to listen to any specific problems that people will have. Therefore, I want to thank the Father of the House, my hon. Friend the Member for Worthing West (Sir Peter Bottomley) and my right hon. Friend the Member for North Somerset (Dr Fox) for their comments.

I thank the hon. Member for Somerton and Frome (Sarah Dyke) for her maiden speech and congratulate her on how she delivered it and its content. I listened to it with great interest and particularly noted her advocacy for and championing of the cider industry in her constituency, as well as her standing up for farmers. I am sure that is something that every single Member of the House can strongly agree with. I wish her all the best for her parliamentary career.

I thank my hon. Friend the Member for St Ives (Derek Thomas), my right hon. Friend the Member for Aldridge-Brownhills (Wendy Morton), the hon. Member for North Shropshire (Helen Morgan), my right hon. Friend the Member for Wokingham (John Redwood), my hon. Friend the Member for Buckingham (Greg Smith), my right hon. Friend the Member for New Forest East (Sir Julian Lewis) and my hon. Friends the Members for Mansfield (Ben Bradley) and for Waveney (Peter Aldous) for their comments. I also thank colleagues from the Opposition Front Benches for their constructive comments. We have definitely reached agreement on some points, although not all, which is not surprising given the range of issues we have been looking at.

I want to touch on a few themes that colleagues have raised. I hope that we can go some way to addressing the specific questions put to me by them. Colleagues

[*Rachel Maclean*]

have raised concerns about how national development management policies will operate in practice; people have said they are thinking ahead to how those could operate in practice. I want to be clear that, where a decision is made in accordance with the development plan, national development management policies and a specific local policy, and NDMPs are relevant considerations but not in conflict, as part of a planning judgment, it will still be for the decision maker to decide how much weight is afforded to those different policies based on their relevance to the proposed development. The precedence clause sets out only what should be done in the event of a conflict between policies and where they contradict one another. We do expect such conflicts to be limited in future because of the more distinct roles that national and local policy will have. In response to questions asked by many hon. and right hon. Members, I can assure the House that we will be consulting further on how that will operate. My right hon. Friend the Member for Aldridge-Brownhills asked: what does the provision mean when it says the Secretary of State can act urgently? I reassure her that that refers to very limited circumstances such as the unprecedented situations that we saw during the pandemic. It is envisaged that that provision would be used only in those sorts of urgent and emergency situations.

There has been much debate about the role of district councils in the future combined county authorities. I have definitely heard the points that colleagues have made. We do value the amazing work that is done by district councils. I wish to thank my own district council—Redditch Borough Council—for the incredible work that it does. I know that Members have thanked their own local authorities. I listened very carefully to the points made by my hon. Friend the Member for Mansfield. It is right that we want devolution to work and the voices of those district councils are really important. The Under-Secretary of State, my hon. Friend the Member for Redcar (Jacob Young), has been very clear in his discussions that we are encouraging potential areas to consider how best to involve district councils—they make a unique contribution—in recognition of the role that they play, without holding up those important devolution arrangements.

I have been struck by the number of colleagues who have talked about remote meetings and challenged the Government's position on that. It is the Government's view that face-to-face democracy should remain in place and that physical attendance at meetings is important, not just to build strong working relationships, but to deliver good governance and democratic accountability. It is clearly right that councillors are regularly and routinely meeting other councillors in person and that members of the public can ask questions in person. Some of these measures were brought in during the pandemic. Now that the pandemic has passed, it is right to consider reversing those and getting back to that face-to-face democracy. However, we are looking at a call for evidence on this matter and we will publish the results of that as soon as possible.

Sir Peter Bottomley: It seems to me that it would be a good idea to consult parish councils in particular and to have a debate in the House of Commons when the Government have had their responses. For the Government

to say what their view is, is one thing. For Parliament, which gives powers to authorities, to decide we do not want to tell them how to discuss using those powers is another. Those authorities are limited by the powers. In my view, they should not be limited in how they discuss them.

Rachel Maclean: I thank the Father of the House for those comments. I can assure him that the Government are carefully considering his points, and those made by other colleagues.

I turn to rural-proofing and the vital role of rural areas—a point made by a number of colleagues, particularly my hon. Friend the Member for Buckingham. He asked how we will make sure that we abide by our commitments to rural-proofing in the Bill. I wish to be clear that we are fully behind the objectives to make sure that rural areas benefit from our levelling-up agendas. We want to make sure that the needs of people and businesses in rural areas are at the heart of policymaking, including through rural-proofing. The report that we published early last year demonstrates that we are making real progress on all sorts of issues, including digital connectivity and action to tackle rural crime.

My hon. Friend also asked about the use of agricultural land for food production—again, an issue close to the hearts of many of us who represent rural areas. The Government agree that we must seek to protect our food production and rural environments, and we will publish the consultation response on that issue very shortly.

4.30 pm

That brings me to a question that I think I have been asked by every single Member of the House who has spoken, which is about the national planning policy framework response. People are anxious to see the detail of that, and I understand why. We had a huge number of responses to this vital planning consultation, which represents a significant change to planning policy and something that the industry is clearly calling for. We have seen problems with our planning system, and we do need to make sure that it is fit for the modern day and can deliver the homes that people need in communities, built to the highest standards. That is our objective and we need to get it right.

I am pleased that we have been able to work with many colleagues across the House, in particular my right hon. Friend the Member for Chipping Barnet (Theresa Villiers) and my hon. Friends the Members for Buckingham and for Isle of Wight (Bob Seely), on the specific concerns they have raised. We will publish the response as soon as possible, or in any case shortly, and our position remains as set out in the Secretary of State's letter of December 2022.

Turning to the vital issue of onshore wind, I recognise the contributions from my right hon. Friends the Members for Reading West (Sir Alok Sharma) and for Middlesbrough South and East Cleveland (Sir Simon Clarke). We will respond shortly to the consultation on local partnerships for onshore wind, including on improvements to the system of community benefits. I recognise the challenge to the Government by my right hon. Friend the Member for Reading West to set out more clearly what the benefits will look like. I hope he can see that the Minister for Energy Security and Net Zero is on the Front Bench

and has been doing considerable work on this matter. There are very successful schemes across the country already that deliver discounts on energy bills of up to £300 a year, and we see great potential to go a lot further. We hope that colleagues continue to support us in that vital work.

I will touch on climate change, which has been raised by several right hon. and hon. Members. I want to be clear that the Government take meeting the challenges of responding to climate change through the planning policy system seriously. That is why there is already a climate change requirement in the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. That is restated in schedule 8 to the Bill, which amends the 2004 Act by adding proposed new section 15C(9), which sets out that local planning authorities must design their local plans “to secure that the use and development of land in the local planning authority’s area contribute to the mitigation of, and adaption to, climate change.”

As part of our programme of changes to the planning system, we intend to complete a fuller review of the national planning policy framework to ensure that it contributes to climate change mitigation and adaptation as fully as possible.

Dr Fox: I hate to take my hon. Friend back to my earlier question, but she has not answered it. Until we get a new NPPF, planning inspectors will refer to the previous one, and that leaves the option open to them to make decisions that are not in line with the legislation. Will the Minister give guidance to planning inspectors now that in the interim, until the new NPPF is in place, they must take account of what is in legislation passed by the House, rather than referring to the previous NPPF? Otherwise, we will find ourselves in the perverse position where local authorities can give permission to developments that are against what the Government are proposing on areas such as the five-year land bank and housing targets. We cannot allow ourselves to be politically exposed like that. This is a party that wants to win a general election and that expects Ministers to give direction to the planning inspectors.

Rachel Maclean: I assure my right hon. Friend that I heard his remarks and concerns. Until we have published the response on the NPPF, it is not possible for us to give directions to the planning inspectors in the way that he has asked. He will also know that the Planning Inspectorate has to work within the framework policy and the legislation of the time. It is important to set out that local areas must get their local plans in place, and I hope that his local area is doing so. That is the best way to ensure that it delivers houses that command the consent of his constituents, for whom he is advocating superbly.

The Bill addresses the entrenched disparities that exist across the United Kingdom, backed by billions of pounds-worth of funding, including, I must add, for Scotland. The hon. Member for Airdrie and Shotts (Ms Qaisar), who spoke for the Scottish National party, was a little ungenerous in her remarks, so I want to land with her the significant investment that this Government are making in Scotland—I think the figure is £394 million—to boost communities across the country.

This Government set clear long-term objectives for levelling up and are held accountable for—

Wendy Morton rose—

Rachel Maclean: I am supposed to be winding up, but I will take one final intervention.

Wendy Morton: I am grateful and will be brief. During an earlier intervention, I asked the Minister for clarity on the specific question of the duty to co-operate. Can she give me that clarity before she winds up?

Rachel Maclean: I can confirm for my right hon. Friend that we will scrap the duty to co-operate for the reasons that she mentioned. We will consult on how we expect local authorities to work together. I urge her to work with us and to contribute to that consultation when we bring it forward in due course.

The Bill devolves powers to all areas of England, modernises the planning system and strengthens environmental protection. We have, of course, heard hon. Members’ points, which we will consider carefully as the Bill completes its passage. The Government are on the side of the builders, communities and homeowners—present and future—across our country. I commend it to the House.

Amendment (a) made to Lords amendment 117.

Government amendments (b) to (d) made to Lords amendment 117.

Lords amendment 117, as amended, agreed to.

After Clause 214

POWER TO REPLACE HEALTH AND SAFETY EXECUTIVE
AS BUILDING SAFETY REGULATOR

*Amendment (a) proposed to Lords amendment 231.—
(Rachel Maclean.)*

Question put, That the amendment be made.

The House divided: Ayes 307, Noes 10.

Division No. 329]

[4.38 pm

AYES

Afolami, Bim
Afriyie, Adam
Aldous, Peter
Allan, Lucy (*Proxy vote cast
by Mr Marcus Jones*)
Anderson, Lee
Anderson, Stuart
Andrew, rh Stuart
Ansell, Caroline
Argar, rh Edward
Atherton, Sarah
Atkins, Victoria
Bacon, Gareth
Bacon, Mr Richard
Badenoch, rh Kemi
Bailey, Shaun
Baillie, Siobhan
Baker, Duncan
Baker, Mr Steve
Baldwin, Harriett
Barclay, rh Steve
Baron, Mr John
Baynes, Simon
Bell, Aaron
Benton, Scott
Bhatti, Saqib

Blackman, Bob
Blunt, Crispin
Bottomley, Sir Peter
Bowie, Andrew
Bradley, Ben
Bradley, rh Karen
Brady, Sir Graham
Braverman, rh Suella
Brereton, Jack
Bridgen, Andrew
Bristow, Paul
Britcliffe, Sara
Browne, Anthony
Bruce, Fiona
Buchan, Felicity
Buckland, rh Sir Robert
Burghart, Alex
Burns, rh Sir Conor
Butler, Rob
Cairns, rh Alun
Cameron, Dr Lisa
Campbell, Mr Gregory
Carter, Andy
Cartledge, James
Cash, Sir William
Cates, Miriam

Caulfield, Maria
 Chalk, rh Alex
 Chishty, Rehman
 Chope, Sir Christopher
 Churchill, Jo
 Clark, rh Greg
 Clarke, rh Sir Simon
 Clarke, Theo
 Clarke-Smith, Brendan
 Clarkson, Chris
 Coffey, rh Dr Thérèse
 Colburn, Elliot
 Collins, Damian
 Costa, Alberto
 Courts, Robert
 Coutinho, rh Claire
 Cox, rh Sir Geoffrey
 Crabb, rh Stephen
 Crosbie, Virginia
 Crouch, Tracey
 Daly, James
 Davies, Gareth
 Davies, Dr James
 Davies, Mims
 Davies, Philip
 Davis, rh Mr David
 Davison, Dehenna
 Dinéage, Dame Caroline
 Dines, Miss Sarah
 Djanogly, Mr Jonathan
 Docherty, Leo
 Donaldson, rh Sir Jeffrey M.
 Donelan, rh Michelle (*Proxy vote cast by Mr Marcus Jones*)
 Double, Steve
 Doyle-Price, Jackie
 Drax, Richard
 Drummond, Mrs Flick
 Duddridge, Sir James
 Duguid, David
 Duncan Smith, rh Sir Iain
 Eastwood, Mark
 Edwards, Ruth
 Ellis, rh Sir Michael
 Elphicke, Mrs Natalie
 Eustice, rh George
 Evennett, rh Sir David
 Everitt, Ben
 Fabricant, Michael
 Farris, Laura
 Fell, Simon
 Firth, Anna
 Fletcher, Katherine
 Fletcher, Mark
 Fletcher, Nick
 Ford, rh Vicky
 Foster, Kevin
 Fox, rh Dr Liam
 Frazer, rh Lucy
 Freeman, George
 Freer, Mike
 French, Mr Louie
 Fysh, Mr Marcus
 Garnier, Mark
 Gibb, rh Nick
 Gibson, Peter
 Gideon, Jo
 Glen, rh John
 Goodwill, rh Sir Robert
 Gove, rh Michael
 Graham, Richard

Grant, Mrs Helen (*Proxy vote cast by Mr Marcus Jones*)
 Gray, James
 Grayling, rh Chris
 Green, Chris
 Green, rh Damian
 Griffith, Andrew
 Grundy, James
 Gullis, Jonathan
 Hall, Luke
 Hammond, Stephen
 Hands, rh Greg
 Harper, rh Mr Mark
 Harris, Rebecca
 Harrison, Trudy
 Hart, Sally-Ann
 Hart, rh Simon
 Heald, rh Sir Oliver
 Heapey, rh James
 Henderson, Gordon
 Henry, Darren
 Higginbotham, Antony
 Hinds, rh Damian
 Hoare, Simon
 Holden, Mr Richard
 Hollinrake, Kevin
 Hollobone, Mr Philip
 Holloway, Adam
 Holmes, Paul
 Howell, John
 Howell, Paul
 Huddleston, Nigel
 Hudson, Dr Neil
 Hunt, Jane (*Proxy vote cast by Mr Marcus Jones*)
 Hunt, Tom
 Javid, rh Sajid
 Jayawardena, rh Mr Ranil
 Jenkin, Sir Bernard
 Jenkinson, Mark
 Jenkins, Dame Andrea
 Jenrick, rh Robert
 Johnson, Dr Caroline
 Johnson, Gareth
 Johnston, David
 Jones, Andrew
 Jones, rh Mr David
 Jones, Fay
 Jones, rh Mr Marcus
 Jupp, Simon
 Kawczynski, Daniel
 Kearns, Alicia
 Knight, rh Sir Greg
 Kniveton, Kate
 Kruger, Danny
 Lamont, John
 Latham, Mrs Pauline
 Leadsom, rh Dame Andrea
 Leigh, rh Sir Edward
 Lewer, Andrew
 Lewis, rh Sir Brandon
 Lewis, rh Sir Julian
 Liddell-Grainger, Mr Ian
 Lockhart, Carla
 Loder, Chris
 Logan, Mark
 Longhi, Marco
 Lopez, Julia (*Proxy vote cast by Mr Marcus Jones*)
 Lopresti, Jack
 Loughton, Tim
 Mackrory, Cherylyn

Maclean, Rachel
 Mak, Alan
 Malthouse, rh Kit
 Mangnall, Anthony
 Mann, Scott
 Marson, Julie
 May, rh Mrs Theresa
 Mayhew, Jerome
 Maynard, Paul
 McCartney, Jason
 McCartney, Karl
 McVey, rh Esther
 Menzies, Mark
 Mercer, rh Johnny
 Metcalfe, Stephen
 Millar, Robin
 Mills, Nigel
 Mitchell, rh Mr Andrew
 Mohindra, Mr Gagan
 Moore, Damien
 Moore, Robbie
 Mordaunt, rh Penny
 Morris, Anne Marie
 Morris, David
 Morris, James
 Morrissey, Joy
 Mortimer, Jill
 Morton, rh Wendy
 Mullan, Dr Kieran (*Proxy vote cast by Mr Marcus Jones*)
 Mumby-Croft, Holly
 Murrison, rh Dr Andrew
 Neill, Sir Robert
 Nici, Lia
 Nokes, rh Caroline
 Norman, rh Jesse
 O'Brien, Neil
 Offord, Dr Matthew
 Opperman, Guy
 Patel, rh Priti
 Pawsey, Mark
 Penning, rh Sir Mike
 Penrose, John
 Percy, Andrew
 Poulter, Dr Dan
 Pow, Rebecca
 Prentis, rh Victoria
 Pritchard, rh Mark
 Pursglove, Tom
 Quin, rh Jeremy
 Quince, Will
 Randall, Tom
 Redwood, rh John
 Rees-Mogg, rh Sir Jacob
 Richards, Nicola
 Richardson, Angela
 Robertson, Mr Laurence
 Robinson, Gavin
 Ross, Douglas
 Russell, Dean

Saxby, Selaine
 Scully, Paul
 Seely, Bob
 Selous, Andrew
 Shannon, Jim
 Sharma, rh Sir Alok
 Shelbrooke, rh Alec
 Skidmore, rh Chris
 Smith, rh Chloe
 Smith, Greg
 Smith, Henry
 Smith, Royston
 Spencer, rh Mark
 Stafford, Alexander
 Stephenson, rh Andrew
 Stevenson, Jane
 Stevenson, John
 Stewart, rh Bob
 Stewart, Iain
 Stride, rh Mel
 Stuart, rh Graham
 Sunderland, James
 Swayne, rh Sir Desmond
 Syms, Sir Robert
 Thomas, Derek
 Throup, Maggie
 Timpson, Edward
 Tolhurst, rh Kelly
 Tomlinson, Justin
 Tomlinson, Michael
 Trott, Laura
 Tuckwell, Steve
 Tugendhat, rh Tom
 Vara, rh Shailesh
 Vickers, Martin
 Vickers, Matt
 Villiers, rh Theresa
 Walker, Sir Charles
 Walker, Mr Robin
 Warman, Matt
 Watling, Giles
 Whately, Helen (*Proxy vote cast by Mr Marcus Jones*)
 Wheeler, Mrs Heather
 Whittaker, rh Craig
 Whittingdale, rh Sir John
 Wiggins, Sir Bill
 Wild, James
 Williams, Craig
 Williamson, rh Sir Gavin
 Wilson, rh Sammy
 Wood, Mike
 Wragg, Mr William
 Wright, rh Sir Jeremy
 Young, Jacob
 Zahawi, rh Nadhim

Tellers for the Ayes:
 Amanda Solloway and
 Robert Largan

NOES

Carmichael, rh Mr Alistair
 Cooper, Daisy
 Davey, rh Ed
 Dyke, Sarah
 Farron, Tim
 Farry, Stephen
 Hobhouse, Wera

Lucas, Caroline
 Moran, Layla
 Morgan, Helen

Tellers for the Noes:
 Munira Wilson and
 Wendy Chamberlain

Question accordingly agreed to.

Amendment (a) made to Lords amendment 231.

Lords amendment 231, as amended, agreed to, with Commons financial privileges waived.

Government amendments (a) and (b) made to Lords amendment 237.

Lords amendment 237, as amended, agreed to.

Government amendments (a), (c), (b) and (d) made to Lords amendment 369.

Lords amendment 369, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 1

STATEMENT OF LEVELLING-UP MISSIONS

Motion made, and Question put, That this House disagrees with Lords amendment 1.—(Rachel Maclean.)

The House divided: Ayes 309, Noes 190.

Division No. 330]

[4.53 pm

AYES

Afolami, Bim
 Afriyie, Adam
 Aldous, Peter
 Allan, Lucy (*Proxy vote cast by Mr Marcus Jones*)
 Anderson, Lee
 Anderson, Stuart
 Andrew, rh Stuart
 Ansell, Caroline
 Argar, rh Edward
 Atherton, Sarah
 Atkins, Victoria
 Bacon, Gareth
 Bacon, Mr Richard
 Badenoch, rh Kemi
 Bailey, Shaun
 Baillie, Siobhan
 Baker, Duncan
 Baker, Mr Steve
 Baldwin, Harriett
 Barclay, rh Steve
 Baron, Mr John
 Baynes, Simon
 Bell, Aaron
 Benton, Scott
 Bhatti, Saqib
 Blackman, Bob
 Blunt, Crispin
 Bottomley, Sir Peter
 Bowie, Andrew
 Bradley, Ben
 Bradley, rh Karen
 Brady, Sir Graham
 Braverman, rh Suella
 Brereton, Jack
 Bridgen, Andrew
 Bristow, Paul
 Britcliffe, Sara
 Browne, Anthony
 Bruce, Fiona
 Buchan, Felicity
 Buckland, rh Sir Robert
 Burghart, Alex
 Burns, rh Sir Conor
 Butler, Rob
 Cairns, rh Alun
 Cameron, Dr Lisa
 Campbell, Mr Gregory
 Carter, Andy
 Cartledge, James
 Cates, Miriam
 Caulfield, Maria
 Chalk, rh Alex
 Chishty, Rehman
 Chope, Sir Christopher
 Churchill, Jo
 Clark, rh Greg
 Clarke, rh Sir Simon
 Clarke, Theo
 Clarke-Smith, Brendan
 Clarkson, Chris
 Cleverly, rh James
 Coffey, rh Dr Thérèse
 Colburn, Elliot
 Collins, Damian
 Costa, Alberto
 Coutinho, rh Claire
 Cox, rh Sir Geoffrey
 Crabb, rh Stephen
 Crosbie, Virginia
 Crouch, Tracey
 Daly, James
 Davies, rh David T. C.
 Davies, Gareth
 Davies, Dr James
 Davies, Mims
 Davies, Philip
 Davis, rh Mr David
 Davison, Dehenna
 Dinenage, Dame Caroline
 Dines, Miss Sarah
 Djanogly, Mr Jonathan
 Docherty, Leo
 Donaldson, rh Sir Jeffrey M.
 Donelan, rh Michelle (*Proxy vote cast by Mr Marcus Jones*)
 Double, Steve
 Doyle-Price, Jackie
 Drax, Richard
 Drummond, Mrs Flick
 Duddridge, Sir James
 Duguid, David
 Duncan Smith, rh Sir Iain
 Eastwood, Mark
 Edwards, Ruth
 Ellis, rh Sir Michael
 Ellwood, rh Mr Tobias
 Elphicke, Mrs Natalie
 Eustice, rh George

Evennett, rh Sir David
 Everitt, Ben
 Fabricant, Michael
 Farris, Laura
 Fell, Simon
 Firth, Anna
 Fletcher, Katherine
 Fletcher, Mark
 Fletcher, Nick
 Ford, rh Vicky
 Foster, Kevin
 Fox, rh Dr Liam
 Frazer, rh Lucy
 Freeman, George
 Freer, Mike
 French, Mr Louie
 Fysh, Mr Marcus
 Garnier, Mark
 Gibb, rh Nick
 Gibson, Peter
 Gideon, Jo
 Glen, rh John
 Goodwill, rh Sir Robert
 Gove, rh Michael
 Graham, Richard
 Grant, Mrs Helen (*Proxy vote cast by Mr Marcus Jones*)
 Gray, James
 Grayling, rh Chris
 Green, Chris
 Green, rh Damian
 Griffith, Andrew
 Grundy, James
 Hall, Luke
 Hammond, Stephen
 Hands, rh Greg
 Harper, rh Mr Mark
 Harris, Rebecca
 Harrison, Trudy
 Hart, Sally-Ann
 Hart, rh Simon
 Hayes, rh Sir John
 Heald, rh Sir Oliver
 Heappey, rh James
 Henderson, Gordon
 Henry, Darren
 Higginbotham, Antony
 Hinds, rh Damian
 Hoare, Simon
 Holden, Mr Richard
 Hollinrake, Kevin
 Hollobone, Mr Philip
 Holloway, Adam
 Holmes, Paul
 Howell, John
 Howell, Paul
 Huddleston, Nigel
 Hudson, Dr Neil
 Hunt, Jane (*Proxy vote cast by Mr Marcus Jones*)
 Hunt, Tom
 Javid, rh Sajid
 Jayawardena, rh Mr Ranil
 Jenkin, Sir Bernard
 Jenkinson, Mark
 Jenkyns, Dame Andrea
 Jenrick, rh Robert
 Johnson, Dr Caroline
 Johnson, Gareth
 Johnston, David
 Jones, Andrew

Jones, rh Mr David
 Jones, Fay
 Jones, rh Mr Marcus
 Jupp, Simon
 Kawczynski, Daniel
 Kearns, Alicia
 Knight, rh Sir Greg
 Kniveton, Kate
 Kruger, Danny
 Kwarteng, rh Kwasi
 Lamont, John
 Latham, Mrs Pauline
 Leadsom, rh Dame Andrea
 Leigh, rh Sir Edward
 Lewer, Andrew
 Lewis, rh Sir Brandon
 Lewis, rh Sir Julian
 Liddell-Grainger, Mr Ian
 Lockhart, Carla
 Loder, Chris
 Logan, Mark
 Longhi, Marco
 Lopez, Julia (*Proxy vote cast by Mr Marcus Jones*)
 Lopresti, Jack
 Loughton, Tim
 Mackrory, Cherilyn
 Maclean, Rachel
 Mak, Alan
 Malthouse, rh Kit
 Mangnall, Anthony
 Mann, Scott
 Marson, Julie
 May, rh Mrs Theresa
 Mayhew, Jerome
 Maynard, Paul
 McCartney, Jason
 McCartney, Karl
 McVey, rh Esther
 Menzies, Mark
 Mercer, rh Johnny
 Metcalfe, Stephen
 Millar, Robin
 Mills, Nigel
 Mitchell, rh Mr Andrew
 Mohindra, Mr Gagan
 Moore, Damien
 Moore, Robbie
 Mordaunt, rh Penny
 Morris, Anne Marie
 Morris, David
 Morris, James
 Morrissey, Joy
 Mortimer, Jill
 Morton, rh Wendy
 Mullan, Dr Kieran (*Proxy vote cast by Mr Marcus Jones*)
 Murrison, rh Dr Andrew
 Neill, Sir Robert
 Nici, Lia
 Nokes, rh Caroline
 Norman, rh Jesse
 O'Brien, Neil
 Offord, Dr Matthew
 Opperman, Guy
 Patel, rh Priti
 Pawsey, Mark
 Penning, rh Sir Mike
 Penrose, John
 Percy, Andrew
 Poulter, Dr Dan
 Pow, Rebecca

Prentis, rh Victoria
 Pritchard, rh Mark
 Pursglove, Tom
 Quin, rh Jeremy
 Quince, Will
 Randall, Tom
 Redwood, rh John
 Rees-Mogg, rh Sir Jacob
 Richards, Nicola
 Richardson, Angela
 Robertson, Mr Laurence
 Robinson, Gavin
 Ross, Douglas
 Russell, Dean
 Saxby, Selaine
 Scully, Paul
 Seely, Bob
 Selous, Andrew
 Shannon, Jim
 Sharma, rh Sir Alok
 Shelbrooke, rh Alec
 Skidmore, rh Chris
 Smith, rh Chloe
 Smith, Greg
 Smith, Henry
 Smith, Royston
 Spencer, rh Mark
 Stafford, Alexander
 Stephenson, rh Andrew
 Stevenson, Jane
 Stevenson, John
 Stewart, rh Bob
 Stewart, Iain
 Stride, rh Mel
 Stuart, rh Graham
 Sturdy, Julian
 Sunderland, James

Swayne, rh Sir Desmond
 Syms, Sir Robert
 Thomas, Derek
 Throup, Maggie
 Timpson, Edward
 Tolhurst, rh Kelly
 Tomlinson, Justin
 Tomlinson, Michael
 Trott, Laura
 Tuckwell, Steve
 Tugendhat, rh Tom
 Vara, rh Shailesh
 Vickers, Martin
 Vickers, Matt
 Villiers, rh Theresa
 Walker, Sir Charles
 Walker, Mr Robin
 Warman, Matt
 Watling, Giles
 Whately, Helen (*Proxy vote*
cast by Mr Marcus Jones)
 Wheeler, Mrs Heather
 Whittaker, rh Craig
 Whittingdale, rh Sir John
 Wiggin, Sir Bill
 Wild, James
 Williams, Craig
 Williamson, rh Sir Gavin
 Wilson, rh Sammy
 Wood, Mike
 Wragg, Mr William
 Wright, rh Sir Jeremy
 Young, Jacob
 Zahawi, rh Nadhim

Tellers for the Ayes:
Amanda Solloway and
Robert Largan

NOES

Abrahams, Debbie
 Ali, Rushanara
 Ali, Tahir
 Amesbury, Mike
 Anderson, Fleur
 Ashworth, rh Jonathan
 Bardell, Hannah
 Barker, Paula
 Beckett, rh Margaret
 Benn, rh Hilary
 Blackman, Kirsty
 Blake, Olivia
 Blomfield, Paul
 Bonnar, Steven
 Bradshaw, rh Mr Ben
 Brennan, Kevin
 Brock, Deidre
 Brown, Alan
 Brown, Ms Lyn
 Brown, rh Mr Nicholas
 Buck, Ms Karen
 Burgon, Richard
 Byrne, rh Liam
 Callaghan, Amy (*Proxy vote*
cast by Marion Fellows)
 Campbell, rh Sir Alan
 Carden, Dan
 Carmichael, rh Mr Alistair
 Chamberlain, Wendy
 Champion, Sarah
 Chapman, Douglas

Cherry, Joanna
 Cooper, Daisy
 Cooper, rh Yvette
 Crawley, Angela
 Creasy, Stella
 Cruddas, Jon
 Cryer, John
 Cummins, Judith
 Cunningham, Alex
 Daby, Janet
 Dalton, Ashley
 Davey, rh Ed
 Davies, Geraint
 Davies-Jones, Alex
 Debbonaire, Thangam
 Dhesi, Mr Tanmanjeet Singh
 Dixon, Samantha
 Docherty-Hughes, Martin
 Dodds, Anneliese
 Dorans, Allan (*Proxy vote cast*
by Marion Fellows)
 Doughty, Stephen
 Dowd, Peter
 Duffield, Rosie
 Dyke, Sarah
 Eagle, Dame Angela
 Edwards, Jonathan
 Efford, Clive
 Elliott, Julie
 Elmore, Chris

Eshalomi, Florence
 Esterson, Bill
 Farron, Tim
 Fellows, Marion
 Flynn, Stephen
 Fovargue, Yvonne
 Foxcroft, Vicky
 Foy, Mary Kelly
 Furniss, Gill
 Gardiner, Barry
 Grady, Patrick
 Greenwood, Lilian
 Greenwood, Margaret
 Griffith, Dame Nia
 Gwynne, Andrew
 Hamilton, Mrs Paulette
 Hanna, Claire
 Hardy, Emma
 Harman, rh Ms Harriet
 Harris, Carolyn
 Hayes, Helen
 Healey, rh John
 Hobhouse, Wera
 Hodge, rh Dame Margaret
 Hodgson, Mrs Sharon
 Howarth, rh Sir George
 Hussain, Imran
 Jarvis, Dan
 Johnson, Kim
 Jones, Darren
 Jones, Gerald
 Jones, rh Mr Kevan
 Jones, Ruth
 Kane, Mike
 Keeley, Barbara
 Kendall, Liz
 Khan, Afzal
 Kinnock, Stephen
 Lake, Ben
 Lammy, rh Mr David
 Lavery, Ian
 Law, Chris
 Leadbeater, Kim
 Lewis, Clive
 Lightwood, Simon
 Lloyd, Tony
 Long Bailey, Rebecca
 Lucas, Caroline
 Lynch, Holly
 MacAskill, Kenny
 MacNeil, Angus Brendan
 Madders, Justin
 Malhotra, Seema
 Maskell, Rachael
 McCabe, Steve
 McCarthy, Kerry
 McDonagh, Siobhain
 McDonald, Andy
 McDonnell, rh John
 McFadden, rh Mr Pat
 McGovern, Alison
 McKinnell, Catherine
 McMahan, Jim
 McMorrin, Anna
 Mearns, Ian
 Miliband, rh Edward
 Mishra, Navendu
 Moran, Layla

Morden, Jessica
 Morgan, Helen
 Morgan, Stephen
 Morris, Grahame
 Murray, Ian
 Murray, James
 Newlands, Gavin
 Nichols, Charlotte
 Nicolson, John (*Proxy vote*
cast by Marion Fellows)
 O'Hara, Brendan
 Onwurah, Chi
 Oppong-Asare, Abena
 Osamor, Kate
 Owatemi, Taiwo
 Owen, Sarah
 Pennycook, Matthew
 Perkins, Mr Toby
 Phillipson, Bridget
 Powell, Lucy
 Qaisar, Ms Anum
 Rayner, rh Angela
 Reed, Steve
 Rees, Christina
 Reynolds, Jonathan
 Ribeiro-Addy, Bell
 Rimmer, Ms Marie
 Rodda, Matt
 Russell-Moyle, Lloyd
 Saville Roberts, rh Liz
 Shanks, Michael
 Sharma, Mr Virendra
 Sheerman, Mr Barry
 Siddiq, Tulip
 Smith, Cat
 Smith, Jeff
 Smyth, Karin
 Sobel, Alex
 Spellar, rh John
 Stephens, Chris
 Stevens, Jo
 Stone, Jamie
 Streeting, Wes
 Stringer, Graham
 Sultana, Zarah
 Tami, rh Mark
 Tarry, Sam
 Thomas, Gareth
 Thomas-Symonds, rh Nick
 Thompson, Owen
 Thornberry, rh Emily
 Timms, rh Sir Stephen
 Turner, Karl
 Twigg, Derek
 Twist, Liz
 Vaz, rh Valerie
 Webbe, Claudia
 West, Catherine
 Western, Andrew
 Whitehead, Dr Alan
 Whittome, Nadia
 Williams, Hywel
 Wilson, Munira
 Zeichner, Daniel

Tellers for the Noes:
Mary Glindon and
Christian Wakeford

Question accordingly agreed to.
Lords amendment 1 disagreed to.

5.5 pm

*Proceedings interrupted (Programme Order, this day).**The Deputy Speaker put forthwith the Questions necessary for the disposal of the business to be concluded at that time (Standing Order No. 83F).**Motion made, and Question put, That this House disagrees with Lords amendment 2.—(Rachel Maclean.)**The House divided: Ayes 301, Noes 195.***Division No. 331]****[5.6 pm****AYES**

Afolami, Bim
 Afriyie, Adam
 Aldous, Peter
 Allan, Lucy (*Proxy vote cast by Mr Marcus Jones*)
 Anderson, Lee
 Anderson, Stuart
 Andrew, rh Stuart
 Ansell, Caroline
 Argar, rh Edward
 Atherton, Sarah
 Atkins, Victoria
 Bacon, Gareth
 Bacon, Mr Richard
 Badenoch, rh Kemi
 Bailey, Shaun
 Baillie, Siobhan
 Baker, Duncan
 Baker, Mr Steve
 Baldwin, Harriett
 Barclay, rh Steve
 Baron, Mr John
 Baynes, Simon
 Bell, Aaron
 Benton, Scott
 Bhatti, Saqib
 Blackman, Bob
 Blunt, Crispin
 Bottomley, Sir Peter
 Bowie, Andrew
 Bradley, Ben
 Bradley, rh Karen
 Brady, Sir Graham
 Braverman, rh Suella
 Brereton, Jack
 Bridgen, Andrew
 Brine, Steve
 Bristow, Paul
 Britcliffe, Sara
 Browne, Anthony
 Bruce, Fiona
 Buchan, Felicity
 Buckland, rh Sir Robert
 Burghart, Alex
 Butler, Rob
 Cairns, rh Alun
 Cameron, Dr Lisa
 Carter, Andy
 Cartlidge, James
 Cates, Miriam
 Caulfield, Maria
 Chalk, rh Alex
 Chishti, Rehman
 Chope, Sir Christopher
 Churchill, Jo
 Clark, rh Greg
 Clarke, rh Sir Simon
 Clarke, Theo

Clarkson, Chris
 Cleverly, rh James
 Coffey, rh Dr Thérèse
 Colburn, Elliot
 Collins, Damian
 Costa, Alberto
 Courts, Robert
 Coutinho, rh Claire
 Cox, rh Sir Geoffrey
 Crabb, rh Stephen
 Crosbie, Virginia
 Crouch, Tracey
 Davies, rh David T. C.
 Davies, Gareth
 Davies, Dr James
 Davies, Mims
 Davies, Philip
 Davis, rh Mr David
 Davison, Dehenna
 Dinenage, Dame Caroline
 Dines, Miss Sarah
 Djanogly, Mr Jonathan
 Docherty, Leo
 Donelan, rh Michelle (*Proxy vote cast by Mr Marcus Jones*)
 Double, Steve
 Doyle-Price, Jackie
 Drax, Richard
 Drummond, Mrs Flick
 Duddridge, Sir James
 Duguid, David
 Duncan Smith, rh Sir Iain
 Dunne, rh Philip
 Eastwood, Mark
 Edwards, Ruth
 Ellis, rh Sir Michael
 Ellwood, rh Mr Tobias
 Elphicke, Mrs Natalie
 Eustice, rh George
 Evennett, rh Sir David
 Everitt, Ben
 Fabricant, Michael
 Farris, Laura
 Fell, Simon
 Firth, Anna
 Fletcher, Katherine
 Fletcher, Mark
 Fletcher, Nick
 Foster, Kevin
 Frazer, rh Lucy
 Freeman, George
 Freer, Mike
 French, Mr Louie
 Fysh, Mr Marcus
 Garnier, Mark
 Gibb, rh Nick
 Gibson, Peter

Gideon, Jo
 Glen, rh John
 Goodwill, rh Sir Robert
 Gove, rh Michael
 Graham, Richard
 Grant, Mrs Helen (*Proxy vote cast by Mr Marcus Jones*)
 Gray, James
 Grayling, rh Chris
 Green, Chris
 Green, rh Damian
 Griffith, Andrew
 Grundy, James
 Gullis, Jonathan
 Hall, Luke
 Hammond, Stephen
 Hands, rh Greg
 Harper, rh Mr Mark
 Harris, Rebecca
 Harrison, Trudy
 Hart, Sally-Ann
 Hart, rh Simon
 Hayes, rh Sir John
 Heald, rh Sir Oliver
 Heappey, rh James
 Henderson, Gordon
 Henry, Darren
 Higginbotham, Antony
 Hinds, rh Damian
 Hoare, Simon
 Holden, Mr Richard
 Hollinrake, Kevin
 Hollobone, Mr Philip
 Holloway, Adam
 Holmes, Paul
 Howell, John
 Howell, Paul
 Huddleston, Nigel
 Hudson, Dr Neil
 Hunt, Jane (*Proxy vote cast by Mr Marcus Jones*)
 Hunt, Tom
 Javid, rh Sajid
 Jayawardena, rh Mr Ranil
 Jenkin, Sir Bernard
 Jenkinson, Mark
 Jenkins, Dame Andrea
 Johnson, Dr Caroline
 Johnson, Gareth
 Johnston, David
 Jones, Andrew
 Jones, rh Mr David
 Jones, Fay
 Jones, rh Mr Marcus
 Jupp, Simon
 Kawczynski, Daniel
 Kearns, Alicia
 Knight, rh Sir Greg
 Kniveton, Kate
 Kruger, Danny
 Kwarteng, rh Kwasi
 Lamont, John
 Latham, Mrs Pauline
 Leadsom, rh Dame Andrea
 Leigh, rh Sir Edward
 Lewer, Andrew
 Lewis, rh Sir Brandon
 Lewis, rh Sir Julian
 Liddell-Grainger, Mr Ian
 Loder, Chris
 Logan, Mark
 Longhi, Marco

Lopez, Julia (*Proxy vote cast by Mr Marcus Jones*)
 Lopresti, Jack
 Loughton, Tim
 Mackrory, Cherylyn
 Maclean, Rachel
 Mak, Alan
 Malthouse, rh Kit
 Mangnall, Anthony
 Mann, Scott
 Marson, Julie
 May, rh Mrs Theresa
 Mayhew, Jerome
 Maynard, Paul
 McCartney, Jason
 McCartney, Karl
 McVey, rh Esther
 Menzies, Mark
 Mercer, rh Johnny
 Metcalfe, Stephen
 Millar, Robin
 Mills, Nigel
 Mohindra, Mr Gagan
 Moore, Damien
 Moore, Robbie
 Mordaunt, rh Penny
 Morris, Anne Marie
 Morris, David
 Morris, James
 Morrissey, Joy
 Mortimer, Jill
 Morton, rh Wendy
 Mullan, Dr Kieran (*Proxy vote cast by Mr Marcus Jones*)
 Mumby-Croft, Holly
 Murrison, rh Dr Andrew
 Neill, Sir Robert
 Nici, Lia
 Nokes, rh Caroline
 Norman, rh Jesse
 O'Brien, Neil
 Offord, Dr Matthew
 Opperman, Guy
 Patel, rh Priti
 Pawsey, Mark
 Penning, rh Sir Mike
 Penrose, John
 Percy, Andrew
 Poulter, Dr Dan
 Pow, Rebecca
 Prentis, rh Victoria
 Pritchard, rh Mark
 Pursglove, Tom
 Quin, rh Jeremy
 Quince, Will
 Randall, Tom
 Redwood, rh John
 Rees-Mogg, rh Sir Jacob
 Richards, Nicola
 Richardson, Angela
 Robertson, Mr Laurence
 Ross, Douglas
 Russell, Dean
 Saxby, Selaine
 Scully, Paul
 Seely, Bob
 Selous, Andrew
 Sharma, rh Sir Alok
 Shelbrooke, rh Alec
 Skidmore, rh Chris

Smith, rh Chloe
 Smith, Greg
 Smith, Henry
 Smith, Royston
 Spencer, rh Mark
 Stafford, Alexander
 Stephenson, rh Andrew
 Stevenson, Jane
 Stevenson, John
 Stewart, rh Bob
 Stewart, Iain
 Stride, rh Mel
 Stuart, rh Graham
 Sturdy, Julian
 Sunderland, James
 Swayne, rh Sir Desmond
 Thomas, Derek
 Throup, Maggie
 Timpson, Edward
 Tolhurst, rh Kelly
 Tomlinson, Justin
 Tomlinson, Michael
 Trott, Laura
 Tuckwell, Steve
 Tugendhat, rh Tom

Vara, rh Shailesh
 Vickers, Martin
 Vickers, Matt
 Villiers, rh Theresa
 Walker, Sir Charles
 Walker, Mr Robin
 Warman, Matt
 Watling, Giles
 Whately, Helen (*Proxy vote cast by Mr Marcus Jones*)
 Wheeler, Mrs Heather
 Whittaker, rh Craig
 Whittingdale, rh Sir John
 Wiggin, Sir Bill
 Wild, James
 Williams, Craig
 Wood, Mike
 Wragg, Mr William
 Wright, rh Sir Jeremy
 Young, Jacob
 Zahawi, rh Nadhim

Tellers for the Ayes:
 Amanda Solloway and
 Robert Largan

NOES

Abrahams, Debbie
 Ali, Rushanara
 Ali, Tahir
 Amesbury, Mike
 Anderson, Fleur
 Ashworth, rh Jonathan
 Bardell, Hannah
 Barker, Paula
 Beckett, rh Margaret
 Benn, rh Hilary
 Blackman, Kirsty
 Blake, Olivia
 Blomfield, Paul
 Bonnar, Steven
 Bradshaw, rh Mr Ben
 Brennan, Kevin
 Brock, Deidre
 Brown, Alan
 Brown, Ms Lyn
 Brown, rh Mr Nicholas
 Buck, Ms Karen
 Burgon, Richard
 Callaghan, Amy (*Proxy vote cast by Marion Fellows*)
 Campbell, rh Sir Alan
 Campbell, Mr Gregory
 Carden, Dan
 Carmichael, rh Mr Alistair
 Chamberlain, Wendy
 Champion, Sarah
 Chapman, Douglas
 Cherry, Joanna
 Cooper, Daisy
 Cooper, rh Yvette
 Crawley, Angela
 Creasy, Stella
 Cruddas, Jon
 Cryer, John
 Cummins, Judith
 Cunningham, Alex
 Daby, Janet
 Dalton, Ashley
 Davey, rh Ed
 Davies-Jones, Alex

Debbonaire, Thangam
 Dhesi, Mr Tanmanjeet Singh
 Dixon, Samantha
 Docherty-Hughes, Martin
 Dodds, Anneliese
 Donaldson, rh Sir Jeffrey M.
 Dorans, Allan (*Proxy vote cast by Marion Fellows*)
 Doughty, Stephen
 Dowd, Peter
 Duffield, Rosie
 Dyke, Sarah
 Eagle, Dame Angela
 Edwards, Jonathan
 Efford, Clive
 Elliott, Julie
 Elmore, Chris
 Eshalomi, Florence
 Esterson, Bill
 Farron, Tim
 Farry, Stephen
 Fellows, Marion
 Flynn, Stephen
 Fovargue, Yvonne
 Foxcroft, Vicky
 Foy, Mary Kelly
 Furniss, Gill
 Gardiner, Barry
 Grady, Patrick
 Greenwood, Lilian
 Greenwood, Margaret
 Griffith, Dame Nia
 Gwynne, Andrew
 Hamilton, Mrs Paulette
 Hanna, Claire
 Hardy, Emma
 Harman, rh Ms Harriet
 Harris, Carolyn
 Hayes, Helen
 Healey, rh John
 Hobhouse, Wera
 Hodge, rh Dame Margaret
 Hodgson, Mrs Sharon
 Howarth, rh Sir George

Hussain, Imran
 Jarvis, Dan
 Johnson, Kim
 Jones, Darren
 Jones, Gerald
 Jones, rh Mr Kevan
 Jones, Ruth
 Kane, Mike
 Keeley, Barbara
 Kendall, Liz
 Khan, Afzal
 Kinnock, Stephen
 Lake, Ben
 Lammy, rh Mr David
 Lavery, Ian
 Law, Chris
 Leadbeater, Kim
 Lewis, Clive
 Lightwood, Simon
 Lloyd, Tony
 Lockhart, Carla
 Long Bailey, Rebecca
 Lucas, Caroline
 Lynch, Holly
 MacAskill, Kenny
 MacNeil, Angus Brendan
 Madders, Justin
 Malhotra, Seema
 Maskell, Rachael
 McCabe, Steve
 McCarthy, Kerry
 McDonagh, Siobhain
 McDonald, Andy
 McDonnell, rh John
 McFadden, rh Mr Pat
 McGovern, Alison
 McKinnell, Catherine
 McMahon, Jim
 McMorris, Anna
 Mearns, Ian
 Miliband, rh Edward
 Mishra, Navendu
 Moran, Layla
 Morden, Jessica
 Morgan, Helen
 Morgan, Stephen
 Morris, Grahame
 Murray, Ian
 Murray, James
 Newlands, Gavin
 Nichols, Charlotte
 Nicolson, John (*Proxy vote cast by Marion Fellows*)
 O'Hara, Brendan
 Onwurah, Chi
 Oppong-Asare, Abena

Osamor, Kate
 Owatemi, Taiwo
 Owen, Sarah
 Pennycook, Matthew
 Perkins, Mr Toby
 Phillipson, Bridget
 Powell, Lucy
 Qaisar, Ms Anum
 Rayner, rh Angela
 Reed, Steve
 Rees, Christina
 Reynolds, Jonathan
 Ribeiro-Addy, Bell
 Rimmer, Ms Marie
 Robinson, Gavin
 Rodda, Matt
 Russell-Moyle, Lloyd
 Saville Roberts, rh Liz
 Shanks, Michael
 Shannon, Jim
 Sharma, Mr Virendra
 Sheerman, Mr Barry
 Siddiq, Tulip
 Smith, Cat
 Smith, Jeff
 Smyth, Karin
 Sobel, Alex
 Spellar, rh John
 Stephens, Chris
 Stevens, Jo
 Stone, Jamie
 Streeting, Wes
 Stringer, Graham
 Sultana, Zarah
 Tami, rh Mark
 Tarry, Sam
 Thomas, Gareth
 Thomas-Symonds, rh Nick
 Thompson, Owen
 Thornberry, rh Emily
 Timms, rh Sir Stephen
 Turner, Karl
 Twigg, Derek
 Twist, Liz
 Webbe, Claudia
 West, Catherine
 Western, Andrew
 Whitehead, Dr Alan
 Williams, Hywel
 Wilson, Munira
 Wilson, rh Sammy
 Zeichner, Daniel

Tellers for the Noes:
 Mary Glindon and
 Christian Wakeford

Question accordingly agreed to.

Lords amendment 2 disagreed to.

Motion made, and Question put, That this House disagrees with Lords amendment 4.—(Rachel Maclean.)

The House divided: Ayes 298, Noes 197.

Division No. 332]

[5.18 pm

AYES

Afolami, Bim
 Afriyie, Adam
 Aldous, Peter
 Allan, Lucy (*Proxy vote cast by Mr Marcus Jones*)

Anderson, Lee
 Anderson, Stuart
 Andrew, rh Stuart
 Ansell, Caroline
 Argar, rh Edward

Atherton, Sarah
 Atkins, Victoria
 Bacon, Gareth
 Bacon, Mr Richard
 Badenoch, rh Kemi
 Bailey, Shaun
 Baillie, Siobhan
 Baker, Duncan
 Baker, Mr Steve
 Baldwin, Harriett
 Barclay, rh Steve
 Baron, Mr John
 Baynes, Simon
 Bell, Aaron
 Benton, Scott
 Bhatti, Saqib
 Blackman, Bob
 Blunt, Crispin
 Bowie, Andrew
 Bradley, Ben
 Bradley, rh Karen
 Brady, Sir Graham
 Brereton, Jack
 Bridgen, Andrew
 Brine, Steve
 Bristow, Paul
 Britcliffe, Sara
 Browne, Anthony
 Bruce, Fiona
 Buchan, Felicity
 Buckland, rh Sir Robert
 Burghart, Alex
 Butler, Rob
 Cairns, rh Alun
 Cameron, Dr Lisa
 Carter, Andy
 Cartlidge, James
 Cates, Miriam
 Caulfield, Maria
 Chalk, rh Alex
 Chishti, Rehman
 Chope, Sir Christopher
 Churchill, Jo
 Clark, rh Greg
 Clarke, rh Sir Simon
 Clarke, Theo
 Clarke-Smith, Brendan
 Clarkson, Chris
 Coffey, rh Dr Thérèse
 Colburn, Elliot
 Collins, Damian
 Costa, Alberto
 Courts, Robert
 Coutinho, rh Claire
 Cox, rh Sir Geoffrey
 Crabb, rh Stephen
 Crosbie, Virginia
 Crouch, Tracey
 Daly, James
 Davies, rh David T. C.
 Davies, Gareth
 Davies, Dr James
 Davies, Mims
 Davies, Philip
 Davis, rh Mr David
 Davison, Dehenna
 Dinanage, Dame Caroline
 Dines, Miss Sarah
 Djanogly, Mr Jonathan
 Docherty, Leo

Donelan, rh Michelle (*Proxy vote cast by Mr Marcus Jones*)
 Double, Steve
 Doyle-Price, Jackie
 Drax, Richard
 Drummond, Mrs Flick
 Duddridge, Sir James
 Duguid, David
 Duncan Smith, rh Sir Iain
 Dunne, rh Philip
 Eastwood, Mark
 Edwards, Ruth
 Ellis, rh Sir Michael
 Ellwood, rh Mr Tobias
 Elphicke, Mrs Natalie
 Eustice, rh George
 Evennett, rh Sir David
 Everitt, Ben
 Fabricant, Michael
 Farris, Laura
 Fell, Simon
 Firth, Anna
 Fletcher, Katherine
 Fletcher, Mark
 Fletcher, Nick
 Foster, Kevin
 Frazer, rh Lucy
 Freeman, George
 Freer, Mike
 French, Mr Louie
 Fysh, Mr Marcus
 Garnier, Mark
 Gibb, rh Nick
 Gibson, Peter
 Gideon, Jo
 Glen, rh John
 Goodwill, rh Sir Robert
 Gove, rh Michael
 Graham, Richard
 Grant, Mrs Helen (*Proxy vote cast by Mr Marcus Jones*)
 Gray, James
 Grayling, rh Chris
 Green, Chris
 Green, rh Damian
 Griffith, Andrew
 Grundy, James
 Gullis, Jonathan
 Hall, Luke
 Hammond, Stephen
 Hands, rh Greg
 Harper, rh Mr Mark
 Harris, Rebecca
 Harrison, Trudy
 Hart, Sally-Ann
 Hart, rh Simon
 Hayes, rh Sir John
 Heald, rh Sir Oliver
 Heapey, rh James
 Henderson, Gordon
 Henry, Darren
 Higginbotham, Antony
 Hinds, rh Damian
 Hoare, Simon
 Holden, Mr Richard
 Hollinrake, Kevin
 Hollobone, Mr Philip
 Holloway, Adam
 Holmes, Paul
 Howell, John
 Howell, Paul

Huddleston, Nigel
 Hudson, Dr Neil
 Hunt, Jane (*Proxy vote cast by Mr Marcus Jones*)
 Hunt, Tom
 Javid, rh Sajid
 Jayawardena, rh Mr Ranil
 Jenkin, Sir Bernard
 Jenkinson, Mark
 Jenkyns, Dame Andrea
 Jenrick, rh Robert
 Johnson, Dr Caroline
 Johnson, Gareth
 Johnston, David
 Jones, Andrew
 Jones, rh Mr David
 Jones, Fay
 Jones, rh Mr Marcus
 Jupp, Simon
 Kawczynski, Daniel
 Knight, rh Sir Greg
 Kniveton, Kate
 Kruger, Danny
 Kwarteng, rh Kwasi
 Lamont, John
 Langan, Robert
 Latham, Mrs Pauline
 Leigh, rh Sir Edward
 Lewer, Andrew
 Lewis, rh Sir Brandon
 Lewis, rh Sir Julian
 Liddell-Grainger, Mr Ian
 Loder, Chris
 Logan, Mark
 Longhi, Marco
 Lopez, Julia (*Proxy vote cast by Mr Marcus Jones*)
 Lopresti, Jack
 Loughton, Tim
 Mackrory, Cherilyn
 Maclean, Rachel
 Mak, Alan
 Malthouse, rh Kit
 Mangnall, Anthony
 Marson, Julie
 May, rh Mrs Theresa
 Mayhew, Jerome
 Maynard, Paul
 McCartney, Jason
 McCartney, Karl
 McVey, rh Esther
 Menzies, Mark
 Metcalfe, Stephen
 Millar, Robin
 Mills, Nigel
 Mitchell, rh Mr Andrew
 Mohindra, Mr Gagan
 Moore, Damien
 Moore, Robbie
 Mordaunt, rh Penny
 Morris, Anne Marie
 Morris, David
 Morris, James
 Mortimer, Jill
 Morton, rh Wendy
 Mullan, Dr Kieran (*Proxy vote cast by Mr Marcus Jones*)
 Mumby-Croft, Holly
 Murrison, rh Dr Andrew
 Neill, Sir Robert
 Nici, Lia
 Nokes, rh Caroline

Norman, rh Jesse
 O'Brien, Neil
 Offord, Dr Matthew
 Opperman, Guy
 Pawsey, Mark
 Penning, rh Sir Mike
 Penrose, John
 Poulter, Dr Dan
 Pow, Rebecca
 Prentis, rh Victoria
 Pritchard, rh Mark
 Pursglove, Tom
 Quin, rh Jeremy
 Quince, Will
 Randall, Tom
 Redwood, rh John
 Rees-Mogg, rh Sir Jacob
 Richards, Nicola
 Richardson, Angela
 Robertson, Mr Laurence
 Ross, Douglas
 Russell, Dean
 Saxby, Selaine
 Scully, Paul
 Seely, Bob
 Selous, Andrew
 Sharma, rh Sir Alok
 Shelbrooke, rh Alec
 Skidmore, rh Chris
 Smith, rh Chloe
 Smith, Greg
 Smith, Henry
 Smith, Royston
 Solloway, Amanda
 Spencer, rh Mark
 Stafford, Alexander
 Stephenson, rh Andrew
 Stevenson, Jane
 Stevenson, John
 Stewart, rh Bob
 Stewart, Iain
 Stride, rh Mel
 Stuart, rh Graham
 Sturdy, Julian
 Sunderland, James
 Swayne, rh Sir Desmond
 Syms, Sir Robert
 Thomas, Derek
 Throup, Maggie
 Timpson, Edward
 Tolhurst, rh Kelly
 Tomlinson, Justin
 Tomlinson, Michael
 Trott, Laura
 Tuckwell, Steve
 Tugendhat, rh Tom
 Vara, rh Shailesh
 Vickers, Martin
 Vickers, Matt
 Villiers, rh Theresa
 Walker, Sir Charles
 Walker, Mr Robin
 Warman, Matt
 Watling, Giles
 Whately, Helen (*Proxy vote cast by Mr Marcus Jones*)
 Wheeler, Mrs Heather
 Whittaker, rh Craig
 Whittingdale, rh Sir John
 Wiggin, Sir Bill

Wild, James
Williams, Craig
Williamson, rh Sir Gavin
Wood, Mike
Wragg, Mr William
Wright, rh Sir Jeremy

Young, Jacob
Zahawi, rh Nadhim

Tellers for the Ayes:

**Joy Morrissey and
Scott Mann**

NOES

Abrahams, Debbie
Ali, Rushanara
Ali, Tahir
Amesbury, Mike
Anderson, Fleur
Ashworth, rh Jonathan
Bardell, Hannah
Barker, Paula
Beckett, rh Margaret
Benn, rh Hilary
Blackman, Kirsty
Blake, Olivia
Blomfield, Paul
Bonnar, Steven
Bottomley, Sir Peter
Bradshaw, rh Mr Ben
Brennan, Kevin
Brock, Deidre
Brown, Alan
Brown, Ms Lyn
Brown, rh Mr Nicholas
Buck, Ms Karen
Burgon, Richard
Byrne, rh Liam
Callaghan, Amy (*Proxy vote
cast by Marion Fellows*)
Campbell, rh Sir Alan
Campbell, Mr Gregory
Carden, Dan
Carmichael, rh Mr Alistair
Chamberlain, Wendy
Champion, Sarah
Chapman, Douglas
Cherry, Joanna
Cooper, Daisy
Cooper, rh Yvette
Crawley, Angela
Creasy, Stella
Cruddas, Jon
Cryer, John
Cummins, Judith
Daby, Janet
Dalton, Ashley
Davey, rh Ed
Davies-Jones, Alex
Debbonaire, Thangam
Dhesi, Mr Tanmanjeet Singh
Dixon, Samantha
Docherty-Hughes, Martin
Dodds, Anneliese
Donaldson, rh Sir Jeffrey M.
Dorans, Allan (*Proxy vote cast
by Marion Fellows*)
Doughty, Stephen
Dowd, Peter
Duffield, Rosie
Dyke, Sarah
Eagle, Dame Angela
Edwards, Jonathan
Efford, Clive
Elliott, Julie
Elmore, Chris
Eshalomi, Florence

Esterson, Bill
Farron, Tim
Farry, Stephen
Fellows, Marion
Flynn, Stephen
Fovargue, Yvonne
Foxcroft, Vicky
Foy, Mary Kelly
Furniss, Gill
Gardiner, Barry
Grady, Patrick
Greenwood, Lilian
Greenwood, Margaret
Griffith, Dame Nia
Gwynne, Andrew
Hamilton, Mrs Paulette
Hanna, Claire
Hardy, Emma
Harman, rh Ms Harriet
Harris, Carolyn
Hayes, Helen
Hobhouse, Wera
Hodge, rh Dame Margaret
Hodgson, Mrs Sharon
Howarth, rh Sir George
Hussain, Imran
Jarvis, Dan
Johnson, rh Dame Diana
Johnson, Kim
Jones, Darren
Jones, Gerald
Jones, rh Mr Kevan
Jones, Ruth
Kane, Mike
Keeley, Barbara
Kendall, Liz
Khan, Afzal
Kinnock, Stephen
Lake, Ben
Lammy, rh Mr David
Lavery, Ian
Law, Chris
Leadbeater, Kim
Lewis, Clive
Lightwood, Simon
Lloyd, Tony
Lockhart, Carla
Long Bailey, Rebecca
Lucas, Caroline
Lynch, Holly
MacAskill, Kenny
MacNeil, Angus Brendan
Madders, Justin
Malhotra, Seema
Maskell, Rachael
McCabe, Steve
McCarthy, Kerry
McDonagh, Siobhain
McDonald, Andy
McDonnell, rh John
McFadden, rh Mr Pat
McGovern, Alison
McKinnell, Catherine

McMahon, Jim
McMorris, Anna
Mearns, Ian
Miliband, rh Edward
Mishra, Navendu
Moran, Layla
Morden, Jessica
Morgan, Helen
Morgan, Stephen
Morris, Grahame
Murray, Ian
Murray, James
Newlands, Gavin
Nichols, Charlotte
Nicolson, John (*Proxy vote
cast by Marion Fellows*)
O'Hara, Brendan
Onwurah, Chi
Oppong-Asare, Abena
Osamor, Kate
Owatemi, Taiwo
Owen, Sarah
Pennycook, Matthew
Perkins, Mr Toby
Phillipson, Bridget
Powell, Lucy
Qaisar, Ms Anum
Rayner, rh Angela
Reed, Steve
Rees, Christina
Reynolds, Jonathan
Ribeiro-Addy, Bell
Rimmer, Ms Marie
Robinson, Gavin
Rodda, Matt
Russell-Moyle, Lloyd
Saville Roberts, rh Liz
Shanks, Michael
Shannon, Jim

Sharma, Mr Virendra
Sheerman, Mr Barry
Siddiq, Tulip
Smith, Cat
Smith, Jeff
Smyth, Karin
Sobel, Alex
Spellar, rh John
Stephens, Chris
Stevens, Jo
Stone, Jamie
Streeting, Wes
Stringer, Graham
Sultana, Zarah
Tami, rh Mark
Tarry, Sam
Thomas, Gareth
Thomas-Symonds, rh Nick
Thompson, Owen
Thornberry, rh Emily
Timms, rh Sir Stephen
Turner, Karl
Twigg, Derek
Twist, Liz
Vaz, rh Valerie
Webbe, Claudia
West, Catherine
Western, Andrew
Whitehead, Dr Alan
Whittome, Nadia
Williams, Hywel
Wilson, Munira
Wilson, rh Sammy
Zeichner, Daniel

Tellers for the Noes:

**Mary Glindon and
Christian Wakeford**

Question accordingly agreed to.

Lords amendment 4 disagreed to.

*Government amendments (a) and (b) made in lieu of
Lords amendments 2 and 4.*

*Motion made, and Question put, That this House
disagrees with Lords amendment 3.—(Rachel Maclean.)*

The House divided: Ayes 300, Noes 193.

Division No. 333]

[5.30 pm

AYES

Afolami, Bim
Afriyie, Adam
Aldous, Peter
Allan, Lucy (*Proxy vote cast
by Mr Marcus Jones*)
Anderson, Lee
Anderson, Stuart
Andrew, rh Stuart
Ansell, Caroline
Argar, rh Edward
Atherton, Sarah
Atkins, Victoria
Bacon, Gareth
Bacon, Mr Richard
Badenoch, rh Kemi
Bailey, Shaun
Baillie, Siobhan
Baker, Duncan
Baker, Mr Steve

Baldwin, Harriett
Barclay, rh Steve
Baron, Mr John
Baynes, Simon
Bell, Aaron
Benton, Scott
Bhatti, Saqib
Blackman, Bob
Blunt, Crispin
Bottomley, Sir Peter
Bowie, Andrew
Bradley, Ben
Bradley, rh Karen
Brady, Sir Graham
Braverman, rh Suella
Brereton, Jack
Bridgen, Andrew
Brine, Steve
Bristow, Paul

Britcliffe, Sara
 Browne, Anthony
 Bruce, Fiona
 Buchan, Felicity
 Buckland, rh Sir Robert
 Burghart, Alex
 Butler, Rob
 Cairns, rh Alun
 Cameron, Dr Lisa
 Carter, Andy
 Cartledge, James
 Cates, Miriam
 Caulfield, Maria
 Chalk, rh Alex
 Chishti, Rehman
 Chope, Sir Christopher
 Churchill, Jo
 Clark, rh Greg
 Clarke, rh Sir Simon
 Clarke, Theo
 Clarke-Smith, Brendan
 Clackson, Chris
 Coffey, rh Dr Thérèse
 Colburn, Elliot
 Collins, Damian
 Costa, Alberto
 Coutinho, rh Claire
 Cox, rh Sir Geoffrey
 Crabb, rh Stephen
 Crosbie, Virginia
 Crouch, Tracey
 Daly, James
 Davies, rh David T. C.
 Davies, Gareth
 Davies, Dr James
 Davies, Mims
 Davies, Philip
 Davis, rh Mr David
 Davison, Dehenna
 Dinenage, Dame Caroline
 Dines, Miss Sarah
 Djanogly, Mr Jonathan
 Docherty, Leo
 Donelan, rh Michelle (*Proxy vote cast by Mr Marcus Jones*)
 Double, Steve
 Doyle-Price, Jackie
 Drax, Richard
 Drummond, Mrs Flick
 Duddridge, Sir James
 Duguid, David
 Duncan Smith, rh Sir Iain
 Dunne, rh Philip
 Eastwood, Mark
 Edwards, Ruth
 Ellis, rh Sir Michael
 Ellwood, rh Mr Tobias
 Elphicke, Mrs Natalie
 Eustice, rh George
 Evennett, rh Sir David
 Everitt, Ben
 Fabricant, Michael
 Farris, Laura
 Fell, Simon
 Firth, Anna
 Fletcher, Katherine
 Fletcher, Mark
 Fletcher, Nick
 Foster, Kevin
 Frazer, rh Lucy
 Freeman, George

Freer, Mike
 French, Mr Louie
 Fysh, Mr Marcus
 Garnier, Mark
 Gibb, rh Nick
 Gibson, Peter
 Gideon, Jo
 Glen, rh John
 Goodwill, rh Sir Robert
 Gove, rh Michael
 Graham, Richard
 Grant, Mrs Helen (*Proxy vote cast by Mr Marcus Jones*)
 Gray, James
 Grayling, rh Chris
 Green, Chris
 Green, rh Damian
 Griffith, Andrew
 Grundy, James
 Gullis, Jonathan
 Hall, Luke
 Hammond, Stephen
 Hands, rh Greg
 Harper, rh Mr Mark
 Harris, Rebecca
 Harrison, Trudy
 Hart, Sally-Ann
 Hart, rh Simon
 Hayes, rh Sir John
 Heald, rh Sir Oliver
 Heappey, rh James
 Henderson, Gordon
 Henry, Darren
 Higginbotham, Antony
 Hinds, rh Damian
 Hoare, Simon
 Holden, Mr Richard
 Hollinrake, Kevin
 Hollobone, Mr Philip
 Holloway, Adam
 Holmes, Paul
 Howell, John
 Howell, Paul
 Huddleston, Nigel
 Hudson, Dr Neil
 Hunt, Jane (*Proxy vote cast by Mr Marcus Jones*)
 Hunt, Tom
 Javid, rh Sajid
 Jayawardena, rh Mr Ranil
 Jenkin, Sir Bernard
 Jenkinson, Mark
 Jenkyns, Dame Andrea
 Johnson, Dr Caroline
 Johnson, Gareth
 Johnston, David
 Jones, Andrew
 Jones, rh Mr David
 Jones, Fay
 Jones, rh Mr Marcus
 Jupp, Simon
 Kawczynski, Daniel
 Kearns, Alicia
 Knight, rh Sir Greg
 Kniveton, Kate
 Kruger, Danny
 Kwarteng, rh Kwasi
 Lamont, John
 Largan, Robert
 Latham, Mrs Pauline
 Leadsom, rh Dame Andrea
 Leigh, rh Sir Edward

Lewer, Andrew
 Lewis, rh Sir Brandon
 Lewis, rh Sir Julian
 Liddell-Grainger, Mr Ian
 Loder, Chris
 Logan, Mark
 Longhi, Marco
 Lopez, Julia (*Proxy vote cast by Mr Marcus Jones*)
 Lopresti, Jack
 Loughton, Tim
 Mackrory, Cherilyn
 Maclean, Rachel
 Mak, Alan
 Malthouse, rh Kit
 Mangnall, Anthony
 Marson, Julie
 May, rh Mrs Theresa
 Mayhew, Jerome
 Maynard, Paul
 McCartney, Jason
 McCartney, Karl
 McVey, rh Esther
 Menzies, Mark
 Mercer, rh Johnny
 Metcalfe, Stephen
 Millar, Robin
 Mills, Nigel
 Mitchell, rh Mr Andrew
 Mohindra, Mr Gagan
 Moore, Damien
 Moore, Robbie
 Mordaunt, rh Penny
 Morris, Anne Marie
 Morris, David
 Morris, James
 Mortimer, Jill
 Morton, rh Wendy
 Mullan, Dr Kieran (*Proxy vote cast by Mr Marcus Jones*)
 Mumby-Croft, Holly
 Murrison, rh Dr Andrew
 Neill, Sir Robert
 Nici, Lia
 Nokes, rh Caroline
 Norman, rh Jesse
 O'Brien, Neil
 Offord, Dr Matthew
 Opperman, Guy
 Patel, rh Priti
 Pawsey, Mark
 Penning, rh Sir Mike
 Penrose, John
 Percy, Andrew
 Poulter, Dr Dan
 Pow, Rebecca
 Prentis, rh Victoria
 Pritchard, rh Mark
 Pursglove, Tom
 Quin, rh Jeremy
 Quince, Will
 Randall, Tom
 Redwood, rh John
 Rees-Mogg, rh Sir Jacob
 Richards, Nicola

Richardson, Angela
 Robertson, Mr Laurence
 Ross, Douglas
 Russell, Dean
 Saxby, Selaine
 Scully, Paul
 Seely, Bob
 Selous, Andrew
 Sharma, rh Sir Alok
 Shelbrooke, rh Alec
 Skidmore, rh Chris
 Smith, rh Chloe
 Smith, Greg
 Smith, Henry
 Smith, Royston
 Solloway, Amanda
 Spencer, rh Mark
 Stafford, Alexander
 Stephenson, rh Andrew
 Stevenson, Jane
 Stevenson, John
 Stewart, rh Bob
 Stewart, Iain
 Stride, rh Mel
 Stuart, rh Graham
 Sturdy, Julian
 Sunderland, James
 Swayne, rh Sir Desmond
 Syms, Sir Robert
 Thomas, Derek
 Throup, Maggie
 Timpson, Edward
 Tolhurst, rh Kelly
 Tomlinson, Justin
 Tomlinson, Michael
 Trott, Laura
 Tuckwell, Steve
 Tugendhat, rh Tom
 Vara, rh Shailesh
 Vickers, Martin
 Vickers, Matt
 Villiers, rh Theresa
 Walker, Sir Charles
 Walker, Mr Robin
 Warman, Matt
 Watling, Giles
 Whately, Helen (*Proxy vote cast by Mr Marcus Jones*)
 Wheeler, Mrs Heather
 Whittaker, rh Craig
 Whittingdale, rh Sir John
 Wiggins, Sir Bill
 Wild, James
 Williams, Craig
 Williamson, rh Sir Gavin
 Wood, Mike
 Wragg, Mr William
 Wright, rh Sir Jeremy
 Young, Jacob
 Zahawi, rh Nadhim
Tellers for the Ayes:
 Joy Morrissey and
 Scott Mann

NOES

Abrahams, Debbie
 Ali, Tahir
 Amesbury, Mike
 Anderson, Fleur

Ashworth, rh Jonathan
 Bardell, Hannah
 Barker, Paula
 Beckett, rh Margaret

Benn, rh Hilary
 Blackman, Kirsty
 Blake, Olivia
 Blomfield, Paul
 Bonnar, Steven
 Bradshaw, rh Mr Ben
 Brennan, Kevin
 Brock, Deidre
 Brown, Alan
 Brown, Ms Lyn
 Brown, rh Mr Nicholas
 Buck, Ms Karen
 Burgon, Richard
 Byrne, rh Liam
 Callaghan, Amy (*Proxy vote cast by Mr Marcus Jones*)
 Campbell, rh Sir Alan
 Campbell, Mr Gregory
 Carden, Dan
 Carmichael, rh Mr Alistair
 Chamberlain, Wendy
 Champion, Sarah
 Chapman, Douglas
 Cherry, Joanna
 Cooper, Daisy
 Cooper, rh Yvette
 Crawley, Angela
 Creasy, Stella
 Cruddas, Jon
 Cryer, John
 Cummins, Judith
 Cunningham, Alex
 Daby, Janet
 Dalton, Ashley
 Davey, rh Ed
 Davies-Jones, Alex
 Debonnaire, Thangam
 Dhesi, Mr Tanmanjeet Singh
 Dixon, Samantha
 Docherty-Hughes, Martin
 Dodds, Anneliese
 Donaldson, rh Sir Jeffrey M.
 Dorans, Allan (*Proxy vote cast by Marion Fellows*)
 Doughty, Stephen
 Dowd, Peter
 Duffield, Rosie
 Dyke, Sarah
 Eagle, Dame Angela
 Edwards, Jonathan
 Efford, Clive
 Elliott, Julie
 Elmore, Chris
 Eshalomi, Florence
 Esterson, Bill
 Farron, Tim
 Farry, Stephen
 Fellows, Marion
 Flynn, Stephen
 Fovargue, Yvonne
 Foxcroft, Vicky
 Foy, Mary Kelly
 Furniss, Gill
 Gardiner, Barry
 Grady, Patrick
 Greenwood, Lilian
 Greenwood, Margaret
 Griffith, Dame Nia
 Gwynne, Andrew
 Hamilton, Mrs Paulette
 Hardy, Emma
 Harman, rh Ms Harriet

Harris, Carolyn
 Hayes, Helen
 Hobhouse, Wera
 Hodge, rh Dame Margaret
 Hodgson, Mrs Sharon
 Howarth, rh Sir George
 Hussain, Imran
 Jarvis, Dan
 Johnson, rh Dame Diana
 Johnson, Kim
 Jones, Darren
 Jones, Gerald
 Jones, rh Mr Kevan
 Jones, Ruth
 Kane, Mike
 Keeley, Barbara
 Kendall, Liz
 Khan, Afzal
 Kinnock, Stephen
 Lake, Ben
 Lavery, Ian
 Law, Chris
 Leadbeater, Kim
 Lewis, Clive
 Lightwood, Simon
 Lloyd, Tony
 Lockhart, Carla
 Long Bailey, Rebecca
 Lucas, Caroline
 Lynch, Holly
 MacAskill, Kenny
 MacNeil, Angus Brendan
 Madders, Justin
 Malhotra, Seema
 Maskell, Rachael
 McCabe, Steve
 McCarthy, Kerry
 McDonagh, Siobhain
 McDonald, Andy
 McDonnell, rh John
 McFadden, rh Mr Pat
 McGovern, Alison
 McKinnell, Catherine
 McMahon, Jim
 McMorris, Anna
 Mearns, Ian
 Miliband, rh Edward
 Mishra, Navendu
 Moran, Layla
 Morden, Jessica
 Morgan, Helen
 Morgan, Stephen
 Morris, Grahame
 Murray, Ian
 Murray, James
 Nandy, Lisa
 Newlands, Gavin
 Nichols, Charlotte
 Nicolson, John (*Proxy vote cast by Marion Fellows*)
 O'Hara, Brendan
 Onwurah, Chi
 Oppong-Asare, Abena
 Osamor, Kate
 Owatemi, Taiwo
 Owen, Sarah
 Pennycook, Matthew
 Perkins, Mr Toby
 Phillipson, Bridget
 Powell, Lucy
 Qaisar, Ms Anum
 Rayner, rh Angela

Reed, Steve
 Rees, Christina
 Reynolds, Jonathan
 Ribeiro-Addy, Bell
 Rimmer, Ms Marie
 Robinson, Gavin
 Rodda, Matt
 Russell-Moyle, Lloyd
 Saville Roberts, rh Liz
 Shanks, Michael
 Shannon, Jim
 Sharma, Mr Virendra
 Sheerman, Mr Barry
 Siddiq, Tulip
 Smith, Cat
 Smith, Jeff
 Smyth, Karin
 Sobel, Alex
 Spellar, rh John
 Stephens, Chris
 Stevens, Jo
 Stone, Jamie
 Stringer, Graham

Sultana, Zarah
 Tami, rh Mark
 Thomas, Gareth
 Thomas-Symonds, rh Nick
 Thompson, Owen
 Thornberry, rh Emily
 Timms, rh Sir Stephen
 Turner, Karl
 Twigg, Derek
 Twist, Liz
 Vaz, rh Valerie
 Webbe, Claudia
 West, Catherine
 Western, Andrew
 Whitehead, Dr Alan
 Whittome, Nadia
 Williams, Hywel
 Wilson, Munira
 Wilson, rh Sammy
 Zeichner, Daniel

Tellers for the Noes:
 Mary Glindon and
 Christian Wakeford

Question accordingly agreed to.

Lords amendment 3 disagreed to.

Lords amendment 6 disagreed to.

*Government amendments (a) to (d) made in lieu of
 Lords amendment 6.*

After Clause 5

LEVELLING UP FUND: ROUND THREE

*Motion made, and Question put, That this House
 disagrees with Lords amendment 10.—(Rachel Maclean.)*

The House divided: Ayes 297, Noes 193.

Division No. 334]

[5.42pm

AYES

Afolami, Bim
 Afriyie, Adam
 Aldous, Peter
 Allan, Lucy (*Proxy vote cast by Mr Marcus Jones*)
 Anderson, Lee
 Anderson, Stuart
 Andrew, rh Stuart
 Ansell, Caroline
 Argar, rh Edward
 Atherton, Sarah
 Atkins, Victoria
 Bacon, Gareth
 Bacon, Mr Richard
 Bailey, Shaun
 Baillie, Siobhan
 Baker, Duncan
 Baker, Mr Steve
 Baldwin, Harriett
 Barclay, rh Steve
 Baron, Mr John
 Baynes, Simon
 Bell, Aaron
 Benton, Scott
 Bhatti, Saqib
 Blackman, Bob
 Blunt, Crispin
 Bottomley, Sir Peter

Bowie, Andrew
 Bradley, Ben
 Bradley, rh Karen
 Brady, Sir Graham
 Brereton, Jack
 Bridgen, Andrew
 Brine, Steve
 Bristow, Paul
 Britcliffe, Sara
 Browne, Anthony
 Bruce, Fiona
 Buchan, Felicity
 Buckland, rh Sir Robert
 Burghart, Alex
 Butler, Rob
 Cairns, rh Alun
 Cameron, Dr Lisa
 Carter, Andy
 Cartlidge, James
 Cates, Miriam
 Caulfield, Maria
 Chalk, rh Alex
 Chishti, Rehman
 Chope, Sir Christopher
 Clark, rh Greg
 Clarke, rh Sir Simon
 Clarke, Theo
 Clarke-Smith, Brendan

Clarkson, Chris
 Cleverly, rh James
 Coffey, rh Dr Thérèse
 Colburn, Elliot
 Collins, Damian
 Costa, Alberto
 Courts, Robert
 Coutinho, rh Claire
 Cox, rh Sir Geoffrey
 Crabb, rh Stephen
 Crosbie, Virginia
 Crouch, Tracey
 Daly, James
 Davies, rh David T. C.
 Davies, Gareth
 Davies, Dr James
 Davies, Mims
 Davis, rh Mr David
 Davison, Dehenna
 Dinenage, Dame Caroline
 Dines, Miss Sarah
 Djanogly, Mr Jonathan
 Docherty, Leo
 Donelan, rh Michelle (*Proxy vote cast by Mr Marcus Jones*)
 Double, Steve
 Drax, Richard
 Drummond, Mrs Flick
 Duguid, David
 Duncan Smith, rh Sir Iain
 Dunne, rh Philip
 Eastwood, Mark
 Edwards, Ruth
 Ellis, rh Sir Michael
 Ellwood, rh Mr Tobias
 Elphicke, Mrs Natalie
 Eustice, rh George
 Evennett, rh Sir David
 Everitt, Ben
 Fabricant, Michael
 Farris, Laura
 Fell, Simon
 Firth, Anna
 Fletcher, Katherine
 Fletcher, Mark
 Fletcher, Nick
 Foster, Kevin
 Frazer, rh Lucy
 Freeman, George
 Freer, Mike
 French, Mr Louie
 Fysh, Mr Marcus
 Garnier, Mark
 Gibb, rh Nick
 Gibson, Peter
 Gideon, Jo
 Glen, rh John
 Goodwill, rh Sir Robert
 Gove, rh Michael
 Graham, Richard
 Grant, Mrs Helen (*Proxy vote cast by Mr Marcus Jones*)
 Gray, James
 Grayling, rh Chris
 Green, Chris
 Green, rh Damian
 Griffith, Andrew
 Grundy, James
 Gullis, Jonathan
 Hall, Luke
 Hammond, Stephen

Hands, rh Greg
 Harper, rh Mr Mark
 Harris, Rebecca
 Harrison, Trudy
 Hart, Sally-Ann
 Hart, rh Simon
 Hayes, rh Sir John
 Heald, rh Sir Oliver
 Heapey, rh James
 Henderson, Gordon
 Henry, Darren
 Higginbotham, Antony
 Hinds, rh Damian
 Hoare, Simon
 Holden, Mr Richard
 Hollinrake, Kevin
 Hollobone, Mr Philip
 Holloway, Adam
 Holmes, Paul
 Howell, John
 Howell, Paul
 Huddleston, Nigel
 Hudson, Dr Neil
 Hunt, Jane (*Proxy vote cast by Mr Marcus Jones*)
 Hunt, Tom
 Javid, rh Sajid
 Jayawardena, rh Mr Ranil
 Jenkin, Sir Bernard
 Jenkinson, Mark
 Jenrick, rh Robert
 Johnson, Dr Caroline
 Johnson, Gareth
 Johnston, David
 Jones, Andrew
 Jones, rh Mr David
 Jones, Fay
 Jones, rh Mr Marcus
 Jupp, Simon
 Kawczynski, Daniel
 Kearns, Alicia
 Knight, rh Sir Greg
 Kniveton, Kate
 Kruger, Danny
 Kwarteng, rh Kwasi
 Lamont, John
 Langan, Robert
 Latham, Mrs Pauline
 Leadsom, rh Dame Andrea
 Leigh, rh Sir Edward
 Lewer, Andrew
 Lewis, rh Sir Brandon
 Lewis, rh Sir Julian
 Liddell-Grainger, Mr Ian
 Loder, Chris
 Logan, Mark
 Longhi, Marco
 Lopez, Julia (*Proxy vote cast by Mr Marcus Jones*)
 Lopresti, Jack
 Loughton, Tim
 Mackrory, Cherilyn
 Maclean, Rachel
 Mak, Alan
 Malthouse, rh Kit
 Mangnall, Anthony
 Marson, Julie
 May, rh Mrs Theresa
 Mayhew, Jerome
 Maynard, Paul
 McCartney, Jason
 McCartney, Karl

Menzies, Mark
 Mercer, rh Johnny
 Metcalfe, Stephen
 Millar, Robin
 Mills, Nigel
 Mohindra, Mr Gagan
 Moore, Damien
 Moore, Robbie
 Mordaunt, rh Penny
 Morris, Anne Marie
 Morris, David
 Morris, James
 Mortimer, Jill
 Morton, rh Wendy
 Mullan, Dr Kieran (*Proxy vote cast by Mr Marcus Jones*)
 Mumby-Croft, Holly
 Murrison, rh Dr Andrew
 Neill, Sir Robert
 Nici, Lia
 Nokes, rh Caroline
 Norman, rh Jesse
 O'Brien, Neil
 Offord, Dr Matthew
 Opperman, Guy
 Patel, rh Priti
 Pawsey, Mark
 Penning, rh Sir Mike
 Penrose, John
 Percy, Andrew
 Poulter, Dr Dan
 Pow, Rebecca
 Prentis, rh Victoria
 Pritchard, rh Mark
 Pursglove, Tom
 Quin, rh Jeremy
 Quince, Will
 Randall, Tom
 Redwood, rh John
 Rees-Mogg, rh Sir Jacob
 Richards, Nicola
 Richardson, Angela
 Robertson, Mr Laurence
 Ross, Douglas
 Russell, Dean
 Saxby, Selaine
 Scully, Paul
 Seely, Bob
 Selous, Andrew
 Sharma, rh Sir Alok
 Shelbrooke, rh Alec
 Skidmore, rh Chris
 Smith, rh Chloe

Smith, Greg
 Smith, Henry
 Smith, Royston
 Solloway, Amanda
 Spencer, rh Mark
 Stafford, Alexander
 Stephenson, rh Andrew
 Stevenson, Jane
 Stevenson, John
 Stewart, rh Bob
 Stewart, Iain
 Stride, rh Mel
 Stuart, rh Graham
 Sturdy, Julian
 Sunderland, James
 Swayne, rh Sir Desmond
 Syms, Sir Robert
 Thomas, Derek
 Throup, Maggie
 Timpson, Edward
 Tolhurst, rh Kelly
 Tomlinson, Justin
 Tomlinson, Michael
 Trott, Laura
 Tuckwell, Steve
 Tugendhat, rh Tom
 Vara, rh Shailesh
 Vickers, Martin
 Vickers, Matt
 Villiers, rh Theresa
 Walker, Sir Charles
 Walker, Mr Robin
 Warman, Matt
 Watling, Giles
 Whately, Helen (*Proxy vote cast by Mr Marcus Jones*)
 Wheeler, Mrs Heather
 Whittaker, rh Craig
 Whittingdale, rh Sir John
 Wiggin, Sir Bill
 Wild, James
 Williams, Craig
 Williamson, rh Sir Gavin
 Wood, Mike
 Wragg, Mr William
 Wright, rh Sir Jeremy
 Young, Jacob
 Zahawi, rh Nadhim

Tellers for the Ayes:

Joy Morrissey and
 Scott Mann

NOES

Abrahams, Debbie
 Ali, Rushanara
 Ali, Tahir
 Amesbury, Mike
 Anderson, Fleur
 Ashworth, rh Jonathan
 Bardell, Hannah
 Barker, Paula
 Beckett, rh Margaret
 Benn, rh Hilary
 Blackman, Kirsty
 Blake, Olivia
 Blomfield, Paul
 Bonnar, Steven
 Bradshaw, rh Mr Ben
 Brennan, Kevin

Brock, Deidre
 Brown, Alan
 Brown, Ms Lyn
 Brown, rh Mr Nicholas
 Buck, Ms Karen
 Burgon, Richard
 Byrne, rh Liam
 Callaghan, Amy (*Proxy vote cast by Marion Fellows*)
 Campbell, rh Sir Alan
 Campbell, Mr Gregory
 Carden, Dan
 Carmichael, rh Mr Alistair
 Chamberlain, Wendy
 Champion, Sarah
 Chapman, Douglas

Cherry, Joanna
 Cooper, Daisy
 Cooper, rh Yvette
 Crawley, Angela
 Creasy, Stella
 Cruddas, Jon
 Cummins, Judith
 Cunningham, Alex
 Daby, Janet
 Dalton, Ashley
 Davey, rh Ed
 Davies-Jones, Alex
 Debbonaire, Thangam
 Dhesi, Mr Tanmanjeet Singh
 Dixon, Samantha
 Docherty-Hughes, Martin
 Dodds, Anneliese
 Donaldson, rh Sir Jeffrey M.
 Dorans, Allan (*Proxy vote cast by Marion Fellows*)
 Doughty, Stephen
 Dowd, Peter
 Duffield, Rosie
 Dyke, Sarah
 Eagle, Dame Angela
 Edwards, Jonathan
 Efford, Clive
 Elliott, Julie
 Elmore, Chris
 Eshalomi, Florence
 Esterson, Bill
 Farron, Tim
 Farry, Stephen
 Fellows, Marion
 Flynn, Stephen
 Fovargue, Yvonne
 Foxcroft, Vicky
 Foy, Mary Kelly
 Furniss, Gill
 Gardiner, Barry
 Grady, Patrick
 Greenwood, Lilian
 Greenwood, Margaret
 Griffith, Dame Nia
 Gwynne, Andrew
 Hamilton, Mrs Paulette
 Hardy, Emma
 Harman, rh Ms Harriet
 Harris, Carolyn
 Hayes, Helen
 Hobhouse, Wera
 Hodge, rh Dame Margaret
 Hodgson, Mrs Sharon
 Hussain, Imran
 Jarvis, Dan
 Johnson, rh Dame Diana
 Johnson, Kim
 Jones, Darren
 Jones, Gerald
 Jones, rh Mr Kevan
 Jones, Ruth
 Kane, Mike
 Keeley, Barbara
 Kendall, Liz
 Khan, Afzal
 Kinnock, Stephen
 Lake, Ben
 Lavery, Ian
 Law, Chris
 Leadbeater, Kim
 Lewis, Clive
 Lightwood, Simon

Lloyd, Tony
 Lockhart, Carla
 Long Bailey, Rebecca
 Lucas, Caroline
 Lynch, Holly
 MacAskill, Kenny
 Madders, Justin
 Malhotra, Seema
 Maskell, Rachael
 McCabe, Steve
 McCarthy, Kerry
 McDonagh, Siobhain
 McDonald, Andy
 McDonnell, rh John
 McFadden, rh Mr Pat
 McGovern, Alison
 McKinnell, Catherine
 McMahon, Jim
 McMorris, Anna
 Mearns, Ian
 Miliband, rh Edward
 Mishra, Navendu
 Moran, Layla
 Morden, Jessica
 Morgan, Helen
 Morgan, Stephen
 Morris, Grahame
 Murray, Ian
 Murray, James
 Nandy, Lisa
 Newlands, Gavin
 Nichols, Charlotte
 Nicolson, John (*Proxy vote cast by Marion Fellows*)
 Oppong-Asare, Abena
 Osamor, Kate
 Owatemi, Taiwo
 Owen, Sarah
 Pennycook, Matthew
 Perkins, Mr Toby
 Phillipson, Bridget
 Powell, Lucy
 Qaisar, Ms Anum
 Rayner, rh Angela
 Reed, Steve
 Rees, Christina
 Reynolds, Jonathan
 Ribeiro-Addy, Bell
 Rimmer, Ms Marie
 Robinson, Gavin
 Rodda, Matt
 Russell-Moyle, Lloyd
 Saville Roberts, rh Liz
 Shanks, Michael
 Shannon, Jim
 Sharma, Mr Virendra
 Sheerman, Mr Barry
 Siddiq, Tulip
 Smith, Cat
 Smith, Jeff
 Smyth, Karin
 Spellar, rh John
 Stephens, Chris
 Stevens, Jo
 Stone, Jamie
 Streeter, Wes
 Stringer, Graham
 Sultana, Sarah
 Tami, rh Mark
 Tarry, Sam
 Thomas, Gareth
 Thomas-Symonds, rh Nick

Thompson, Owen
 Thornberry, rh Emily
 Timms, rh Sir Stephen
 Turner, Karl
 Twigg, Derek
 Twist, Liz
 Vaz, rh Valerie
 Webbe, Claudia
 West, Catherine
 Western, Andrew

Whitehead, Dr Alan
 Whittome, Nadia
 Williams, Hywel
 Wilson, Munira
 Wilson, rh Sammy
 Zeichner, Daniel

Tellers for the Noes:

Mary Glindon and
 Christian Wakeford

Question accordingly agreed to.

Lords amendment 10 disagreed to.

*Government amendments (a) and (b) made in lieu of
 Lords amendment 10.*

Clause 9

NON-CONSTITUENT MEMBERS OF A CCA

*Motion made, and Question put, That this House
 disagrees with Lords amendment 13.—(Rachel Maclean.)*

The House divided: Ayes 304, Noes 159.

Division No. 335]

[5.54 pm

AYES

Afolami, Bim
 Afriyie, Adam
 Aldous, Peter
 Allan, Lucy (*Proxy vote cast by Mr Marcus Jones*)
 Anderson, Lee
 Anderson, Stuart
 Andrew, rh Stuart
 Ansell, Caroline
 Argar, rh Edward
 Atherton, Sarah
 Atkins, Victoria
 Bacon, Gareth
 Bacon, Mr Richard
 Bailey, Shaun
 Baillie, Siobhan
 Baker, Duncan
 Baker, Mr Steve
 Baldwin, Harriett
 Barclay, rh Steve
 Baron, Mr John
 Baynes, Simon
 Bell, Aaron
 Benton, Scott
 Bhatti, Saqib
 Blackman, Bob
 Blunt, Crispin
 Bottomley, Sir Peter
 Bowie, Andrew
 Bradley, Ben
 Bradley, rh Karen
 Brady, Sir Graham
 Brereton, Jack
 Bridgen, Andrew
 Brine, Steve
 Bristow, Paul
 Britcliffe, Sara
 Browne, Anthony
 Bruce, Fiona
 Buchan, Felicity
 Buckland, rh Sir Robert
 Burghart, Alex
 Butler, Rob

Cairns, rh Alun
 Cameron, Dr Lisa
 Campbell, Mr Gregory
 Carter, Andy
 Cartledge, James
 Cates, Miriam
 Caulfield, Maria
 Chalk, rh Alex
 Chishti, Rehman
 Chope, Sir Christopher
 Churchill, Jo
 Clark, rh Greg
 Clarke, rh Sir Simon
 Clarke, Theo
 Clarke-Smith, Brendan
 Clarkson, Chris
 Cleverly, rh James
 Coffey, rh Dr Thérèse
 Colburn, Elliot
 Collins, Damian
 Costa, Alberto
 Courts, Robert
 Coutinho, rh Claire
 Cox, rh Sir Geoffrey
 Crabb, rh Stephen
 Crosbie, Virginia
 Crouch, Tracey
 Daly, James
 Davies, rh David T. C.
 Davies, Gareth
 Davies, Dr James
 Davies, Mims
 Davis, rh Mr David
 Davison, Dehenna
 Dinanage, Dame Caroline
 Dines, Miss Sarah
 Djanogly, Mr Jonathan
 Docherty, Leo
 Donaldson, rh Sir Jeffrey M.
 Donelan, rh Michelle (*Proxy vote cast by Mr Marcus Jones*)
 Double, Steve

Doyle-Price, Jackie
 Drax, Richard
 Drummond, Mrs Flick
 Duguid, David
 Duncan Smith, rh Sir Iain
 Dunne, rh Philip
 Eastwood, Mark
 Edwards, Ruth
 Ellis, rh Sir Michael
 Ellwood, rh Mr Tobias
 Elphicke, Mrs Natalie
 Eustice, rh George
 Evennett, rh Sir David
 Everitt, Ben
 Fabricant, Michael
 Farris, Laura
 Fell, Simon
 Firth, Anna
 Fletcher, Katherine
 Fletcher, Mark
 Fletcher, Nick
 Foster, Kevin
 Francois, rh Mr Mark
 Frazer, rh Lucy
 Freeman, George
 Freer, Mike
 French, Mr Louie
 Fysh, Mr Marcus
 Garnier, Mark
 Gibb, rh Nick
 Gibson, Peter
 Gideon, Jo
 Glen, rh John
 Goodwill, rh Sir Robert
 Gove, rh Michael
 Graham, Richard
 Grant, Mrs Helen (*Proxy vote cast by Mr Marcus Jones*)
 Gray, James
 Grayling, rh Chris
 Green, Chris
 Green, rh Damian
 Griffith, Andrew
 Grundy, James
 Gullis, Jonathan
 Hall, Luke
 Hammond, Stephen
 Hands, rh Greg
 Harper, rh Mr Mark
 Harris, Rebecca
 Harrison, Trudy
 Hart, Sally-Ann
 Hart, rh Simon
 Hayes, rh Sir John
 Heald, rh Sir Oliver
 Heappey, rh James
 Henderson, Gordon
 Henry, Darren
 Higginbotham, Antony
 Hinds, rh Damian
 Hoare, Simon
 Holden, Mr Richard
 Hollinrake, Kevin
 Hollobone, Mr Philip
 Holloway, Adam
 Holmes, Paul
 Howell, John
 Howell, Paul
 Huddleston, Nigel

Hudson, Dr Neil
 Hunt, Jane (*Proxy vote cast by Mr Marcus Jones*)
 Hunt, Tom
 Javid, rh Sajid
 Jayawardena, rh Mr Ranil
 Jenkin, Sir Bernard
 Jenkinson, Mark
 Jenkyns, Dame Andrea
 Jenrick, rh Robert
 Johnson, Dr Caroline
 Johnson, Gareth
 Johnston, David
 Jones, Andrew
 Jones, rh Mr David
 Jones, Fay
 Jones, rh Mr Marcus
 Jupp, Simon
 Kawczynski, Daniel
 Kearns, Alicia
 Knight, rh Sir Greg
 Kniveton, Kate
 Kruger, Danny
 Kwarteng, rh Kwasi
 Lamont, John
 Largan, Robert
 Latham, Mrs Pauline
 Leadsom, rh Dame Andrea
 Leigh, rh Sir Edward
 Lewer, Andrew
 Lewis, rh Sir Brandon
 Liddell-Grainger, Mr Ian
 Lockhart, Carla
 Loder, Chris
 Logan, Mark
 Longhi, Marco
 Lopez, Julia (*Proxy vote cast by Mr Marcus Jones*)
 Lopresti, Jack
 Loughton, Tim
 Mackrory, Cherilyn
 Maclean, Rachel
 Mak, Alan
 Malthouse, rh Kit
 Mangnall, Anthony
 Mann, Scott
 May, rh Mrs Theresa
 Mayhew, Jerome
 Maynard, Paul
 McCartney, Jason
 McCartney, Karl
 Menzies, Mark
 Mercer, rh Johnny
 Metcalfe, Stephen
 Millar, Robin
 Mills, Nigel
 Mohindra, Mr Gagan
 Moore, Damien
 Moore, Robbie
 Mordaunt, rh Penny
 Morris, Anne Marie
 Morris, David
 Morris, James
 Morrissey, Joy
 Mortimer, Jill
 Morton, rh Wendy
 Mullan, Dr Kieran (*Proxy vote cast by Mr Marcus Jones*)
 Mumby-Croft, Holly

Murrison, rh Dr Andrew
 Neill, Sir Robert
 Nici, Lia
 Nokes, rh Caroline
 Norman, rh Jesse
 O'Brien, Neil
 Offord, Dr Matthew
 Opperman, Guy
 Pawsey, Mark
 Penning, rh Sir Mike
 Penrose, John
 Percy, Andrew
 Poulter, Dr Dan
 Pow, Rebecca
 Prentis, rh Victoria
 Pritchard, rh Mark
 Pursglove, Tom
 Quin, rh Jeremy
 Quince, Will
 Randall, Tom
 Redwood, rh John
 Rees-Mogg, rh Sir Jacob
 Richards, Nicola
 Richardson, Angela
 Robertson, Mr Laurence
 Robinson, Gavin
 Ross, Douglas
 Russell, Dean
 Rutley, David
 Saxby, Selaine
 Scully, Paul
 Seely, Bob
 Shannon, Jim
 Sharma, rh Sir Alok
 Shelbrooke, rh Alec
 Skidmore, rh Chris
 Smith, rh Chloe
 Smith, Greg
 Smith, Henry
 Smith, Royston
 Solloway, Amanda
 Spencer, rh Mark
 Stafford, Alexander
 Stevenson, Jane
 Stevenson, John

Stewart, rh Bob
 Stewart, Iain
 Stride, rh Mel
 Stuart, rh Graham
 Sturdy, Julian
 Sunderland, James
 Swayne, rh Sir Desmond
 Syms, Sir Robert
 Thomas, Derek
 Throup, Maggie
 Timpson, Edward
 Tolhurst, rh Kelly
 Tomlinson, Justin
 Tomlinson, Michael
 Trott, Laura
 Tuckwell, Steve
 Tugendhat, rh Tom
 Vara, rh Shailesh
 Vickers, Martin
 Vickers, Matt
 Villiers, rh Theresa
 Walker, Sir Charles
 Walker, Mr Robin
 Warman, Matt
 Watling, Giles
 Whately, Helen (*Proxy vote cast by Mr Marcus Jones*)
 Wheeler, Mrs Heather
 Whittaker, rh Craig
 Whittingdale, rh Sir John
 Wiggin, Sir Bill
 Wild, James
 Williams, Craig
 Williamson, rh Sir Gavin
 Wilson, rh Sammy
 Wood, Mike
 Wragg, Mr William
 Wright, rh Sir Jeremy
 Young, Jacob
 Zahawi, rh Nadhim

Tellers for the Ayes:
Julie Marson and
Andrew Stephenson

NOES

Abrahams, Debbie
 Ali, Rushanara
 Ali, Tahir
 Amesbury, Mike
 Anderson, Fleur
 Ashworth, rh Jonathan
 Barker, Paula
 Beckett, rh Margaret
 Benn, rh Hilary
 Blake, Olivia
 Blomfield, Paul
 Bradshaw, rh Mr Ben
 Brennan, Kevin
 Brown, Ms Lyn
 Brown, rh Mr Nicholas
 Buck, Ms Karen
 Burgon, Richard
 Byrne, rh Liam
 Campbell, rh Sir Alan
 Carden, Dan
 Carmichael, rh Mr Alistair
 Chamberlain, Wendy

Champion, Sarah
 Cooper, Daisy
 Cooper, rh Yvette
 Creasy, Stella
 Cruddas, Jon
 Cummins, Judith
 Cunningham, Alex
 Daby, Janet
 Dalton, Ashley
 Davey, rh Ed
 Davies-Jones, Alex
 Debbonaire, Thangam
 Dhesi, Mr Tanmanjeet Singh
 Dixon, Samantha
 Dodds, Anneliese
 Doughty, Stephen
 Dowd, Peter
 Duffield, Rosie
 Dyke, Sarah
 Eagle, Dame Angela
 Edwards, Jonathan
 Efford, Clive
 Elliott, Julie
 Elmore, Chris

Eshalomi, Florence
 Esterson, Bill
 Farron, Tim
 Farry, Stephen
 Fovargue, Yvonne
 Foxcroft, Vicky
 Foy, Mary Kelly
 Furniss, Gill
 Gardiner, Barry
 Greenwood, Lilian
 Greenwood, Margaret
 Griffith, Dame Nia
 Gwynne, Andrew
 Hamilton, Mrs Paulette
 Hardy, Emma
 Harman, rh Ms Harriet
 Harris, Carolyn
 Hayes, Helen
 Hobhouse, Wera
 Hodge, rh Dame Margaret
 Hodgson, Mrs Sharon
 Howarth, rh Sir George
 Hussain, Imran
 Jarvis, Dan
 Johnson, rh Dame Diana
 Johnson, Kim
 Jones, Gerald
 Jones, rh Mr Kevan
 Jones, Ruth
 Kane, Mike
 Keeley, Barbara
 Kendall, Liz
 Khan, Afzal
 Kinnock, Stephen
 Lavery, Ian
 Leadbeater, Kim
 Lewis, Clive
 Lightwood, Simon
 Lloyd, Tony
 Long Bailey, Rebecca
 Lucas, Caroline
 Lynch, Holly
 Madders, Justin
 Malhotra, Seema
 Maskell, Rachael
 McCabe, Steve
 McCarthy, Kerry
 McDonagh, Siobhain
 McDonald, Andy
 McDonnell, rh John
 McFadden, rh Mr Pat
 McGovern, Alison
 McKinnell, Catherine
 McMahon, Jim
 McMorris, Anna
 Mearns, Ian
 Miliband, rh Edward
 Mishra, Navendu
 Moran, Layla

Morden, Jessica
 Morgan, Helen
 Morgan, Stephen
 Morris, Grahame
 Murray, Ian
 Murray, James
 Nandy, Lisa
 Nichols, Charlotte
 Onwurah, Chi
 Oppong-Asare, Abena
 Osamor, Kate
 Owatemi, Taiwo
 Pennycook, Matthew
 Perkins, Mr Toby
 Phillipson, Bridget
 Powell, Lucy
 Rayner, rh Angela
 Reed, Steve
 Rees, Christina
 Reynolds, Jonathan
 Ribeiro-Addy, Bell
 Rimmer, Ms Marie
 Rodda, Matt
 Russell-Moyle, Lloyd
 Shanks, Michael
 Sharma, Mr Virendra
 Sheerman, Mr Barry
 Siddiq, Tulip
 Smith, Cat
 Smith, Jeff
 Sobel, Alex
 Spellar, rh John
 Stevens, Jo
 Stone, Jamie
 Streeting, Wes
 Stringer, Graham
 Sultana, Zarah
 Tami, rh Mark
 Tarry, Sam
 Thomas, Gareth
 Thomas-Symonds, rh Nick
 Thornberry, rh Emily
 Timms, rh Sir Stephen
 Turner, Karl
 Twigg, Derek
 Twist, Liz
 Vaz, rh Valerie
 Webbe, Claudia
 West, Catherine
 Western, Andrew
 Whitehead, Dr Alan
 Whittome, Nadia
 Wilson, Munira
 Zeichner, Daniel

Tellers for the Noes:

Mary Glindon and
 Christian Wakeford

Question accordingly agreed to.

Lords amendment 13 disagreed to.

Lords amendment 14 disagreed to.

*Government amendments (a) to (p) made in lieu of
 Lords amendment 14.*

Lords amendment 18 disagreed to.

*Government amendments (a) and (b) made in lieu of
 Lords amendment 18.*

After Clause 70

LOCAL AUTHORITIES TO BE ALLOWED TO
 MEET VIRTUALLY

*Motion made, and Question put, That this House
 disagrees with Lords amendment 22.—(Rachel Maclean.)*

The House divided: Ayes 303, Noes 157.

Division No. 336]

[6.8 pm

AYES

Afolami, Bim
 Afriyie, Adam
 Allan, Lucy (*Proxy vote cast
 by Mr Marcus Jones*)
 Anderson, Lee
 Anderson, Stuart
 Andrew, rh Stuart
 Ansell, Caroline
 Argar, rh Edward
 Atherton, Sarah
 Atkins, Victoria
 Bacon, Gareth
 Bacon, Mr Richard
 Badenoch, rh Kemi
 Bailey, Shaun
 Baillie, Siobhan
 Baker, Duncan
 Baker, Mr Steve
 Baldwin, Harriett
 Barclay, rh Steve
 Baron, Mr John
 Baynes, Simon
 Bell, Aaron
 Benton, Scott
 Berry, rh Sir Jake
 Bhatti, Saqib
 Blunt, Crispin
 Bowie, Andrew
 Bradley, rh Karen
 Braverman, rh Suella
 Brereton, Jack
 Bridgen, Andrew
 Brine, Steve
 Bristow, Paul
 Britcliffe, Sara
 Browne, Anthony
 Bruce, Fiona
 Buchan, Felicity
 Buckland, rh Sir Robert
 Burghart, Alex
 Butler, Rob
 Cairns, rh Alun
 Cameron, Dr Lisa
 Campbell, Mr Gregory
 Carter, Andy
 Cartledge, James
 Cates, Miriam
 Caulfield, Maria
 Chalk, rh Alex
 Chishti, Rehman
 Chope, Sir Christopher
 Churchill, Jo
 Clark, rh Greg
 Clarke, rh Sir Simon
 Clarke, Theo
 Clarke-Smith, Brendan
 Clarkson, Chris
 Cleverly, rh James
 Coffey, rh Dr Thérèse
 Colburn, Elliot
 Collins, Damian
 Costa, Alberto
 Courts, Robert
 Coutinho, rh Claire
 Cox, rh Sir Geoffrey
 Crabb, rh Stephen
 Crossbie, Virginia
 Crouch, Tracey
 Daly, James
 Davies, rh David T. C.
 Davies, Gareth
 Davies, Dr James
 Davies, Mims
 Davies, Philip
 Davis, rh Mr David
 Davison, Dehenna
 Dinenage, Dame Caroline
 Dines, Miss Sarah
 Djanogly, Mr Jonathan
 Docherty, Leo
 Donaldson, rh Sir Jeffrey M.
 Donelan, rh Michelle (*Proxy
 vote cast by Mr Marcus
 Jones*)
 Double, Steve
 Doyle-Price, Jackie
 Drax, Richard
 Drummond, Mrs Flick
 Duguid, David
 Duncan Smith, rh Sir Iain
 Dunne, rh Philip
 Eastwood, Mark
 Edwards, Ruth
 Ellis, rh Sir Michael
 Ellwood, rh Mr Tobias
 Elphicke, Mrs Natalie
 Eustice, rh George
 Evennett, rh Sir David
 Everitt, Ben
 Fabricant, Michael
 Farris, Laura
 Fell, Simon
 Firth, Anna
 Fletcher, Katherine
 Fletcher, Mark
 Fletcher, Nick
 Foster, Kevin
 Francois, rh Mr Mark
 Frazer, rh Lucy
 Freeman, George
 Freer, Mike
 French, Mr Louie
 Fysh, Mr Marcus
 Garnier, Mark
 Gibb, rh Nick
 Gibson, Peter
 Gideon, Jo
 Glen, rh John
 Goodwill, rh Sir Robert
 Gove, rh Michael

Graham, Richard
 Grant, Mrs Helen (*Proxy vote cast by Mr Marcus Jones*)
 Gray, James
 Grayling, rh Chris
 Green, Chris
 Green, rh Damian
 Griffith, Andrew
 Grundy, James
 Gullis, Jonathan
 Hall, Luke
 Hammond, Stephen
 Hands, rh Greg
 Harper, rh Mr Mark
 Harris, Rebecca
 Harrison, Trudy
 Hart, Sally-Ann
 Hart, rh Simon
 Hayes, rh Sir John
 Heald, rh Sir Oliver
 Heapey, rh James
 Henderson, Gordon
 Henry, Darren
 Higginbotham, Antony
 Hinds, rh Damian
 Hoare, Simon
 Holden, Mr Richard
 Hollinrake, Kevin
 Hollobone, Mr Philip
 Holloway, Adam
 Holmes, Paul
 Howell, John
 Howell, Paul
 Huddleston, Nigel
 Hudson, Dr Neil
 Hunt, Jane (*Proxy vote cast by Mr Marcus Jones*)
 Hunt, Tom
 Javid, rh Sajid
 Jayawardena, rh Mr Ranil
 Jenkin, Sir Bernard
 Jenkinson, Mark
 Jenkyns, Dame Andrea
 Jenrick, rh Robert
 Johnson, Dr Caroline
 Johnson, Gareth
 Johnston, David
 Jones, Andrew
 Jones, rh Mr David
 Jones, Fay
 Jones, rh Mr Marcus
 Jupp, Simon
 Kawczynski, Daniel
 Kearns, Alicia
 Keegan, rh Gillian
 Knight, rh Sir Greg
 Kniveton, Kate
 Kruger, Danny
 Kwarteng, rh Kwasi
 Lamont, John
 Langan, Robert
 Latham, Mrs Pauline
 Leadsom, rh Dame Andrea
 Leigh, rh Sir Edward
 Lewer, Andrew
 Lewis, rh Sir Brandon
 Lewis, rh Sir Julian
 Liddell-Grainger, Mr Ian
 Lockhart, Carla
 Logan, Mark
 Longhi, Marco

Lopez, Julia (*Proxy vote cast by Mr Marcus Jones*)
 Lopresti, Jack
 Loughton, Tim
 Mackrory, Cherilyn
 Maclean, Rachel
 Mak, Alan
 Malthouse, rh Kit
 Mangnall, Anthony
 Mann, Scott
 May, rh Mrs Theresa
 Mayhew, Jerome
 Maynard, Paul
 McCartney, Jason
 McCartney, Karl
 McVey, rh Esther
 Menzies, Mark
 Mercer, rh Johnny
 Metcalfe, Stephen
 Millar, Robin
 Mills, Nigel
 Mohindra, Mr Gagan
 Moore, Damien
 Moore, Robbie
 Mordaunt, rh Penny
 Morris, Anne Marie
 Morris, David
 Morris, James
 Morrissey, Joy
 Mortimer, Jill
 Morton, rh Wendy
 Mullan, Dr Kieran (*Proxy vote cast by Mr Marcus Jones*)
 Mumby-Croft, Holly
 Murrison, rh Dr Andrew
 Neill, Sir Robert
 Nici, Lia
 Nokes, rh Caroline
 Norman, rh Jesse
 O'Brien, Neil
 Offord, Dr Matthew
 Opperman, Guy
 Pawsey, Mark
 Penning, rh Sir Mike
 Penrose, John
 Percy, Andrew
 Pow, Rebecca
 Prentis, rh Victoria
 Pritchard, rh Mark
 Pursglove, Tom
 Quin, rh Jeremy
 Quince, Will
 Randall, Tom
 Redwood, rh John
 Rees-Mogg, rh Sir Jacob
 Richards, Nicola
 Richardson, Angela
 Robertson, Mr Laurence
 Robinson, Gavin
 Ross, Douglas
 Russell, Dean
 Rutley, David
 Saxby, Selaine
 Scully, Paul
 Seely, Bob
 Selous, Andrew
 Shannon, Jim
 Sharma, rh Sir Alok
 Shelbrooke, rh Alec
 Skidmore, rh Chris
 Smith, rh Chloe
 Smith, Greg

Smith, Henry
 Smith, Royston
 Solloway, Amanda
 Spencer, rh Mark
 Stafford, Alexander
 Stevenson, Jane
 Stevenson, John
 Stewart, rh Bob
 Stewart, Iain
 Stride, rh Mel
 Stuart, rh Graham
 Sturdy, Julian
 Sunderland, James
 Swayne, rh Sir Desmond
 Syms, Sir Robert
 Thomas, Derek
 Throup, Maggie
 Timpson, Edward
 Tolhurst, rh Kelly
 Tomlinson, Justin
 Tomlinson, Michael
 Trott, Laura
 Tuckwell, Steve
 Tugendhat, rh Tom
 Vara, rh Shailesh

Abrahams, Debbie
 Aldous, Peter
 Ali, Rushanara
 Ali, Tahir
 Amesbury, Mike
 Anderson, Fleur
 Ashworth, rh Jonathan
 Barker, Paula
 Beckett, rh Margaret
 Benn, rh Hilary
 Blake, Olivia
 Blomfield, Paul
 Bottomley, Sir Peter
 Bradshaw, rh Mr Ben
 Brennan, Kevin
 Brown, Ms Lyn
 Brown, rh Mr Nicholas
 Buck, Ms Karen
 Burgon, Richard
 Byrne, rh Liam
 Campbell, rh Sir Alan
 Carden, Dan
 Carmichael, rh Mr Alistair
 Chamberlain, Wendy
 Champion, Sarah
 Cooper, Daisy
 Cooper, rh Yvette
 Creasy, Stella
 Cruddas, Jon
 Cummins, Judith
 Cunningham, Alex
 Daby, Janet
 Davey, rh Ed
 Davies-Jones, Alex
 Debbonaire, Thangam
 Dhesi, Mr Tanmanjeet Singh
 Dixon, Samantha
 Dodds, Anneliese
 Doughty, Stephen
 Dowd, Peter
 Duffield, Rosie
 Dyke, Sarah
 Eagle, Dame Angela
 Edwards, Jonathan

Vickers, Martin
 Vickers, Matt
 Villiers, rh Theresa
 Walker, Sir Charles
 Walker, Mr Robin
 Warman, Matt
 Watling, Giles
 Whately, Helen (*Proxy vote cast by Mr Marcus Jones*)
 Wheeler, Mrs Heather
 Whittaker, rh Craig
 Whittingdale, rh Sir John
 Wiggin, Sir Bill
 Wild, James
 Williams, Craig
 Williamson, rh Sir Gavin
 Wilson, rh Sammy
 Wood, Mike
 Wragg, Mr William
 Young, Jacob
 Zahawi, rh Nadhim

Tellers for the Ayes:
Julie Marson and
Andrew Stephenson

NOES

Efford, Clive
 Elliott, Julie
 Elmore, Chris
 Eshalomi, Florence
 Esterson, Bill
 Farron, Tim
 Farry, Stephen
 Fovargue, Yvonne
 Foxcroft, Vicky
 Foy, Mary Kelly
 Furniss, Gill
 Gardiner, Barry
 Greenwood, Lilian
 Greenwood, Margaret
 Griffith, Dame Nia
 Hamilton, Mrs Paulette
 Hardy, Emma
 Harman, rh Ms Harriet
 Harris, Carolyn
 Hayes, Helen
 Hobhouse, Wera
 Hodge, rh Dame Margaret
 Hodgson, Mrs Sharon
 Howarth, rh Sir George
 Hussain, Imran
 Jarvis, Dan
 Johnson, rh Dame Diana
 Johnson, Kim
 Jones, Gerald
 Jones, rh Mr Kevan
 Jones, Ruth
 Kane, Mike
 Keeley, Barbara
 Kendall, Liz
 Khan, Afzal
 Kinnock, Stephen
 Lavery, Ian
 Leadbeater, Kim
 Lewis, Clive
 Lightwood, Simon
 Lloyd, Tony
 Long Bailey, Rebecca
 Lucas, Caroline
 Lynch, Holly

Madders, Justin
 Malhotra, Seema
 Maskell, Rachael
 McCabe, Steve
 McCarthy, Kerry
 McDonagh, Siobhain
 McDonald, Andy
 McDonnell, rh John
 McFadden, rh Mr Pat
 McGovern, Alison
 McKinnell, Catherine
 McMahon, Jim
 McMorris, Anna
 Mearns, Ian
 Mishra, Navendu
 Moran, Layla
 Morden, Jessica
 Morgan, Helen
 Morgan, Stephen
 Morris, Grahame
 Murray, Ian
 Murray, James
 Nandy, Lisa
 Nichols, Charlotte
 Onwurah, Chi
 Osamor, Kate
 Owatemi, Taiwo
 Pennycook, Matthew
 Perkins, Mr Toby
 Phillipson, Bridget
 Poulter, Dr Dan
 Powell, Lucy
 Rayner, rh Angela
 Reed, Steve
 Rees, Christina
 Reynolds, Jonathan

Ribeiro-Addy, Bell
 Rimmer, Ms Marie
 Rodda, Matt
 Russell-Moyle, Lloyd
 Shanks, Michael
 Sharma, Mr Virendra
 Sheerman, Mr Barry
 Siddiq, Tulip
 Smith, Cat
 Smith, Jeff
 Sobel, Alex
 Spellar, rh John
 Stevens, Jo
 Stone, Jamie
 Stringer, Graham
 Sultana, Zarah
 Tami, rh Mark
 Tarry, Sam
 Thomas, Gareth
 Thomas-Symonds, rh Nick
 Thornberry, rh Emily
 Timms, rh Sir Stephen
 Turner, Karl
 Twigg, Derek
 Twist, Liz
 Vaz, rh Valerie
 Webbe, Claudia
 West, Catherine
 Western, Andrew
 Whitehead, Dr Alan
 Whittome, Nadia
 Wilson, Munira
 Zeichner, Daniel

Tellers for the Noes:

Mary Glindon and
 Christian Wakeford

Blackman, Bob
 Blunt, Crispin
 Bottomley, Sir Peter
 Bowie, Andrew
 Bradley, Ben
 Bradley, rh Karen
 Brereton, Jack
 Brine, Steve
 Bristow, Paul
 Britcliffe, Sara
 Browne, Anthony
 Bruce, Fiona
 Buchan, Felicity
 Buckland, rh Sir Robert
 Burghart, Alex
 Butler, Rob
 Cairns, rh Alun
 Cameron, Dr Lisa
 Campbell, Mr Gregory
 Carter, Andy
 Cartlidge, James
 Cates, Miriam
 Caulfield, Maria
 Chalk, rh Alex
 Chishti, Rehman
 Chope, Sir Christopher
 Churchill, Jo
 Clark, rh Greg
 Clarke, rh Sir Simon
 Clarke, Theo
 Clarke-Smith, Brendan
 Clarkson, Chris
 Coffey, rh Dr Thérèse
 Colburn, Elliot
 Collins, Damian
 Costa, Alberto
 Courts, Robert
 Coutinho, rh Claire
 Cox, rh Sir Geoffrey
 Crabb, rh Stephen
 Crosbie, Virginia
 Crouch, Tracey
 Daly, James
 Davies, rh David T. C.
 Davies, Gareth
 Davies, Dr James
 Davies, Mims
 Davies, Philip
 Davis, rh Mr David
 Davison, Dehenna
 Dinenage, Dame Caroline
 Dines, Miss Sarah
 Djanogly, Mr Jonathan
 Docherty, Leo
 Donaldson, rh Sir Jeffrey M.
 Donelan, rh Michelle (*Proxy vote cast by Mr Marcus Jones*)
 Double, Steve
 Doyle-Price, Jackie
 Drax, Richard
 Drummond, Mrs Flick
 Duddridge, Sir James
 Duguid, David
 Duncan Smith, rh Sir Iain
 Dunne, rh Philip
 Eastwood, Mark
 Edwards, Ruth
 Ellis, rh Sir Michael
 Ellwood, rh Mr Tobias
 Elphicke, Mrs Natalie

Eustice, rh George
 Evennett, rh Sir David
 Everitt, Ben
 Fabricant, Michael
 Farris, Laura
 Fell, Simon
 Firth, Anna
 Fletcher, Katherine
 Fletcher, Mark
 Fletcher, Nick
 Foster, Kevin
 Francois, rh Mr Mark
 Frazer, rh Lucy
 Freeman, George
 Freer, Mike
 French, Mr Louie
 Fysh, Mr Marcus
 Garnier, Mark
 Gibson, Peter
 Gideon, Jo
 Glen, rh John
 Goodwill, rh Sir Robert
 Gove, rh Michael
 Graham, Richard
 Grant, Mrs Helen (*Proxy vote cast by Mr Marcus Jones*)
 Gray, James
 Grayling, rh Chris
 Green, Chris
 Green, rh Damian
 Griffith, Andrew
 Grundy, James
 Gullis, Jonathan
 Hall, Luke
 Hammond, Stephen
 Hands, rh Greg
 Harper, rh Mr Mark
 Harris, Rebecca
 Harrison, Trudy
 Hart, Sally-Ann
 Hart, rh Simon
 Hayes, rh Sir John
 Heald, rh Sir Oliver
 Heapey, rh James
 Henderson, Gordon
 Henry, Darren
 Higginbotham, Antony
 Hinds, rh Damian
 Hoare, Simon
 Holden, Mr Richard
 Hollinrake, Kevin
 Hollobone, Mr Philip
 Holloway, Adam
 Holmes, Paul
 Howell, John
 Howell, Paul
 Huddleston, Nigel
 Hudson, Dr Neil
 Hunt, Jane (*Proxy vote cast by Mr Marcus Jones*)
 Hunt, Tom
 Javid, rh Sajid
 Jayawardena, rh Mr Ranil
 Jenkin, Sir Bernard
 Jenkyns, Dame Andrea
 Jenrick, rh Robert
 Johnson, Dr Caroline
 Johnson, Gareth
 Johnston, David
 Jones, Andrew

Question accordingly agreed to.

Lords amendment 22 disagreed to.

Lords amendments 30 and 31 disagreed to.

*Government amendments (a) to (d) made in lieu of
 Lords amendments 30 and 31.*

Clause 87

NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT POLICIES:

MEANING

*Motion made, and Question put, That this House
 disagrees with Lords amendment 44—(Rachel Maclean.)*

The House divided: Ayes 302, Noes 152.

Division No. 337]

[6.22 pm

AYES

Afolami, Bim
 Afriyie, Adam
 Aldous, Peter
 Allan, Lucy (*Proxy vote cast
 by Mr Marcus Jones*)
 Anderson, Lee
 Anderson, Stuart
 Andrew, rh Stuart
 Ansell, Caroline
 Argar, rh Edward
 Atherton, Sarah
 Atkins, Victoria
 Bacon, Gareth

Bacon, Mr Richard
 Badenoch, rh Kemi
 Bailey, Shaun
 Baillie, Siobhan
 Baker, Duncan
 Baker, Mr Steve
 Baldwin, Harriett
 Barclay, rh Steve
 Baron, Mr John
 Baynes, Simon
 Bell, Aaron
 Benton, Scott
 Berry, rh Sir Jake
 Bhatti, Saqib

Jones, rh Mr David
 Jones, Fay
 Jones, rh Mr Marcus
 Jupp, Simon
 Kawczynski, Daniel
 Kearns, Alicia
 Knight, rh Sir Greg
 Kniveton, Kate
 Kruger, Danny
 Lamont, John
 Largan, Robert
 Latham, Mrs Pauline
 Leadsom, rh Dame Andrea
 Leigh, rh Sir Edward
 Lewer, Andrew
 Lewis, rh Sir Brandon
 Lewis, rh Sir Julian
 Liddell-Grainger, Mr Ian
 Lockhart, Carla
 Logan, Mark
 Longhi, Marco
 Lopez, Julia (*Proxy vote cast by Mr Marcus Jones*)
 Lopresti, Jack
 Loughton, Tim
 Mackrory, Cherilyn
 Maclean, Rachel
 Mak, Alan
 Malthouse, rh Kit
 Mangnall, Anthony
 Mann, Scott
 May, rh Mrs Theresa
 Mayhew, Jerome
 Maynard, Paul
 McCartney, Jason
 McCartney, Karl
 McVey, rh Esther
 Menzies, Mark
 Mercer, rh Johnny
 Metcalfe, Stephen
 Millar, Robin
 Mills, Nigel
 Mohindra, Mr Gagan
 Moore, Damien
 Moore, Robbie
 Mordaunt, rh Penny
 Morris, Anne Marie
 Morris, David
 Morris, James
 Morrissey, Joy
 Mortimer, Jill
 Morton, rh Wendy
 Mullan, Dr Kieran (*Proxy vote cast by Mr Marcus Jones*)
 Mumby-Croft, Holly
 Murrison, rh Dr Andrew
 Neill, Sir Robert
 Nici, Lia
 Nokes, rh Caroline
 Norman, rh Jesse
 O'Brien, Neil
 Offord, Dr Matthew
 Opperman, Guy
 Pawsey, Mark
 Penning, rh Sir Mike
 Penrose, John
 Percy, Andrew
 Poulter, Dr Dan
 Pow, Rebecca
 Prentis, rh Victoria
 Pritchard, rh Mark
 Purslove, Tom

Quin, rh Jeremy
 Quince, Will
 Randall, Tom
 Redwood, rh John
 Rees-Mogg, rh Sir Jacob
 Richards, Nicola
 Richardson, Angela
 Robertson, Mr Laurence
 Robinson, Gavin
 Ross, Douglas
 Russell, Dean
 Rutley, David
 Saxby, Selaine
 Scully, Paul
 Seely, Bob
 Selous, Andrew
 Shannon, Jim
 Sharma, rh Sir Alok
 Shelbrooke, rh Alec
 Skidmore, rh Chris
 Smith, rh Chloe
 Smith, Greg
 Smith, Henry
 Smith, Royston
 Solloway, Amanda
 Spencer, rh Mark
 Stafford, Alexander
 Stevenson, Jane
 Stevenson, John
 Stewart, rh Bob
 Stewart, Iain
 Stride, rh Mel
 Stuart, rh Graham
 Sturdy, Julian
 Sunderland, James
 Swayne, rh Sir Desmond
 Syms, Sir Robert
 Thomas, Derek
 Throup, Maggie
 Timpson, Edward
 Tolhurst, rh Kelly
 Tomlinson, Justin
 Tomlinson, Michael
 Trott, Laura
 Tuckwell, Steve
 Tugendhat, rh Tom
 Vara, rh Shailesh
 Vickers, Martin
 Vickers, Matt
 Villiers, rh Theresa
 Walker, Sir Charles
 Walker, Mr Robin
 Warman, Matt
 Watling, Giles
 Whately, Helen (*Proxy vote cast by Mr Marcus Jones*)
 Wheeler, Mrs Heather
 Whittaker, rh Craig
 Whittingdale, rh Sir John
 Wiggin, Sir Bill
 Wild, James
 Williams, Craig
 Williamson, rh Sir Gavin
 Wilson, rh Sammy
 Wood, Mike
 Wragg, Mr William
 Wright, rh Sir Jeremy
 Young, Jacob
 Zahawi, rh Nadhim

Tellers for the Ayes:
 Andrew Stephenson and
 Julie Marson

NOES

Abrahams, Debbie
 Ali, Rushanara
 Ali, Tahir
 Amesbury, Mike
 Anderson, Fleur
 Ashworth, rh Jonathan
 Barker, Paula
 Beckett, rh Margaret
 Benn, rh Hilary
 Blake, Olivia
 Blomfield, Paul
 Bradshaw, rh Mr Ben
 Brennan, Kevin
 Brown, Ms Lyn
 Brown, rh Mr Nicholas
 Buck, Ms Karen
 Burgon, Richard
 Byrne, rh Liam
 Campbell, rh Sir Alan
 Carden, Dan
 Carmichael, rh Mr Alistair
 Chamberlain, Wendy
 Champion, Sarah
 Cooper, Daisy
 Cooper, rh Yvette
 Creasy, Stella
 Cruddas, Jon
 Cummins, Judith
 Cunningham, Alex
 Daby, Janet
 Davey, rh Ed
 Davies-Jones, Alex
 Debbonaire, Thangam
 Dhesi, Mr Tanmanjeet Singh
 Dodds, Anneliese
 Doughty, Stephen
 Dowd, Peter
 Duffield, Rosie
 Dyke, Sarah
 Eagle, Dame Angela
 Edwards, Jonathan
 Efford, Clive
 Elliott, Julie
 Elmore, Chris
 Eshalomi, Florence
 Esterson, Bill
 Farron, Tim
 Farry, Stephen
 Fovargue, Yvonne
 Foxcroft, Vicky
 Foy, Mary Kelly
 Furniss, Gill
 Gardiner, Barry
 Glendon, Mary
 Greenwood, Lilian
 Greenwood, Margaret
 Griffith, Dame Nia
 Hamilton, Mrs Paulette
 Hardy, Emma
 Harman, rh Ms Harriet
 Harris, Carolyn
 Hayes, Helen
 Hobhouse, Wera
 Hodge, rh Dame Margaret
 Hodgson, Mrs Sharon
 Howarth, rh Sir George
 Hussain, Imran
 Jarvis, Dan
 Johnson, rh Dame Diana
 Johnson, Kim
 Jones, rh Mr Kevan
 Jones, Ruth
 Kane, Mike
 Keeley, Barbara
 Khan, Afzal
 Kinnock, Stephen
 Lavery, Ian
 Leadbeater, Kim
 Lewis, Clive
 Lightwood, Simon
 Lloyd, Tony
 Long Bailey, Rebecca
 Lucas, Caroline
 Lynch, Holly
 Madders, Justin
 Malhotra, Seema
 Maskell, Rachael
 McCabe, Steve
 McCarthy, Kerry
 McDonagh, Siobhain
 McDonald, Andy
 McDonnell, rh John
 McFadden, rh Mr Pat
 McGovern, Alison
 McKinnell, Catherine
 McMahon, Jim
 McMorris, Anna
 Mearns, Ian
 Mishra, Navendu
 Moran, Layla
 Morden, Jessica
 Morgan, Helen
 Morgan, Stephen
 Morris, Grahame
 Murray, Ian
 Murray, James
 Nandy, Lisa
 Nichols, Charlotte
 Onwurah, Chi
 Osamor, Kate
 Owatemi, Taiwo
 Pennycook, Matthew
 Perkins, Mr Toby
 Rayner, rh Angela
 Reed, Steve
 Rees, Christina
 Reynolds, Jonathan
 Ribeiro-Addy, Bell
 Rimmer, Ms Marie
 Rodda, Matt
 Russell-Moyle, Lloyd
 Shanks, Michael
 Sharma, Mr Virendra
 Sheerman, Mr Barry
 Siddiq, Tulip
 Smith, Cat
 Smith, Jeff
 Sobel, Alex
 Spellar, rh John
 Stevens, Jo
 Stone, Jamie
 Stringer, Graham
 Sultana, Zarah
 Tami, rh Mark
 Tarry, Sam
 Thomas, Gareth
 Thomas-Symonds, rh Nick
 Thornberry, rh Emily
 Timms, rh Sir Stephen
 Turner, Karl
 Twigg, Derek
 Twist, Liz

Vaz, rh Valerie
Wakeford, Christian
Webbe, Claudia
West, Catherine
Western, Andrew
Whitehead, Dr Alan

Whittome, Nadia
Wilson, Munira
Zeichner, Daniel

Tellers for the Noes:
Gerald Jones and
Samantha Dixon

Question accordingly agreed to.

Lords amendment 44 disagreed to.

*Government amendments (a) and (b) made in lieu of
Lords amendment 44.*

After Clause 87

DUTIES IN RELATION TO MITIGATION OF, AND
ADAPTATION TO, CLIMATE CHANGE IN RELATION TO
PLANNING

*Motion made, and Question put, That this House
disagrees with Lords amendment 45.—(Rachel Maclean.)*

The House divided: Ayes 303, Noes 152.

Division No. 338]

[6.35 pm

AYES

Afolami, Bim
Afriyie, Adam
Allan, Lucy (*Proxy vote cast
by Mr Marcus Jones*)
Anderson, Lee
Anderson, Stuart
Andrew, rh Stuart
Ansell, Caroline
Argar, rh Edward
Atherton, Sarah
Atkins, Victoria
Bacon, Gareth
Bacon, Mr Richard
Badenoch, rh Kemi
Bailey, Shaun
Baillie, Siobhan
Baker, Duncan
Baker, Mr Steve
Baldwin, Harriett
Barclay, rh Steve
Baron, Mr John
Baynes, Simon
Bell, Aaron
Benton, Scott
Berry, rh Sir Jake
Bhatti, Saqib
Blackman, Bob
Blunt, Crispin
Bottomley, Sir Peter
Bowie, Andrew
Bradley, Ben
Bradley, rh Karen
Braverman, rh Suella
Brereton, Jack
Bridgen, Andrew
Brine, Steve
Bristow, Paul
Britcliffe, Sara
Browne, Anthony
Bruce, Fiona
Buchan, Felicity
Buckland, rh Sir Robert
Burghart, Alex
Butler, Rob
Cairns, rh Alun

Cameron, Dr Lisa
Campbell, Mr Gregory
Carter, Andy
Cartlidge, James
Cates, Miriam
Caulfield, Maria
Chalk, rh Alex
Chishti, Rehman
Chope, Sir Christopher
Churchill, Jo
Clark, rh Greg
Clarke, rh Sir Simon
Clarke, Theo
Clarke-Smith, Brendan
Clarkson, Chris
Coffey, rh Dr Thérèse
Colburn, Elliot
Collins, Damian
Costa, Alberto
Courts, Robert
Coutinho, rh Claire
Cox, rh Sir Geoffrey
Crabb, rh Stephen
Crosbie, Virginia
Crouch, Tracey
Daly, James
Davies, rh David T. C.
Davies, Gareth
Davies, Dr James
Davies, Mims
Davies, Philip
Davis, rh Mr David
Davison, Dehenna
Dinenage, Dame Caroline
Dines, Miss Sarah
Djanogly, Mr Jonathan
Docherty, Leo
Donaldson, rh Sir Jeffrey M.
Donelan, rh Michelle (*Proxy
vote cast by Mr Marcus
Jones*)
Doyle-Price, Jackie
Drax, Richard
Drummond, Mrs Flick
Duddridge, Sir James

Duguid, David
Duncan Smith, rh Sir Iain
Dunne, rh Philip
Eastwood, Mark
Edwards, Ruth
Ellis, rh Sir Michael
Ellwood, rh Mr Tobias
Elphicke, Mrs Natalie
Eustice, rh George
Evennett, rh Sir David
Everitt, Ben
Fabricant, Michael
Farris, Laura
Fell, Simon
Firth, Anna
Fletcher, Katherine
Fletcher, Mark
Fletcher, Nick
Foster, Kevin
Francois, rh Mr Mark
Frazer, rh Lucy
Freeman, George
Freer, Mike
French, Mr Louie
Fysh, Mr Marcus
Garnier, Mark
Gibb, rh Nick
Gibson, Peter
Gideon, Jo
Glen, rh John
Goodwill, rh Sir Robert
Gove, rh Michael
Graham, Richard
Grant, Mrs Helen (*Proxy vote
cast by Mr Marcus Jones*)
Gray, James
Grayling, rh Chris
Green, Chris
Green, rh Damian
Griffith, Andrew
Grundy, James
Gullis, Jonathan
Hall, Luke
Hands, rh Greg
Harper, rh Mr Mark
Harris, Rebecca
Harrison, Trudy
Hart, Sally-Ann
Hart, rh Simon
Hayes, rh Sir John
Heald, rh Sir Oliver
Heapey, rh James
Henderson, Gordon
Henry, Darren
Higginbotham, Antony
Hinds, rh Damian
Hoare, Simon
Holden, Mr Richard
Hollinrake, Kevin
Hollobone, Mr Philip
Holloway, Adam
Holmes, Paul
Howell, John
Howell, Paul
Huddleston, Nigel
Hudson, Dr Neil
Hunt, Jane (*Proxy vote cast
by Mr Marcus Jones*)
Hunt, Tom
Javid, rh Sajid
Jayawardena, rh Mr Ranil
Jenkin, Sir Bernard

Jenkinson, Mark
Jenkyins, Dame Andrea
Jenrick, rh Robert
Johnson, Dr Caroline
Johnson, Gareth
Johnston, David
Jones, Andrew
Jones, rh Mr David
Jones, rh Mr Marcus
Jupp, Simon
Kawczynski, Daniel
Kearns, Alicia
Keegan, rh Gillian
Knight, rh Sir Greg
Kniveton, Kate
Kruger, Danny
Kwarteng, rh Kwasi
Lamont, John
Largan, Robert
Latham, Mrs Pauline
Leadsom, rh Dame Andrea
Leigh, rh Sir Edward
Lewer, Andrew
Lewis, rh Sir Brandon
Lewis, rh Sir Julian
Liddell-Grainger, Mr Ian
Lockhart, Carla
Logan, Mark
Longhi, Marco
Lopez, Julia (*Proxy vote cast
by Mr Marcus Jones*)
Lopresti, Jack
Loughton, Tim
Mackrory, Cherylyn
Maclean, Rachel
Mak, Alan
Malthouse, rh Kit
Mangnall, Anthony
Mann, Scott
Marson, Julie
May, rh Mrs Theresa
Mayhew, Jerome
Maynard, Paul
McCartney, Jason
McCartney, Karl
Menzies, Mark
Mercer, rh Johnny
Metcalf, Stephen
Millar, Robin
Mills, Nigel
Mohindra, Mr Gagan
Moore, Damien
Moore, Robbie
Mordaunt, rh Penny
Morris, Anne Marie
Morris, David
Morris, James
Morrissey, Joy
Mortimer, Jill
Morton, rh Wendy
Mullan, Dr Kieran (*Proxy vote
cast by Mr Marcus Jones*)
Mumby-Croft, Holly
Murrison, rh Dr Andrew
Neill, Sir Robert
Nici, Lia
Nokes, rh Caroline
Norman, rh Jesse
O'Brien, Neil
Offord, Dr Matthew
Opperman, Guy
Pawsey, Mark

Penning, rh Sir Mike
 Penrose, John
 Percy, Andrew
 Pow, Rebecca
 Prentis, rh Victoria
 Pritchard, rh Mark
 Pursglove, Tom
 Quin, rh Jeremy
 Quince, Will
 Randall, Tom
 Redwood, rh John
 Rees-Mogg, rh Sir Jacob
 Richards, Nicola
 Richardson, Angela
 Robertson, Mr Laurence
 Robinson, Gavin
 Ross, Douglas
 Russell, Dean
 Rutley, David
 Saxby, Selaine
 Scully, Paul
 Seely, Bob
 Selous, Andrew
 Shannon, Jim
 Sharma, rh Sir Alok
 Shelbrooke, rh Alec
 Smith, rh Chloe
 Smith, Greg
 Smith, Henry
 Smith, Royston
 Solloway, Amanda
 Spencer, rh Mark
 Stafford, Alexander
 Stephenson, rh Andrew
 Stevenson, Jane
 Stevenson, John
 Stewart, rh Bob
 Stewart, Iain
 Stuart, rh Graham
 Sturdy, Julian

Sunderland, James
 Swayne, rh Sir Desmond
 Syms, Sir Robert
 Thomas, Derek
 Throup, Maggie
 Timpson, Edward
 Tolhurst, rh Kelly
 Tomlinson, Justin
 Tomlinson, Michael
 Trott, Laura
 Truss, rh Elizabeth
 Tuckwell, Steve
 Tugendhat, rh Tom
 Vara, rh Shailesh
 Vickers, Martin
 Vickers, Matt
 Villiers, rh Theresa
 Walker, Sir Charles
 Walker, Mr Robin
 Warman, Matt
 Watling, Giles
 Whately, Helen (*Proxy vote cast by Mr Marcus Jones*)
 Wheeler, Mrs Heather
 Whittaker, rh Craig
 Whittingdale, rh Sir John
 Wiggin, Sir Bill
 Wild, James
 Williams, Craig
 Williamson, rh Sir Gavin
 Wilson, rh Sammy
 Wood, Mike
 Wragg, Mr William
 Wright, rh Sir Jeremy
 Young, Jacob
 Zahawi, rh Nadhim

Tellers for the Ayes:

Fay Jones and
 Steve Double

NOES

Abrahams, Debbie
 Aldous, Peter
 Ali, Rushanara
 Ali, Tahir
 Amesbury, Mike
 Anderson, Fleur
 Ashworth, rh Jonathan
 Barker, Paula
 Beckett, rh Margaret
 Benn, rh Hilary
 Blake, Olivia
 Blomfield, Paul
 Bradshaw, rh Mr Ben
 Brennan, Kevin
 Brown, Ms Lyn
 Brown, rh Mr Nicholas
 Buck, Ms Karen
 Burgon, Richard
 Byrne, rh Liam
 Campbell, rh Sir Alan
 Carden, Dan
 Carmichael, rh Mr Alistair
 Chamberlain, Wendy
 Champion, Sarah
 Cooper, Daisy
 Cooper, rh Yvette
 Creasy, Stella
 Cruddas, Jon
 Cummins, Judith

Cunningham, Alex
 Daby, Janet
 Davey, rh Ed
 Davies-Jones, Alex
 Debbonaire, Thangam
 Dhesi, Mr Tanmanjeet Singh
 Dodds, Anneliese
 Doughty, Stephen
 Dowd, Peter
 Duffield, Rosie
 Dyke, Sarah
 Eagle, Dame Angela
 Edwards, Jonathan
 Efford, Clive
 Elliott, Julie
 Elmore, Chris
 Eshalomi, Florence
 Esterson, Bill
 Farron, Tim
 Farry, Stephen
 Fovargue, Yvonne
 Foxcroft, Vicky
 Foy, Mary Kelly
 Furniss, Gill
 Gardiner, Barry
 Glindon, Mary
 Greenwood, Lilian
 Greenwood, Margaret
 Griffith, Dame Nia

Hamilton, Mrs Paulette
 Hardy, Emma
 Harman, rh Ms Harriet
 Harris, Carolyn
 Hayes, Helen
 Hobhouse, Wera
 Hodge, rh Dame Margaret
 Hodgson, Mrs Sharon
 Howarth, rh Sir George
 Hussain, Imran
 Jarvis, Dan
 Johnson, rh Dame Diana
 Johnson, Kim
 Jones, rh Mr Kevan
 Jones, Ruth
 Kane, Mike
 Khan, Afzal
 Kinnock, Stephen
 Lavery, Ian
 Leadbeater, Kim
 Lewis, Clive
 Lightwood, Simon
 Lloyd, Tony
 Long Bailey, Rebecca
 Lucas, Caroline
 Lynch, Holly
 Madders, Justin
 Malhotra, Seema
 Maskell, Rachael
 McCabe, Steve
 McCarthy, Kerry
 McDonagh, Siobhain
 McDonald, Andy
 McDonnell, rh John
 McGovern, Alison
 McKinnell, Catherine
 McMahon, Jim
 McMorris, Anna
 Mearns, Ian
 Mishra, Navendu
 Moran, Layla
 Morden, Jessica
 Morgan, Helen
 Morgan, Stephen
 Morris, Grahame
 Murray, Ian
 Murray, James
 Nandy, Lisa
 Nichols, Charlotte

Onwurah, Chi
 Osamor, Kate
 Owatemi, Taiwo
 Pennycook, Matthew
 Perkins, Mr Toby
 Poulter, Dr Dan
 Powell, Lucy
 Rayner, rh Angela
 Reed, Steve
 Rees, Christina
 Reynolds, Jonathan
 Ribeiro-Addy, Bell
 Rimmer, Ms Marie
 Rodda, Matt
 Russell-Moyle, Lloyd
 Shanks, Michael
 Sharma, Mr Virendra
 Sheerman, Mr Barry
 Siddiq, Tulip
 Skidmore, rh Chris
 Smith, Cat
 Smith, Jeff
 Sobel, Alex
 Spellar, rh John
 Stevens, Jo
 Stone, Jamie
 Stringer, Graham
 Sultana, Zarah
 Tami, rh Mark
 Tarry, Sam
 Thomas, Gareth
 Thornberry, rh Emily
 Timms, rh Sir Stephen
 Turner, Karl
 Twigg, Derek
 Twist, Liz
 Vaz, rh Valerie
 Wakeford, Christian
 Webbe, Claudia
 West, Catherine
 Western, Andrew
 Whitehead, Dr Alan
 Whittome, Nadia
 Wilson, Munira
 Zeichner, Daniel

Tellers for the Noes:

Gerald Jones and
 Samantha Dixon

Question accordingly agreed to.

Lords amendment 45 disagreed to.

Lords amendment 46 disagreed to.

Lords amendment 80 disagreed to.

After Clause 123

DEVELOPMENTS AFFECTING ANCIENT WOODLAND

Motion made, and Question put, That this House disagrees with Lords amendment 81.—(Rachel Maclean.)

The House divided: Ayes 299, Noes 148.

Division No. 339]

[6.48 pm

AYES

Afolami, Bim
 Afriyie, Adam
 Aldous, Peter
 Allan, Lucy (*Proxy vote cast by Mr Marcus Jones*)

Anderson, Lee
 Anderson, Stuart
 Andrew, rh Stuart
 Ansell, Caroline
 Argar, rh Edward

Atherton, Sarah
 Atkins, Victoria
 Bacon, Gareth
 Bacon, Mr Richard
 Badenoch, rh Kemi
 Bailey, Shaun
 Baillie, Siobhan
 Baker, Duncan
 Baker, Mr Steve
 Baldwin, Harriett
 Barclay, rh Steve
 Baron, Mr John
 Baynes, Simon
 Bell, Aaron
 Benton, Scott
 Beresford, Sir Paul
 Berry, rh Sir Jake
 Bhatti, Saqib
 Blackman, Bob
 Blunt, Crispin
 Bottomley, Sir Peter
 Bowie, Andrew
 Bradley, Ben
 Bradley, rh Karen
 Braverman, rh Suella
 Brereton, Jack
 Bridgen, Andrew
 Brine, Steve
 Bristow, Paul
 Britcliffe, Sara
 Browne, Anthony
 Bruce, Fiona
 Buchan, Felicity
 Buckland, rh Sir Robert
 Burghart, Alex
 Butler, Rob
 Cairns, rh Alun
 Cameron, Dr Lisa
 Carter, Andy
 Cartlidge, James
 Cates, Miriam
 Caulfield, Maria
 Chalk, rh Alex
 Chishti, Rehman
 Chope, Sir Christopher
 Churchill, Jo
 Clark, rh Greg
 Clarke, rh Sir Simon
 Clarke, Theo
 Clarke-Smith, Brendan
 Clarkson, Chris
 Clifton-Brown, Sir Geoffrey
 Coffey, rh Dr Thérèse
 Colburn, Elliot
 Collins, Damian
 Costa, Alberto
 Coutinho, rh Claire
 Cox, rh Sir Geoffrey
 Crabb, rh Stephen
 Crosbie, Virginia
 Crouch, Tracey
 Daly, James
 Davies, rh David T. C.
 Davies, Gareth
 Davies, Dr James
 Davies, Mims
 Davis, rh Mr David
 Davison, Dehenna
 Dinage, Dame Caroline
 Dines, Miss Sarah
 Djanogly, Mr Jonathan
 Docherty, Leo

Donelan, rh Michelle (*Proxy vote cast by Mr Marcus Jones*)
 Doyle-Price, Jackie
 Drax, Richard
 Drummond, Mrs Flick
 Duddridge, Sir James
 Duguid, David
 Duncan Smith, rh Sir Iain
 Dunne, rh Philip
 Eastwood, Mark
 Edwards, Ruth
 Ellis, rh Sir Michael
 Ellwood, rh Mr Tobias
 Elphicke, Mrs Natalie
 Eustice, rh George
 Evennett, rh Sir David
 Everitt, Ben
 Fabricant, Michael
 Farris, Laura
 Fell, Simon
 Firth, Anna
 Fletcher, Katherine
 Fletcher, Mark
 Fletcher, Nick
 Foster, Kevin
 Francois, rh Mr Mark
 Frazer, rh Lucy
 Freeman, George
 Freer, Mike
 French, Mr Louie
 Fysh, Mr Marcus
 Garnier, Mark
 Gibb, rh Nick
 Gibson, Peter
 Gideon, Jo
 Glen, rh John
 Goodwill, rh Sir Robert
 Gove, rh Michael
 Graham, Richard
 Grant, Mrs Helen (*Proxy vote cast by Mr Marcus Jones*)
 Gray, James
 Green, Chris
 Green, rh Damian
 Griffith, Andrew
 Grundy, James
 Gullis, Jonathan
 Hall, Luke
 Hands, rh Greg
 Harper, rh Mr Mark
 Harris, Rebecca
 Harrison, Trudy
 Hart, Sally-Ann
 Hart, rh Simon
 Hayes, rh Sir John
 Heald, rh Sir Oliver
 Heappey, rh James
 Henderson, Gordon
 Henry, Darren
 Higginbotham, Antony
 Hinds, rh Damian
 Hoare, Simon
 Holden, Mr Richard
 Hollinrake, Kevin
 Hollobone, Mr Philip
 Holloway, Adam
 Holmes, Paul
 Howell, John
 Howell, Paul
 Huddleston, Nigel
 Hudson, Dr Neil

Hunt, Jane (*Proxy vote cast by Mr Marcus Jones*)
 Hunt, Tom
 Javid, rh Sajid
 Jayawardena, rh Mr Ranil
 Jenkin, Sir Bernard
 Jenkinson, Mark
 Jenkyns, Dame Andrea
 Jenrick, rh Robert
 Johnson, Dr Caroline
 Johnson, Gareth
 Johnston, David
 Jones, Andrew
 Jones, rh Mr David
 Jones, rh Mr Marcus
 Jupp, Simon
 Kawczynski, Daniel
 Kearns, Alicia
 Keegan, rh Gillian
 Knight, rh Sir Greg
 Kniveton, Kate
 Kruger, Danny
 Kwarteng, rh Kwasi
 Lamont, John
 Langan, Robert
 Latham, Mrs Pauline
 Leadsom, rh Dame Andrea
 Leigh, rh Sir Edward
 Lewer, Andrew
 Lewis, rh Sir Brandon
 Lewis, rh Sir Julian
 Liddell-Grainger, Mr Ian
 Logan, Mark
 Longhi, Marco
 Lopez, Julia (*Proxy vote cast by Mr Marcus Jones*)
 Lopresti, Jack
 Loughton, Tim
 Mackrory, Cherilyn
 Maclean, Rachel
 Mak, Alan
 Malthouse, rh Kit
 Mangnall, Anthony
 Mann, Scott
 Marson, Julie
 May, rh Mrs Theresa
 Mayhew, Jerome
 Maynard, Paul
 McCartney, Jason
 McCartney, Karl
 Menzies, Mark
 Mercer, rh Johnny
 Metcalfe, Stephen
 Millar, Robin
 Mills, Nigel
 Mohindra, Mr Gagan
 Moore, Damien
 Moore, Robbie
 Mordaunt, rh Penny
 Morris, Anne Marie
 Morris, David
 Morris, James
 Morrissey, Joy
 Mortimer, Jill
 Morton, rh Wendy
 Mullan, Dr Kieran (*Proxy vote cast by Mr Marcus Jones*)
 Mumby-Croft, Holly
 Murrison, rh Dr Andrew
 Neill, Sir Robert
 Nici, Lia
 Nokes, rh Caroline

Norman, rh Jesse
 O'Brien, Neil
 Offord, Dr Matthew
 Opperman, Guy
 Pawsey, Mark
 Penning, rh Sir Mike
 Penrose, John
 Percy, Andrew
 Poulter, Dr Dan
 Pow, Rebecca
 Prentis, rh Victoria
 Pritchard, rh Mark
 Pursglove, Tom
 Quin, rh Jeremy
 Quince, Will
 Randall, Tom
 Redwood, rh John
 Richards, Nicola
 Richardson, Angela
 Robertson, Mr Laurence
 Ross, Douglas
 Russell, Dean
 Rutley, David
 Saxby, Selaine
 Scully, Paul
 Seely, Bob
 Selous, Andrew
 Sharma, rh Sir Alok
 Shelbrooke, rh Alec
 Smith, rh Chloe
 Smith, Greg
 Smith, Henry
 Smith, Royston
 Solloway, Amanda
 Spencer, rh Mark
 Stafford, Alexander
 Stephenson, rh Andrew
 Stevenson, Jane
 Stevenson, John
 Stewart, rh Bob
 Stewart, Iain
 Stuart, rh Graham
 Sturdy, Julian
 Sunderland, James
 Swayne, rh Sir Desmond
 Syms, Sir Robert
 Thomas, Derek
 Throup, Maggie
 Timpson, Edward
 Tolhurst, rh Kelly
 Tomlinson, Justin
 Tomlinson, Michael
 Trott, Laura
 Truss, rh Elizabeth
 Tuckwell, Steve
 Tugendhat, rh Tom
 Vara, rh Shailesh
 Vickers, Martin
 Vickers, Matt
 Villiers, rh Theresa
 Walker, Sir Charles
 Walker, Mr Robin
 Warman, Matt
 Watling, Giles
 Whately, Helen (*Proxy vote cast by Mr Marcus Jones*)
 Wheeler, Mrs Heather
 Whittaker, rh Craig
 Whittingdale, rh Sir John
 Wiggin, Sir Bill
 Wild, James
 Williams, Craig

Williamson, rh Sir Gavin
Wood, Mike
Wragg, Mr William
Wright, rh Sir Jeremy
Young, Jacob

Zahawi, rh Nadhim

Tellers for the Ayes:

Fay Jones and
Steve Double

NOES

Abrahams, Debbie
Ali, Rushanara
Ali, Tahir
Amesbury, Mike
Anderson, Fleur
Ashworth, rh Jonathan
Barker, Paula
Benn, rh Hilary
Blake, Olivia
Blomfield, Paul
Brennan, Kevin
Brown, Ms Lyn
Brown, rh Mr Nicholas
Burgon, Richard
Byrne, rh Liam
Campbell, rh Sir Alan
Campbell, Mr Gregory
Carden, Dan
Carmichael, rh Mr Alistair
Chamberlain, Wendy
Champion, Sarah
Cooper, Daisy
Creasy, Stella
Cruddas, Jon
Cummins, Judith
Cunningham, Alex
Daby, Janet
Davey, rh Ed
Davies-Jones, Alex
Debbonaire, Thangam
Dhesi, Mr Tanmanjeet Singh
Dodds, Anneliese
Donaldson, rh Sir Jeffrey M.
Doughty, Stephen
Dowd, Peter
Duffield, Rosie
Dyke, Sarah
Eagle, Dame Angela
Edwards, Jonathan
Efford, Clive
Elliott, Julie
Eshalomi, Florence
Esterson, Bill
Farron, Tim
Farry, Stephen
Fovargue, Yvonne
Foxcroft, Vicky
Foy, Mary Kelly
Furniss, Gill
Gardiner, Barry
Glindon, Mary
Greenwood, Lilian
Greenwood, Margaret
Griffith, Dame Nia
Hamilton, Mrs Paulette
Hardy, Emma
Harman, rh Ms Harriet
Harris, Carolyn
Hayes, Helen
Hobhouse, Wera
Hodge, rh Dame Margaret
Hodgson, Mrs Sharon
Howarth, rh Sir George
Hussain, Imran

Jarvis, Dan
Johnson, rh Dame Diana
Johnson, Kim
Jones, rh Mr Kevan
Jones, Ruth
Kane, Mike
Khan, Afzal
Kinnock, Stephen
Lavery, Ian
Lewis, Clive
Lightwood, Simon
Lloyd, Tony
Lockhart, Carla
Long Bailey, Rebecca
Lucas, Caroline
Lynch, Holly
Madders, Justin
Malhotra, Seema
Maskell, Rachael
McCabe, Steve
McCarthy, Kerry
McDonagh, Siobhain
McDonald, Andy
McDonnell, rh John
McKinnell, Catherine
McMahon, Jim
McMorris, Anna
Mearns, Ian
Mishra, Navendu
Moran, Layla
Morgan, Helen
Morgan, Stephen
Morris, Grahame
Murray, Ian
Murray, James
Nandy, Lisa
Nichols, Charlotte
Onwurah, Chi
Osamor, Kate
Owatemi, Taiwo
Pennycook, Matthew
Perkins, Mr Toby
Powell, Lucy
Rayner, rh Angela
Reed, Steve
Rees, Christina
Reynolds, Jonathan
Ribeiro-Addy, Bell
Rimmer, Ms Marie
Robinson, Gavin
Rodda, Matt
Russell-Moyle, Lloyd
Shanks, Michael
Shannon, Jim
Sharma, Mr Virendra
Sheerman, Mr Barry
Siddiq, Tulip
Smith, Cat
Smith, Jeff
Sobel, Alex
Spellar, rh John
Stevens, Jo
Stone, Jamie
Stringer, Graham

Sultana, Zarah
Tami, rh Mark
Tarry, Sam
Thomas, Gareth
Timms, rh Sir Stephen
Turner, Karl
Twigg, Derek
Twist, Liz
Vaz, rh Valerie
Wakeford, Christian
Webbe, Claudia

West, Catherine
Western, Andrew
Whitehead, Dr Alan
Whittome, Nadia
Wilson, Munira
Wilson, rh Sammy
Zeichner, Daniel

Tellers for the Noes:

Samantha Dixon and
Gerald Jones

Question accordingly agreed to.

Lords amendment 81 disagreed to.

*Government amendments (a) to (c) made in lieu of
Lords amendment 81.*

PLANNING APPLICATION FEES

*Motion made, and Question put, That this House
disagrees with Lords amendment 82.—(Rachel Maclean.)*

The House divided: Ayes 304, Noes 12.

Division No. 340]

[7 pm

AYES

Afolami, Bim
Afriyie, Adam
Aldous, Peter
Allan, Lucy (*Proxy vote cast
by Mr Marcus Jones*)
Anderson, Lee
Anderson, Stuart
Andrew, rh Stuart
Ansell, Caroline
Argar, rh Edward
Atherton, Sarah
Atkins, Victoria
Bacon, Gareth
Bacon, Mr Richard
Badenoch, rh Kemi
Bailey, Shaun
Baillie, Siobhan
Baker, Duncan
Baker, Mr Steve
Baldwin, Harriett
Barclay, rh Steve
Baynes, Simon
Bell, Aaron
Benton, Scott
Beresford, Sir Paul
Berry, rh Sir Jake
Bhatti, Saqib
Blunt, Crispin
Bottomley, Sir Peter
Bowie, Andrew
Bradley, Ben
Bradley, rh Karen
Braverman, rh Suella
Brereton, Jack
Bridgen, Andrew
Brine, Steve
Bristow, Paul
Britcliffe, Sara
Browne, Anthony
Bruce, Fiona
Buchan, Felicity
Buckland, rh Sir Robert
Burghart, Alex
Butler, Rob
Cairns, rh Alun
Cameron, Dr Lisa

Campbell, Mr Gregory
Carter, Andy
Cartlidge, James
Cates, Miriam
Caulfield, Maria
Chalk, rh Alex
Chishti, Rehman
Chope, Sir Christopher
Churchill, Jo
Clark, rh Greg
Clarke, rh Sir Simon
Clarke, Theo
Clarke-Smith, Brendan
Clarkson, Chris
Clifton-Brown, Sir Geoffrey
Coffey, rh Dr Trèrèse
Colburn, Elliot
Collins, Damian
Costa, Alberto
Courts, Robert
Coutinho, rh Claire
Cox, rh Sir Geoffrey
Crabb, rh Stephen
Crosbie, Virginia
Crouch, Tracey
Daly, James
Davies, rh David T. C.
Davies, Gareth
Davies, Dr James
Davies, Mims
Davis, rh Mr David
Davison, Dehenna
Dinenage, Dame Caroline
Dines, Miss Sarah
Djanogly, Mr Jonathan
Docherty, Leo
Donaldson, rh Sir Jeffrey M.
Donelan, rh Michelle (*Proxy
vote cast by Mr Marcus
Jones*)
Doyle-Price, Jackie
Drax, Richard
Drummond, Mrs Flick
Duddridge, Sir James
Duguid, David
Duncan Smith, rh Sir Iain

Dunne, rh Philip
 Eastwood, Mark
 Edwards, Ruth
 Ellis, rh Sir Michael
 Ellwood, rh Mr Tobias
 Elphicke, Mrs Natalie
 Eustice, rh George
 Evennett, rh Sir David
 Everitt, Ben
 Fabricant, Michael
 Farris, Laura
 Fell, Simon
 Firth, Anna
 Fletcher, Katherine
 Fletcher, Mark
 Fletcher, Nick
 Foster, Kevin
 Frazer, rh Lucy
 Freeman, George
 Freer, Mike
 French, Mr Louie
 Fysh, Mr Marcus
 Garnier, Mark
 Gibb, rh Nick
 Gibson, Peter
 Gideon, Jo
 Glen, rh John
 Goodwill, rh Sir Robert
 Gove, rh Michael
 Graham, Richard
 Grant, Mrs Helen (*Proxy vote cast by Mr Marcus Jones*)
 Gray, James
 Grayling, rh Chris
 Green, Chris
 Green, rh Damian
 Griffith, Andrew
 Grundy, James
 Gullis, Jonathan
 Hall, Luke
 Hands, rh Greg
 Harper, rh Mr Mark
 Harris, Rebecca
 Harrison, Trudy
 Hart, Sally-Ann
 Hart, rh Simon
 Hayes, rh Sir John
 Heald, rh Sir Oliver
 Heappey, rh James
 Henderson, Gordon
 Henry, Darren
 Higginbotham, Antony
 Hinds, rh Damian
 Hoare, Simon
 Holden, Mr Richard
 Hollinrake, Kevin
 Hollobone, Mr Philip
 Holloway, Adam
 Holmes, Paul
 Howell, John
 Howell, Paul
 Huddleston, Nigel
 Hudson, Dr Neil
 Hunt, Jane (*Proxy vote cast by Mr Marcus Jones*)
 Hunt, Tom
 Javid, rh Sajid
 Jayawardena, rh Mr Ranil
 Jenkinson, Mark
 Jenkyns, Dame Andrea
 Jenrick, rh Robert
 Johnson, Dr Caroline

Johnson, Gareth
 Johnston, David
 Jones, Andrew
 Jones, rh Mr David
 Jones, rh Mr Marcus
 Jupp, Simon
 Kawczynski, Daniel
 Kearns, Alicia
 Keegan, rh Gillian
 Kniveton, Kate
 Kruger, Danny
 Kwarteng, rh Kwasi
 Lamont, John
 Largan, Robert
 Latham, Mrs Pauline
 Leadsom, rh Dame Andrea
 Leigh, rh Sir Edward
 Lewer, Andrew
 Lewis, rh Sir Brandon
 Lewis, rh Sir Julian
 Liddell-Grainger, Mr Ian
 Lockhart, Carla
 Logan, Mark
 Longhi, Marco
 Lopez, Julia (*Proxy vote cast by Mr Marcus Jones*)
 Lopresti, Jack
 Loughton, Tim
 Mackrory, Cheryllyn
 Maclean, Rachel
 Mak, Alan
 Malthouse, rh Kit
 Mangnall, Anthony
 Mann, Scott
 Marson, Julie
 May, rh Mrs Theresa
 Mayhew, Jerome
 Maynard, Paul
 McCartney, Jason
 McCartney, Karl
 Menzies, Mark
 Mercer, rh Johnny
 Metcalfe, Stephen
 Millar, Robin
 Mills, Nigel
 Mitchell, rh Mr Andrew
 Mohindra, Mr Gagan
 Moore, Damien
 Moore, Robbie
 Mordaunt, rh Penny
 Morris, Anne Marie
 Morris, David
 Morris, James
 Morrissey, Joy
 Mortimer, Jill
 Morton, rh Wendy
 Mullan, Dr Kieran (*Proxy vote cast by Mr Marcus Jones*)
 Mumby-Croft, Holly
 Murrison, rh Dr Andrew
 Neill, Sir Robert
 Nici, Lia
 Nokes, rh Caroline
 Norman, rh Jesse
 O'Brien, Neil
 Offord, Dr Matthew
 Opperman, Guy
 Pawsey, Mark
 Penning, rh Sir Mike
 Penrose, John
 Percy, Andrew
 Poulter, Dr Dan

Pow, Rebecca
 Prentis, rh Victoria
 Pritchard, rh Mark
 Pursglove, Tom
 Quin, rh Jeremy
 Quince, Will
 Randall, Tom
 Redwood, rh John
 Richards, Nicola
 Richardson, Angela
 Robertson, Mr Laurence
 Robinson, Gavin
 Ross, Douglas
 Russell, Dean
 Rutley, David
 Saxby, Selaine
 Scully, Paul
 Seely, Bob
 Selous, Andrew
 Shannon, Jim
 Sharma, rh Sir Alok
 Shelbrooke, rh Alec
 Skidmore, rh Chris
 Smith, rh Chloe
 Smith, Greg
 Smith, Henry
 Smith, Royston
 Solloway, Amanda
 Spencer, rh Mark
 Stafford, Alexander
 Stephenson, rh Andrew
 Stevenson, Jane
 Stevenson, John
 Stewart, rh Bob
 Stewart, Iain
 Stuart, rh Graham
 Sturdy, Julian
 Sunderland, James
 Swayne, rh Sir Desmond

Syms, Sir Robert
 Thomas, Derek
 Throup, Maggie
 Timpson, Edward
 Tolhurst, rh Kelly
 Tomlinson, Justin
 Tomlinson, Michael
 Trott, Laura
 Truss, rh Elizabeth
 Tuckwell, Steve
 Tugendhat, rh Tom
 Vara, rh Shailesh
 Vickers, Martin
 Vickers, Matt
 Villiers, rh Theresa
 Walker, Sir Charles
 Walker, Mr Robin
 Warman, Matt
 Watling, Giles
 Whately, Helen (*Proxy vote cast by Mr Marcus Jones*)
 Wheeler, Mrs Heather
 Whittaker, rh Craig
 Whittingdale, rh Sir John
 Wiggin, Sir Bill
 Wild, James
 Williams, Craig
 Williamson, rh Sir Gavin
 Wilson, rh Sammy
 Wood, Mike
 Wragg, Mr William
 Wright, rh Sir Jeremy
 Young, Jacob
 Zahawi, rh Nadhim

Tellers for the Ayes:

Fay Jones and
 Stephen Doughty

NOES

Carmichael, rh Mr Alistair
 Cooper, Daisy
 Davey, rh Ed
 Dyke, Sarah
 Edwards, Jonathan
 Farron, Tim
 Farry, Stephen
 Hobhouse, Wera

Lucas, Caroline
 Moran, Layla
 Morgan, Helen
 Stone, Jamie

Tellers for the Noes:

Wendy Chamberlain and
 Munira Wilson

Question accordingly agreed to.

Lords amendment 82 disagreed to.

Clause 138

POWER TO SPECIFY ENVIRONMENTAL OUTCOMES

Lords amendment 90 disagreed to.

Government amendment (a) made in lieu of Lords amendment 90.

Clause 143

REQUIREMENTS TO CONSULT DEVOLVED
 ADMINISTRATIONS

Lords amendment 102 disagreed to.

Lords amendment 103 disagreed to.

Government amendments (a) to (d) made in lieu of Lords amendments 102 and 103.

Lords amendment 133 disagreed to.
Lords amendment 134 disagreed to.
Lords amendment 137 disagreed to.
Lords amendment 139 disagreed to.
Lords amendment 142 disagreed to.
Lords amendment 156 disagreed to.
Lords amendment 157 disagreed to.
Lords amendment 172 disagreed to.
Lords amendment 180 disagreed to.

After Clause 197

HIGH STREET FINANCIAL SERVICES

Motion made, and Question put, That this House disagrees with Lords amendment 199.—(Rachel Maclean.)

The House divided: Ayes 295, Noes 143.

Division No. 341]

[7.17 pm

AYES

Afolami, Bim
 Afriyie, Adam
 Aldous, Peter
 Allan, Lucy (*Proxy vote cast by Mr Marcus Jones*)
 Anderson, Lee
 Anderson, Stuart
 Andrew, rh Stuart
 Ansell, Caroline
 Argar, rh Edward
 Atherton, Sarah
 Bacon, Gareth
 Bacon, Mr Richard
 Badenoch, rh Kemi
 Bailey, Shaun
 Baillie, Siobhan
 Baker, Duncan
 Baker, Mr Steve
 Barclay, rh Steve
 Baron, Mr John
 Baynes, Simon
 Bell, Aaron
 Benton, Scott
 Berry, rh Sir Jake
 Bhatti, Saqib
 Blackman, Bob
 Blunt, Crispin
 Bottomley, Sir Peter
 Bowie, Andrew
 Bradley, Ben
 Bradley, rh Karen
 Braverman, rh Suella
 Brereton, Jack
 Bridgen, Andrew
 Brine, Steve
 Bristow, Paul
 Britcliffe, Sara
 Browne, Anthony
 Bruce, Fiona
 Buchan, Felicity
 Buckland, rh Sir Robert
 Burghart, Alex
 Butler, Rob
 Cairns, rh Alun
 Cameron, Dr Lisa
 Carter, Andy
 Cartledge, James
 Cates, Miriam
 Caulfield, Maria
 Chalk, rh Alex
 Chishty, Rehman
 Chope, Sir Christopher
 Churchill, Jo
 Clark, rh Greg
 Clarke, rh Sir Simon
 Clarke, Theo
 Clarke-Smith, Brendan
 Clarkson, Chris
 Clifton-Brown, Sir Geoffrey
 Coffey, rh Dr Thérèse
 Colburn, Elliot
 Collins, Damian
 Costa, Alberto
 Courts, Robert
 Coutinho, rh Claire
 Cox, rh Sir Geoffrey
 Crabb, rh Stephen
 Crosbie, Virginia
 Crouch, Tracey
 Daly, James
 Davies, rh David T. C.
 Davies, Gareth
 Davies, Dr James
 Davies, Mims
 Davis, rh Mr David
 Davison, Dehenna
 Dinéage, Dame Caroline
 Dines, Miss Sarah
 Djanogly, Mr Jonathan
 Docherty, Leo
 Donelan, rh Michelle (*Proxy vote cast by Mr Marcus Jones*)
 Double, Steve
 Doyle-Price, Jackie
 Drax, Richard
 Drummond, Mrs Flick
 Duddridge, Sir James
 Duguid, David
 Duncan Smith, rh Sir Iain
 Dunne, rh Philip
 Eastwood, Mark
 Ellis, rh Sir Michael
 Ellwood, rh Mr Tobias

Elphicke, Mrs Natalie
 Eustice, rh George
 Evennett, rh Sir David
 Everitt, Ben
 Fabricant, Michael
 Farris, Laura
 Fell, Simon
 Firth, Anna
 Fletcher, Katherine
 Fletcher, Mark
 Fletcher, Nick
 Foster, Kevin
 Frazer, rh Lucy
 Freeman, George
 Freer, Mike
 French, Mr Louie
 Fysh, Mr Marcus
 Garnier, Mark
 Gibb, rh Nick
 Gibson, Peter
 Gideon, Jo
 Glen, rh John
 Goodwill, rh Sir Robert
 Gove, rh Michael
 Graham, Richard
 Grant, Mrs Helen (*Proxy vote cast by Mr Marcus Jones*)
 Gray, James
 Grayling, rh Chris
 Green, Chris
 Green, rh Damian
 Griffith, Andrew
 Grundy, James
 Gullis, Jonathan
 Hall, Luke
 Hands, rh Greg
 Harper, rh Mr Mark
 Harris, Rebecca
 Harrison, Trudy
 Hart, Sally-Ann
 Hart, rh Simon
 Hayes, rh Sir John
 Heald, rh Sir Oliver
 Heapey, rh James
 Henderson, Gordon
 Henry, Darren
 Higginbotham, Antony
 Hinds, rh Damian
 Hoare, Simon
 Holden, Mr Richard
 Hollinrake, Kevin
 Hollobone, Mr Philip
 Holloway, Adam
 Holmes, Paul
 Howell, John
 Howell, Paul
 Huddleston, Nigel
 Hudson, Dr Neil
 Hunt, Jane (*Proxy vote cast by Mr Marcus Jones*)
 Hunt, Tom
 Javid, rh Sajid
 Jayawardena, rh Mr Ranil
 Jenkin, Sir Bernard
 Jenkinson, Mark
 Jenkyns, Dame Andrea
 Jenrick, rh Robert
 Johnson, Dr Caroline
 Johnson, Gareth
 Johnston, David
 Jones, Andrew
 Jones, rh Mr David
 Jones, Fay
 Jones, rh Mr Marcus
 Jupp, Simon
 Kawczynski, Daniel
 Kearns, Alicia
 Keegan, rh Gillian
 Kniveton, Kate
 Kruger, Danny
 Kwarteng, rh Kwasi
 Lamont, John
 Largan, Robert
 Latham, Mrs Pauline
 Leadsom, rh Dame Andrea
 Leigh, rh Sir Edward
 Lewer, Andrew
 Lewis, rh Sir Brandon
 Lewis, rh Sir Julian
 Liddell-Grainger, Mr Ian
 Logan, Mark
 Longhi, Marco
 Lopez, Julia (*Proxy vote cast by Mr Marcus Jones*)
 Lopresti, Jack
 Loughton, Tim
 Mackrory, Cherilyn
 Maclean, Rachel
 Mak, Alan
 Malthouse, rh Kit
 Mangnall, Anthony
 Mann, Scott
 Marson, Julie
 May, rh Mrs Theresa
 Maynard, Paul
 McCartney, Jason
 McCartney, Karl
 Menzies, Mark
 Mercer, rh Johnny
 Metcalfe, Stephen
 Millar, Robin
 Mills, Nigel
 Mitchell, rh Mr Andrew
 Mohindra, Mr Gagan
 Moore, Damien
 Moore, Robbie
 Mordaunt, rh Penny
 Morris, Anne Marie
 Morris, David
 Morris, James
 Morrissey, Joy
 Mortimer, Jill
 Morton, rh Wendy
 Mullan, Dr Kieran (*Proxy vote cast by Mr Marcus Jones*)
 Mumby-Croft, Holly
 Murrison, rh Dr Andrew
 Neill, Sir Robert
 Nici, Lia
 Nokes, rh Caroline
 Norman, rh Jesse
 O'Brien, Neil
 Offord, Dr Matthew
 Opperman, Guy
 Pawsey, Mark
 Penning, rh Sir Mike
 Penrose, John
 Percy, Andrew
 Poulter, Dr Dan
 Pow, Rebecca
 Prentis, rh Victoria
 Pritchard, rh Mark
 Pursglove, Tom
 Quin, rh Jeremy

Quince, Will
 Randall, Tom
 Redwood, rh John
 Richards, Nicola
 Richardson, Angela
 Robertson, Mr Laurence
 Ross, Douglas
 Russell, Dean
 Rutley, David
 Saxby, Selaine
 Scully, Paul
 Seely, Bob
 Selous, Andrew
 Shelbrooke, rh Alec
 Skidmore, rh Chris
 Smith, rh Chloe
 Smith, Greg
 Smith, Henry
 Smith, Royston
 Solloway, Amanda
 Spencer, rh Mark
 Stafford, Alexander
 Stephenson, rh Andrew
 Stevenson, Jane
 Stevenson, John
 Stewart, rh Bob
 Stewart, Iain
 Stuart, rh Graham
 Sturdy, Julian
 Sunderland, James
 Syms, Sir Robert
 Thomas, Derek

Throup, Maggie
 Timpson, Edward
 Tolhurst, rh Kelly
 Tomlinson, Justin
 Tomlinson, Michael
 Trott, Laura
 Truss, rh Elizabeth
 Tuckwell, Steve
 Tugendhat, rh Tom
 Vara, rh Shailesh
 Vickers, Martin
 Vickers, Matt
 Villiers, rh Theresa
 Walker, Sir Charles
 Walker, Mr Robin
 Warman, Matt
 Watling, Giles
 Whately, Helen (*Proxy vote cast by Mr Marcus Jones*)
 Wheeler, Mrs Heather
 Whittaker, rh Craig
 Whittingdale, rh Sir John
 Wiggin, Sir Bill
 Wild, James
 Williams, Craig
 Williamson, rh Sir Gavin
 Wragg, Mr William
 Wright, rh Sir Jeremy
 Young, Jacob

Tellers for the Ayes:
 Mike Wood and
 Ruth Edwards

NOES

Abrahams, Debbie
 Ali, Rushanara
 Ali, Tahir
 Amesbury, Mike
 Anderson, Fleur
 Ashworth, rh Jonathan
 Barker, Paula
 Benn, rh Hilary
 Blake, Olivia
 Blomfield, Paul
 Brennan, Kevin
 Brown, Ms Lyn
 Brown, rh Mr Nicholas
 Burgon, Richard
 Byrne, rh Liam
 Campbell, rh Sir Alan
 Campbell, Mr Gregory
 Carden, Dan
 Chamberlain, Wendy
 Champion, Sarah
 Cooper, Daisy
 Creasy, Stella
 Cruddas, Jon
 Cummins, Judith
 Cunningham, Alex
 Davey, rh Ed
 Davies-Jones, Alex
 Debonnaire, Thangam
 Dhesi, Mr Tanmanjeet Singh
 Dodds, Anneliese
 Donaldson, rh Sir Jeffrey M.
 Doughty, Stephen
 Dowd, Peter
 Dyke, Sarah
 Eagle, Dame Angela
 Edwards, Jonathan
 Efford, Clive

Elliott, Julie
 Elmore, Chris
 Eshalomi, Florence
 Esterson, Bill
 Farron, Tim
 Farry, Stephen
 Fovargue, Yvonne
 Foxcroft, Vicky
 Foy, Mary Kelly
 Furniss, Gill
 Gardiner, Barry
 Glindon, Mary
 Greenwood, Lilian
 Greenwood, Margaret
 Griffith, Dame Nia
 Hardy, Emma
 Harman, rh Ms Harriet
 Harris, Carolyn
 Hayes, Helen
 Healey, rh John
 Hobhouse, Wera
 Hodge, rh Dame Margaret
 Hodgson, Mrs Sharon
 Howarth, rh Sir George
 Hussain, Imran
 Jarvis, Dan
 Johnson, rh Dame Diana
 Johnson, Kim
 Jones, rh Mr Kevan
 Jones, Ruth
 Kane, Mike
 Khan, Afzal
 Kinnock, Stephen
 Lavery, Ian
 Leadbeater, Kim
 Lewis, Clive
 Lightwood, Simon

Lloyd, Tony
 Lockhart, Carla
 Long Bailey, Rebecca
 Lucas, Caroline
 Lynch, Holly
 Madders, Justin
 Malhotra, Seema
 Maskell, Rachael
 McCabe, Steve
 McCarthy, Kerry
 McDonald, Andy
 McDonnell, rh John
 McKinnell, Catherine
 McMahon, Jim
 McMorris, Anna
 Mearns, Ian
 Mishra, Navendu
 Morgan, Helen
 Morgan, Stephen
 Morris, Grahame
 Murray, Ian
 Murray, James
 Nandy, Lisa
 Nichols, Charlotte
 Onwurah, Chi
 Osamor, Kate
 Owatemi, Taiwo
 Pennycook, Matthew
 Perkins, Mr Toby
 Powell, Lucy
 Rayner, rh Angela
 Reed, Steve
 Rees, Christina
 Reynolds, Jonathan
 Ribeiro-Addy, Bell

Rimmer, Ms Marie
 Robinson, Gavin
 Rodda, Matt
 Russell-Moyle, Lloyd
 Shanks, Michael
 Shannon, Jim
 Sharma, Mr Virendra
 Siddiq, Tulip
 Smith, Cat
 Smith, Jeff
 Sobel, Alex
 Spellar, rh John
 Stevens, Jo
 Stone, Jamie
 Stringer, Graham
 Sultana, Zarah
 Tami, rh Mark
 Tarry, Sam
 Thomas, Gareth
 Timms, rh Sir Stephen
 Turner, Karl
 Twigg, Derek
 Twist, Liz
 Vaz, rh Valerie
 Wakeford, Christian
 West, Catherine
 Western, Andrew
 Whitehead, Dr Alan
 Whittome, Nadia
 Wilson, Munira
 Wilson, rh Sammy
 Zeichner, Daniel

Tellers for the Noes:
 Samantha Dixon and
 Gerald Jones

Question accordingly agreed to.
Lords amendment 199 disagreed to.
Lords amendment 239 disagreed to.
Government amendments (a) to (c) made in lieu of
Lords amendment 239.
Lords amendment 240 disagreed to.
Government amendments (a) to (c) made in lieu of
Lords amendment 240.

After Clause 214

REGENERATION OF SCHOOLS AND HOSPITALS: REGISTER OF SERIOUS DISREPAIR

Motion made, and Question put, That this House disagrees with Lords amendment 241.—(Rachel Maclean.)

The House divided: Ayes 291, Noes 139.

Division No. 342]

[7.30 pm

AYES

Afolami, Bim
 Afriyie, Adam
 Aldous, Peter
 Allan, Lucy (*Proxy vote cast by Mr Marcus Jones*)
 Anderson, Lee
 Anderson, Stuart
 Andrew, rh Stuart
 Ansell, Caroline
 Argar, rh Edward
 Atherton, Sarah
 Bacon, Gareth
 Bacon, Mr Richard
 Badenoch, rh Kemi
 Bailey, Shaun

Baillie, Siobhan
 Baker, Duncan
 Baker, Mr Steve
 Baldwin, Harriett
 Barclay, rh Steve
 Baynes, Simon
 Bell, Aaron
 Benton, Scott
 Bhatti, Saqib
 Blackman, Bob
 Blunt, Crispin
 Bottomley, Sir Peter
 Bowie, Andrew
 Bradley, Ben
 Bradley, rh Karen

Brereton, Jack
 Bridgen, Andrew
 Brine, Steve
 Bristow, Paul
 Britcliffe, Sara
 Browne, Anthony
 Bruce, Fiona
 Buchan, Felicity
 Buckland, rh Sir Robert
 Burghart, Alex
 Butler, Rob
 Cameron, Dr Lisa
 Carter, Andy
 Cartledge, James
 Cates, Miriam
 Caulfield, Maria
 Chalk, rh Alex
 Chishti, Rehman
 Chope, Sir Christopher
 Churchill, Jo
 Clark, rh Greg
 Clarke, rh Sir Simon
 Clarke, Theo
 Clarke-Smith, Brendan
 Clarkson, Chris
 Clifton-Brown, Sir Geoffrey
 Coffey, rh Dr Thérèse
 Colburn, Elliot
 Collins, Damian
 Costa, Alberto
 Courts, Robert
 Coutinho, rh Claire
 Cox, rh Sir Geoffrey
 Crabb, rh Stephen
 Crosbie, Virginia
 Crouch, Tracey
 Daly, James
 Davies, rh David T. C.
 Davies, Gareth
 Davies, Dr James
 Davies, Mims
 Davis, rh Mr David
 Davison, Dehenna
 Dinéage, Dame Caroline
 Dines, Miss Sarah
 Djanogly, Mr Jonathan
 Docherty, Leo
 Donelan, rh Michelle (*Proxy vote cast by Mr Marcus Jones*)
 Double, Steve
 Doyle-Price, Jackie
 Drax, Richard
 Drummond, Mrs Flick
 Duddridge, Sir James
 Duguid, David
 Duncan Smith, rh Sir Iain
 Dunne, rh Philip
 Eastwood, Mark
 Ellis, rh Sir Michael
 Ellwood, rh Mr Tobias
 Elphicke, Mrs Natalie
 Eustice, rh George
 Evennett, rh Sir David
 Everitt, Ben
 Fabricant, Michael
 Farris, Laura
 Fell, Simon
 Firth, Anna
 Fletcher, Katherine
 Fletcher, Mark
 Fletcher, Nick

Foster, Kevin
 Frazer, rh Lucy
 Freeman, George
 Freer, Mike
 French, Mr Louie
 Fysh, Mr Marcus
 Garnier, Mark
 Gibb, rh Nick
 Gibson, Peter
 Gideon, Jo
 Glen, rh John
 Goodwill, rh Sir Robert
 Gove, rh Michael
 Graham, Richard
 Grant, Mrs Helen (*Proxy vote cast by Mr Marcus Jones*)
 Gray, James
 Grayling, rh Chris
 Green, Chris
 Green, rh Damian
 Griffith, Andrew
 Grundy, James
 Gullis, Jonathan
 Hall, Luke
 Hands, rh Greg
 Harper, rh Mr Mark
 Harris, Rebecca
 Harrison, Trudy
 Hart, Sally-Ann
 Hart, rh Simon
 Hayes, rh Sir John
 Heapey, rh James
 Henderson, Gordon
 Henry, Darren
 Higginbotham, Antony
 Hinds, rh Damian
 Hoare, Simon
 Holden, Mr Richard
 Hollinrake, Kevin
 Hollobone, Mr Philip
 Holloway, Adam
 Holmes, Paul
 Howell, John
 Howell, Paul
 Huddleston, Nigel
 Hudson, Dr Neil
 Hunt, Jane (*Proxy vote cast by Mr Marcus Jones*)
 Hunt, Tom
 Javid, rh Sajid
 Jayawardena, rh Mr Ranil
 Jenkin, Sir Bernard
 Jenkinson, Mark
 Jenkyns, Dame Andrea
 Jenrick, rh Robert
 Johnson, Dr Caroline
 Johnson, Gareth
 Johnston, David
 Jones, Andrew
 Jones, rh Mr David
 Jones, Fay
 Jones, rh Mr Marcus
 Jupp, Simon
 Kawczynski, Daniel
 Kearns, Alicia
 Keegan, rh Gillian
 Kniveton, Kate
 Kruger, Danny
 Kwarteng, rh Kwasi
 Lamont, John
 Langan, Robert
 Latham, Mrs Pauline

Leadsom, rh Dame Andrea
 Leigh, rh Sir Edward
 Lewer, Andrew
 Lewis, rh Sir Brandon
 Lewis, rh Sir Julian
 Liddell-Grainger, Mr Ian
 Logan, Mark
 Longhi, Marco
 Lopez, Julia (*Proxy vote cast by Mr Marcus Jones*)
 Loughton, Tim
 Mackrory, Cherylyn
 Maclean, Rachel
 Mak, Alan
 Malthouse, rh Kit
 Mangnall, Anthony
 Mann, Scott
 Marson, Julie
 May, rh Mrs Theresa
 Mayhew, Jerome
 Maynard, Paul
 McCartney, Jason
 McCartney, Karl
 Menzies, Mark
 Mercer, rh Johnny
 Metcalfe, Stephen
 Millar, Robin
 Mills, Nigel
 Mitchell, rh Mr Andrew
 Mohindra, Mr Gagan
 Moore, Damien
 Moore, Robbie
 Mordaunt, rh Penny
 Morris, Anne Marie
 Morris, David
 Morris, James
 Morrissey, Joy
 Mortimer, Jill
 Morton, rh Wendy
 Mullan, Dr Kieran (*Proxy vote cast by Mr Marcus Jones*)
 Mumby-Croft, Holly
 Murrison, rh Dr Andrew
 Neill, Sir Robert
 Nici, Lia
 Nokes, rh Caroline
 Norman, rh Jesse
 O'Brien, Neil
 Offord, Dr Matthew
 Opperman, Guy
 Pawsey, Mark
 Penning, rh Sir Mike
 Penrose, John
 Percy, Andrew
 Poulter, Dr Dan
 Pow, Rebecca
 Prentis, rh Victoria
 Pritchard, rh Mark
 Purslove, Tom
 Quin, rh Jeremy
 Quince, Will
 Randall, Tom
 Redwood, rh John

Richards, Nicola
 Richardson, Angela
 Robertson, Mr Laurence
 Ross, Douglas
 Russell, Dean
 Rutley, David
 Saxby, Selaine
 Scully, Paul
 Seely, Bob
 Selous, Andrew
 Shelbrooke, rh Alec
 Skidmore, rh Chris
 Smith, rh Chloe
 Smith, Greg
 Smith, Henry
 Smith, Royston
 Solloway, Amanda
 Spencer, rh Mark
 Stafford, Alexander
 Stephenson, rh Andrew
 Stevenson, Jane
 Stevenson, John
 Stewart, rh Bob
 Stewart, Iain
 Stuart, rh Graham
 Sturdy, Julian
 Sunderland, James
 Swayne, rh Sir Desmond
 Syms, Sir Robert
 Thomas, Derek
 Throup, Maggie
 Timpson, Edward
 Tolhurst, rh Kelly
 Tomlinson, Justin
 Tomlinson, Michael
 Trott, Laura
 Truss, rh Elizabeth
 Tuckwell, Steve
 Tugendhat, rh Tom
 Vara, rh Shailesh
 Vickers, Martin
 Vickers, Matt
 Villiers, rh Theresa
 Walker, Sir Charles
 Walker, Mr Robin
 Warman, Matt
 Watling, Giles
 Whately, Helen (*Proxy vote cast by Mr Marcus Jones*)
 Wheeler, Mrs Heather
 Whittaker, rh Craig
 Whittingdale, rh Sir John
 Wiggin, Sir Bill
 Wild, James
 Williams, Craig
 Williamson, rh Sir Gavin
 Wragg, Mr William
 Wright, rh Sir Jeremy
 Young, Jacob

Tellers for the Ayes:
Ruth Edwards and
Mike Wood

NOES

Abrahams, Debbie
 Ali, Tahir
 Amesbury, Mike
 Anderson, Fleur
 Ashworth, rh Jonathan
 Barker, Paula

Benn, rh Hilary
 Blake, Olivia
 Blomfield, Paul
 Brennan, Kevin
 Brown, Ms Lyn
 Brown, rh Mr Nicholas

Burton, Richard
 Byrne, rh Liam
 Campbell, rh Sir Alan
 Campbell, Mr Gregory
 Carden, Dan
 Carmichael, rh Mr Alistair
 Chamberlain, Wendy
 Champion, Sarah
 Cooper, Daisy
 Creasy, Stella
 Cruddas, Jon
 Cummins, Judith
 Cunningham, Alex
 Davey, rh Ed
 Davies-Jones, Alex
 Debbonaire, Thangam
 Dhesi, Mr Tanmanjeet Singh
 Dodds, Anneliese
 Donaldson, rh Sir Jeffrey M.
 Doughty, Stephen
 Dowd, Peter
 Duffield, Rosie
 Dyke, Sarah
 Eagle, Dame Angela
 Edwards, Jonathan
 Efford, Clive
 Elliott, Julie
 Elmore, Chris
 Eshalomi, Florence
 Esterson, Bill
 Farron, Tim
 Fovargue, Yvonne
 Foxcroft, Vicky
 Foy, Mary Kelly
 Furniss, Gill
 Gardiner, Barry
 Glendon, Mary
 Greenwood, Lilian
 Greenwood, Margaret
 Griffith, Dame Nia
 Hardy, Emma
 Harris, Carolyn
 Hayes, Helen
 Healey, rh John
 Hobhouse, Wera
 Hodgson, Mrs Sharon
 Howarth, rh Sir George
 Hussain, Imran
 Jarvis, Dan
 Johnson, rh Dame Diana
 Johnson, Kim
 Jones, rh Mr Kevan
 Jones, Ruth
 Kane, Mike
 Khan, Afzal
 Kinnock, Stephen
 Lavery, Ian
 Leadbeater, Kim
 Lewis, Clive
 Lightwood, Simon
 Lloyd, Tony
 Lockhart, Carla
 Long Bailey, Rebecca
 Lucas, Caroline
 Lynch, Holly

Madders, Justin
 Malhotra, Seema
 Maskell, Rachael
 McCabe, Steve
 McCarthy, Kerry
 McDonald, Andy
 McDonnell, rh John
 McKinnell, Catherine
 McMahon, Jim
 McMorris, Anna
 Mearns, Ian
 Mishra, Navendu
 Moran, Layla
 Morgan, Helen
 Morgan, Stephen
 Morris, Grahame
 Murray, Ian
 Murray, James
 Nandy, Lisa
 Osamor, Kate
 Owatemi, Taiwo
 Pennycook, Matthew
 Perkins, Mr Toby
 Powell, Lucy
 Rayner, rh Angela
 Reed, Steve
 Rees, Christina
 Reynolds, Jonathan
 Ribeiro-Addy, Bell
 Rimmer, Ms Marie
 Robinson, Gavin
 Rodda, Matt
 Russell-Moyle, Lloyd
 Shanks, Michael
 Shannon, Jim
 Sharma, Mr Virendra
 Siddiq, Tulip
 Smith, Cat
 Smith, Jeff
 Sobel, Alex
 Spellar, rh John
 Stevens, Jo
 Stone, Jamie
 Stringer, Graham
 Sultana, Zarah
 Tami, rh Mark
 Tarry, Sam
 Thomas, Gareth
 Timms, rh Sir Stephen
 Turner, Karl
 Twist, Liz
 Vaz, rh Valerie
 Wakeford, Christian
 Webbe, Claudia
 West, Catherine
 Western, Andrew
 Whitehead, Dr Alan
 Whittome, Nadia
 Wilson, Munira
 Wilson, rh Sammy
 Zeichner, Daniel

Tellers for the Noes:
 Samantha Dixon and
 Gerald Jones

After Clause 214

ONSHORE WIND DEVELOPMENT

Motion made, and Question put, That this House disagrees with Lords amendment 244—(Rachel Maclean.)

The House divided: Ayes 289, Noes 136.

Division No. 343]

[7.43 pm

AYES

Afolami, Bim
 Afriyie, Adam
 Aldous, Peter
 Allan, Lucy (*Proxy vote cast by Mr Marcus Jones*)
 Anderson, Lee
 Anderson, Stuart
 Andrew, rh Stuart
 Ansell, Caroline
 Argar, rh Edward
 Atherton, Sarah
 Bacon, Gareth
 Bacon, Mr Richard
 Bailey, Shaun
 Baillie, Siobhan
 Baker, Duncan
 Baker, Mr Steve
 Barclay, rh Steve
 Baynes, Simon
 Bell, Aaron
 Benton, Scott
 Bhatti, Saqib
 Blackman, Bob
 Blunt, Crispin
 Bowie, Andrew
 Bradley, Ben
 Bradley, rh Karen
 Brereton, Jack
 Bridgen, Andrew
 Brine, Steve
 Bristow, Paul
 Britcliffe, Sara
 Browne, Anthony
 Bruce, Fiona
 Buchan, Felicity
 Buckland, rh Sir Robert
 Burghart, Alex
 Butler, Rob
 Cameron, Dr Lisa
 Campbell, Mr Gregory
 Carter, Andy
 Cartledge, James
 Cates, Miriam
 Caulfield, Maria
 Chalk, rh Alex
 Chishty, Rehman
 Churchill, Jo
 Clark, rh Greg
 Clarke, rh Sir Simon
 Clarke, Theo
 Clarke-Smith, Brendan
 Clarkson, Chris
 Clifton-Brown, Sir Geoffrey
 Coffey, rh Dr Thérèse
 Colburn, Elliot
 Collins, Damian
 Costa, Alberto
 Coutinho, rh Claire
 Cox, rh Sir Geoffrey
 Crabb, rh Stephen
 Crosbie, Virginia

Crouch, Tracey
 Daly, James
 Davies, rh David T. C.
 Davies, Gareth
 Davies, Dr James
 Davies, Mims
 Davies, Philip
 Davis, rh Mr David
 Davison, Dehenna
 Dinanage, Dame Caroline
 Dines, Miss Sarah
 Djanogly, Mr Jonathan
 Docherty, Leo
 Donaldson, rh Sir Jeffrey M.
 Donelan, rh Michelle (*Proxy vote cast by Mr Marcus Jones*)
 Double, Steve
 Doyle-Price, Jackie
 Drax, Richard
 Drummond, Mrs Flick
 Duddridge, Sir James
 Duguid, David
 Duncan Smith, rh Sir Iain
 Dunne, rh Philip
 Eastwood, Mark
 Ellis, rh Sir Michael
 Ellwood, rh Mr Tobias
 Elphicke, Mrs Natalie
 Eustice, rh George
 Evennett, rh Sir David
 Everitt, Ben
 Fabricant, Michael
 Farris, Laura
 Fell, Simon
 Firth, Anna
 Fletcher, Katherine
 Fletcher, Mark
 Fletcher, Nick
 Foster, Kevin
 Frazer, rh Lucy
 Freeman, George
 Freer, Mike
 French, Mr Louie
 Fysh, Mr Marcus
 Garnier, Mark
 Gibb, rh Nick
 Gibson, Peter
 Gideon, Jo
 Glen, rh John
 Goodwill, rh Sir Robert
 Gove, rh Michael
 Graham, Richard
 Grant, Mrs Helen (*Proxy vote cast by Mr Marcus Jones*)
 Gray, James
 Grayling, rh Chris
 Green, Chris
 Green, rh Damian
 Griffith, Andrew
 Grundy, James

Question accordingly agreed to.

Lords amendment 241 disagreed to.

Lords amendments 242, 243 and 288 disagreed to.

*Government amendments (a) to (d) made in lieu of
 Lords amendments 242, 243 and 288.*

Gullis, Jonathan
Hall, Luke
Hands, rh Greg
Harper, rh Mr Mark
Harris, Rebecca
Harrison, Trudy
Hart, Sally-Ann
Hart, rh Simon
Hayes, rh Sir John
Heappey, rh James
Henderson, Gordon
Henry, Darren
Higginbotham, Antony
Hinds, rh Damian
Hoare, Simon
Holden, Mr Richard
Hollinrake, Kevin
Hollobone, Mr Philip
Holloway, Adam
Holmes, Paul
Howell, John
Huddleston, Nigel
Hudson, Dr Neil
Hunt, Jane (*Proxy vote cast by Mr Marcus Jones*)
Hunt, Tom
Javid, rh Sajid
Jayawardena, rh Mr Ranil
Jenkin, Sir Bernard
Jenkinson, Mark
Jenkyns, Dame Andrea
Johnson, Dr Caroline
Johnson, Gareth
Johnston, David
Jones, Andrew
Jones, rh Mr David
Jones, Fay
Jones, rh Mr Marcus
Jupp, Simon
Kawczynski, Daniel
Kearns, Alicia
Keegan, rh Gillian
Kniveton, Kate
Kruger, Danny
Kwarteng, rh Kwasi
Lamont, John
Largan, Robert
Latham, Mrs Pauline
Leadsom, rh Dame Andrea
Leigh, rh Sir Edward
Lewer, Andrew
Lewis, rh Sir Julian
Liddell-Grainger, Mr Ian
Lockhart, Carla
Logan, Mark
Longhi, Marco
Lopez, Julia (*Proxy vote cast by Mr Marcus Jones*)
Lopresti, Jack
Loughton, Tim
Mackrory, Cherilyn
Maclean, Rachel
Mak, Alan
Malthouse, rh Kit
Mangnall, Anthony
Mann, Scott
Marson, Julie
May, rh Mrs Theresa
Mayhew, Jerome
Maynard, Paul
McCartney, Jason
McCartney, Karl

Menzies, Mark
Mercer, rh Johnny
Metcalf, Stephen
Millar, Robin
Mills, Nigel
Mitchell, rh Mr Andrew
Mohindra, Mr Gagan
Moore, Damien
Moore, Robbie
Mordaunt, rh Penny
Morris, Anne Marie
Morris, David
Morris, James
Morrissey, Joy
Mortimer, Jill
Morton, rh Wendy
Mullan, Dr Kieran (*Proxy vote cast by Mr Marcus Jones*)
Mumby-Croft, Holly
Murrison, rh Dr Andrew
Neill, Sir Robert
Nici, Lia
Nokes, rh Caroline
Norman, rh Jesse
O'Brien, Neil
Offord, Dr Matthew
Opperman, Guy
Pawsey, Mark
Penning, rh Sir Mike
Penrose, John
Percy, Andrew
Poulter, Dr Dan
Pow, Rebecca
Prentis, rh Victoria
Pritchard, rh Mark
Pursglove, Tom
Quin, rh Jeremy
Quince, Will
Randall, Tom
Redwood, rh John
Richards, Nicola
Richardson, Angela
Robertson, Mr Laurence
Robinson, Gavin
Ross, Douglas
Russell, Dean
Rutley, David
Saxby, Selaine
Scully, Paul
Seely, Bob
Selous, Andrew
Shannon, Jim
Shelbrooke, rh Alec
Smith, rh Chloe
Smith, Greg
Smith, Henry
Smith, Royston
Solloway, Amanda
Spencer, rh Mark
Stafford, Alexander
Stephenson, rh Andrew
Stevenson, Jane
Stevenson, John
Stewart, rh Bob
Stewart, Iain
Stuart, rh Graham
Sturdy, Julian
Sunderland, James
Swaine, rh Sir Desmond
Syms, Sir Robert
Thomas, Derek
Throup, Maggie

Timpson, Edward
Tolhurst, rh Kelly
Tomlinson, Justin
Tomlinson, Michael
Trott, Laura
Truss, rh Elizabeth
Tuckwell, Steve
Tugendhat, rh Tom
Vara, rh Shailesh
Vickers, Martin
Vickers, Matt
Villiers, rh Theresa
Walker, Sir Charles
Walker, Mr Robin
Warman, Matt
Watling, Giles

Abrahams, Debbie
Ali, Rushanara
Ali, Tahir
Amesbury, Mike
Anderson, Fleur
Ashworth, rh Jonathan
Barker, Paula
Benn, rh Hilary
Blake, Olivia
Blomfield, Paul
Brennan, Kevin
Brown, Ms Lyn
Brown, rh Mr Nicholas
Burgon, Richard
Byrne, rh Liam
Campbell, rh Sir Alan
Carden, Dan
Chamberlain, Wendy
Champion, Sarah
Cooper, Daisy
Creasy, Stella
Cruddas, Jon
Cummins, Judith
Cunningham, Alex
Davey, rh Ed
Davies-Jones, Alex
Debbonaire, Thangam
Dhesi, Mr Tanmanjeet Singh
Dodds, Anneliese
Doughty, Stephen
Dowd, Peter
Duffield, Rosie
Dyke, Sarah
Eagle, Dame Angela
Edwards, Jonathan
Efford, Clive
Elliott, Julie
Elmore, Chris
Eshalomi, Florence
Esterson, Bill
Farron, Tim
Fovargue, Yvonne
Foxcroft, Vicky
Foy, Mary Kelly
Furniss, Gill
Gardiner, Barry
Glendon, Mary
Greenwood, Lilian
Greenwood, Margaret
Griffith, Dame Nia
Hardy, Emma
Harris, Carolyn
Hayes, Helen

Whately, Helen (*Proxy vote cast by Mr Marcus Jones*)
Wheeler, Mrs Heather
Whittingdale, rh Sir John
Wiggin, Sir Bill
Wild, James
Williams, Craig
Williamson, rh Sir Gavin
Wilson, rh Sammy
Wragg, Mr William
Wright, rh Sir Jeremy
Young, Jacob

Tellers for the Ayes:
Ruth Edwards and
Mike Wood

NOES

Healey, rh John
Hobhouse, Wera
Hodgson, Mrs Sharon
Howarth, rh Sir George
Hussain, Imran
Jarvis, Dan
Johnson, rh Dame Diana
Johnson, Kim
Jones, rh Mr Kevan
Jones, Ruth
Kane, Mike
Khan, Afzal
Kinnock, Stephen
Lavery, Ian
Leadbeater, Kim
Lewis, Clive
Lightwood, Simon
Lloyd, Tony
Long Bailey, Rebecca
Lucas, Caroline
Lynch, Holly
Madders, Justin
Malhotra, Seema
Maskell, Rachael
McCabe, Steve
McCarthy, Kerry
McDonald, Andy
McDonnell, rh John
McKinnell, Catherine
McMahon, Jim
McMorrin, Anna
Mearns, Ian
Mishra, Navendu
Moran, Layla
Morgan, Helen
Morgan, Stephen
Morris, Grahame
Murray, Ian
Murray, James
Nandy, Lisa
Osamor, Kate
Owatemi, Taiwo
Pennycook, Matthew
Perkins, Mr Toby
Powell, Lucy
Rayner, rh Angela
Reed, Steve
Rees, Christina
Reynolds, Jonathan
Ribeiro-Addy, Bell
Rimmer, Ms Marie
Rodda, Matt
Russell-Moyle, Lloyd

Shanks, Michael
 Sharma, Mr Virendra
 Siddiq, Tulip
 Skidmore, rh Chris
 Smith, Cat
 Smith, Jeff
 Sobel, Alex
 Spellar, rh John
 Stevens, Jo
 Stone, Jamie
 Stringer, Graham
 Sultana, Zarah
 Tami, rh Mark
 Tarry, Sam
 Thomas, Gareth
 Timms, rh Sir Stephen

Turner, Karl
 Twigg, Derek
 Vaz, rh Valerie
 Wakeford, Christian
 Webbe, Claudia
 West, Catherine
 Western, Andrew
 Whitehead, Dr Alan
 Whittaker, rh Craig
 Whittome, Nadia
 Wilson, Munira
 Zeichner, Daniel

Tellers for the Noes:
Samantha Dixon and
Gerald Jones

Question accordingly agreed to.

Lords amendment 244 disagreed to.

Lords amendment 249 disagreed to.

Clause 222

COMMENCEMENT AND TRANSITIONAL PROVISION

Motion made, and Question put, That this House disagrees with Lords amendment 273.—(Rachel Maclean.)

The House divided: Ayes 285, Noes 132.

Division No. 344]

[7.55 pm

AYES

Afolami, Bim
 Afriyie, Adam
 Aldous, Peter
 Allan, Lucy (*Proxy vote cast by Mr Marcus Jones*)
 Anderson, Lee
 Andrew, rh Stuart
 Ansell, Caroline
 Argar, rh Edward
 Atherton, Sarah
 Bacon, Gareth
 Bacon, Mr Richard
 Badenoch, rh Kemi
 Bailey, Shaun
 Baillie, Siobhan
 Baker, Duncan
 Baker, Mr Steve
 Baynes, Simon
 Bell, Aaron
 Benton, Scott
 Bhatti, Saqib
 Blackman, Bob
 Blunt, Crispin
 Bowie, Andrew
 Bradley, Ben
 Bradley, rh Karen
 Brereton, Jack
 Bridgen, Andrew
 Brine, Steve
 Bristow, Paul
 Britcliffe, Sara
 Browne, Anthony
 Bruce, Fiona
 Buchan, Felicity
 Buckland, rh Sir Robert
 Burghart, Alex
 Butler, Rob
 Cameron, Dr Lisa
 Campbell, Mr Gregory

Carter, Andy
 Cartlidge, James
 Cates, Miriam
 Caulfield, Maria
 Chalk, rh Alex
 Chishti, Rehman
 Churchill, Jo
 Clark, rh Greg
 Clarke, rh Sir Simon
 Clarke, Theo
 Clarke-Smith, Brendan
 Clarkson, Chris
 Clifton-Brown, Sir Geoffrey
 Coffey, rh Dr Thérèse
 Colburn, Elliot
 Collins, Damian
 Costa, Alberto
 Coutinho, rh Claire
 Cox, rh Sir Geoffrey
 Crabb, rh Stephen
 Crosbie, Virginia
 Daly, James
 Davies, Gareth
 Davies, Dr James
 Davies, Mims
 Davies, Philip
 Davis, rh Mr David
 Davison, Dehenna
 Dinanage, Dame Caroline
 Dines, Miss Sarah
 Djanogly, Mr Jonathan
 Docherty, Leo
 Donaldson, rh Sir Jeffrey M.
 Donelan, rh Michelle (*Proxy vote cast by Mr Marcus Jones*)
 Double, Steve
 Doyle-Price, Jackie
 Drax, Richard

Drummond, Mrs Flick
 Duddridge, Sir James
 Duguid, David
 Duncan Smith, rh Sir Iain
 Dunne, rh Philip
 Eastwood, Mark
 Edwards, Ruth
 Ellis, rh Sir Michael
 Ellwood, rh Mr Tobias
 Elphicke, Mrs Natalie
 Eustice, rh George
 Evennett, rh Sir David
 Everitt, Ben
 Fabricant, Michael
 Farris, Laura
 Fell, Simon
 Firth, Anna
 Fletcher, Katherine
 Fletcher, Mark
 Fletcher, Nick
 Foster, Kevin
 Frazer, rh Lucy
 Freeman, George
 Freer, Mike
 French, Mr Louie
 Fysh, Mr Marcus
 Garnier, Mark
 Gibb, rh Nick
 Gibson, Peter
 Gideon, Jo
 Glen, rh John
 Goodwill, rh Sir Robert
 Gove, rh Michael
 Graham, Richard
 Grant, Mrs Helen (*Proxy vote cast by Mr Marcus Jones*)
 Gray, James
 Grayling, rh Chris
 Green, Chris
 Green, rh Damian
 Griffith, Andrew
 Grundy, James
 Gullis, Jonathan
 Hall, Luke
 Hands, rh Greg
 Harper, rh Mr Mark
 Harris, Rebecca
 Harrison, Trudy
 Hart, Sally-Ann
 Hart, rh Simon
 Hayes, rh Sir John
 Heappey, rh James
 Henderson, Gordon
 Henry, Darren
 Higginbotham, Antony
 Hinds, rh Damian
 Hoare, Simon
 Holden, Mr Richard
 Hollinrake, Kevin
 Hollobone, Mr Philip
 Holloway, Adam
 Holmes, Paul
 Howell, John
 Huddleston, Nigel
 Hudson, Dr Neil
 Hunt, Jane (*Proxy vote cast by Mr Marcus Jones*)
 Hunt, Tom
 Javid, rh Sajid
 Jayawardena, rh Mr Ranil
 Jenkin, Sir Bernard
 Jenkinson, Mark

Jenkyns, Dame Andrea
 Johnson, Dr Caroline
 Johnson, Gareth
 Johnston, David
 Jones, Andrew
 Jones, rh Mr David
 Jones, Fay
 Jones, rh Mr Marcus
 Jupp, Simon
 Kawczynski, Daniel
 Keegan, rh Gillian
 Kniveton, Kate
 Kruger, Danny
 Kwarteng, rh Kwasi
 Lamont, John
 Langan, Robert
 Latham, Mrs Pauline
 Leadsom, rh Dame Andrea
 Leigh, rh Sir Edward
 Lewer, Andrew
 Lewis, rh Sir Julian
 Liddell-Grainger, Mr Ian
 Lockhart, Carla
 Logan, Mark
 Longhi, Marco
 Lopez, Julia (*Proxy vote cast by Mr Marcus Jones*)
 Loughton, Tim
 Mackrory, Cheryllyn
 Maclean, Rachel
 Mak, Alan
 Malthouse, rh Kit
 Mangnall, Anthony
 Mann, Scott
 Marson, Julie
 May, rh Mrs Theresa
 Mayhew, Jerome
 Maynard, Paul
 McCartney, Jason
 McCartney, Karl
 Menzies, Mark
 Mercer, rh Johnny
 Metcalfe, Stephen
 Millar, Robin
 Mills, Nigel
 Mitchell, rh Mr Andrew
 Mohindra, Mr Gagan
 Moore, Damien
 Moore, Robbie
 Mordaunt, rh Penny
 Morris, Anne Marie
 Morris, David
 Morris, James
 Morrissey, Joy
 Mortimer, Jill
 Morton, rh Wendy
 Mullan, Dr Kieran (*Proxy vote cast by Mr Marcus Jones*)
 Mumby-Croft, Holly
 Neill, Sir Robert
 Nici, Lia
 Nokes, rh Caroline
 Norman, rh Jesse
 O'Brien, Neil
 Offord, Dr Matthew
 Opperman, Guy
 Pawsey, Mark
 Penning, rh Sir Mike
 Penrose, John
 Percy, Andrew
 Poulter, Dr Dan
 Pow, Rebecca

Prentis, rh Victoria
 Pritchard, rh Mark
 Pursglove, Tom
 Quin, rh Jeremy
 Quince, Will
 Randall, Tom
 Redwood, rh John
 Richards, Nicola
 Richardson, Angela
 Robertson, Mr Laurence
 Robinson, Gavin
 Ross, Douglas
 Russell, Dean
 Rutley, David
 Saxby, Selaine
 Scully, Paul
 Selous, Andrew
 Shannon, Jim
 Shelbrooke, rh Alec
 Skidmore, rh Chris
 Smith, rh Chloe
 Smith, Greg
 Smith, Henry
 Smith, Royston
 Solloway, Amanda
 Spencer, rh Mark
 Stafford, Alexander
 Stevenson, Jane
 Stevenson, John
 Stewart, rh Bob
 Stewart, Iain
 Stuart, rh Graham
 Sturdy, Julian
 Sunderland, James
 Swayne, rh Sir Desmond
 Syms, Sir Robert

Thomas, Derek
 Throup, Maggie
 Timpson, Edward
 Tolhurst, rh Kelly
 Tomlinson, Justin
 Tomlinson, Michael
 Trott, Laura
 Truss, rh Elizabeth
 Tuckwell, Steve
 Tugendhat, rh Tom
 Vara, rh Shailesh
 Vickers, Martin
 Vickers, Matt
 Villiers, rh Theresa
 Walker, Sir Charles
 Walker, Mr Robin
 Warman, Matt
 Watling, Giles
 Whately, Helen (*Proxy vote
 cast by Mr Marcus Jones*)
 Wheeler, Mrs Heather
 Whittaker, rh Craig
 Whittingdale, rh Sir John
 Wiggin, Sir Bill
 Wild, James
 Williams, Craig
 Williamson, rh Sir Gavin
 Wilson, rh Sammy
 Wood, Mike
 Wragg, Mr William
 Wright, rh Sir Jeremy
 Young, Jacob

Tellers for the Ayes:
 Andrew Stephenson and
 Stuart Anderson

NOES

Abrahams, Debbie
 Ali, Rushanara
 Ali, Tahir
 Amesbury, Mike
 Anderson, Fleur
 Ashworth, rh Jonathan
 Barker, Paula
 Blake, Olivia
 Blomfield, Paul
 Brennan, Kevin
 Brown, Ms Lyn
 Brown, rh Mr Nicholas
 Burgon, Richard
 Byrne, rh Liam
 Campbell, rh Sir Alan
 Carden, Dan
 Chamberlain, Wendy
 Champion, Sarah
 Cooper, Daisy
 Creasy, Stella
 Cruddas, Jon
 Cummins, Judith
 Cunningham, Alex
 Davey, rh Ed
 Davies-Jones, Alex
 Debbonaire, Thangam
 Dhesi, Mr Tanmanjeet Singh
 Dodds, Anneliese
 Doughty, Stephen
 Dowd, Peter
 Duffield, Rosie
 Dyke, Sarah
 Eagle, Dame Angela

Edwards, Jonathan
 Efford, Clive
 Elliott, Julie
 Elmore, Chris
 Eshalomi, Florence
 Esterson, Bill
 Farron, Tim
 Fovargue, Yvonne
 Foxcroft, Vicky
 Foy, Mary Kelly
 Furniss, Gill
 Gardiner, Barry
 Glindon, Mary
 Greenwood, Lilian
 Greenwood, Margaret
 Griffith, Dame Nia
 Hardy, Emma
 Harris, Carolyn
 Hayes, Helen
 Healey, rh John
 Hobhouse, Wera
 Hodgson, Mrs Sharon
 Howarth, rh Sir George
 Hussain, Imran
 Jarvis, Dan
 Johnson, rh Dame Diana
 Johnson, Kim
 Jones, rh Mr Kevan
 Jones, Ruth
 Kane, Mike
 Khan, Afzal
 Kinnock, Stephen
 Lavery, Ian

Leadbeater, Kim
 Lewis, Clive
 Lloyd, Tony
 Long Bailey, Rebecca
 Lucas, Caroline
 Lynch, Holly
 Madders, Justin
 Malhotra, Seema
 Maskell, Rachael
 McCabe, Steve
 McCarthy, Kerry
 McDonald, Andy
 McDonnell, rh John
 McKinnell, Catherine
 McMahan, Jim
 McMorrin, Anna
 Mearns, Ian
 Mishra, Navendu
 Moran, Layla
 Morgan, Helen
 Morgan, Stephen
 Morris, Grahame
 Murray, Ian
 Murray, James
 Nandy, Lisa
 Osamor, Kate
 Owatemi, Taiwo
 Pennycook, Matthew
 Perkins, Mr Toby
 Powell, Lucy
 Rayner, rh Angela
 Reed, Steve
 Rees, Christina
 Reynolds, Jonathan

Ribeiro-Addy, Bell
 Rimmer, Ms Marie
 Rodda, Matt
 Russell-Moyle, Lloyd
 Shanks, Michael
 Sharma, Mr Virendra
 Siddiq, Tulip
 Smith, Cat
 Smith, Jeff
 Sobel, Alex
 Spellars, rh John
 Stevens, Jo
 Stone, Jamie
 Stringer, Graham
 Sultana, Zarah
 Tami, rh Mark
 Tarry, Sam
 Thomas, Gareth
 Timms, rh Sir Stephen
 Turner, Karl
 Twigg, Derek
 Twist, Liz
 Vaz, rh Valerie
 Wakeford, Christian
 Webbe, Claudia
 West, Catherine
 Western, Andrew
 Whitehead, Dr Alan
 Whittome, Nadia
 Wilson, Munira
 Zeichner, Daniel

Tellers for the Noes:
 Gerald Jones and
 Samantha Dixon

Question accordingly agreed to.

Lords amendment 273 disagreed to.

*Government amendment (a) made to Lords
 amendment 273.*

Lords amendment 280 disagreed to.

Lords amendment 285 disagreed to.

*Government amendment (a) made to Lords
 amendment 285.*

Lords amendment 327 disagreed to.

Schedule 7

PLAN MAKING

*Motion made, and Question put, That this House
 disagrees with Lords amendment 329.—(Rachel Maclean.)*

The House divided: Ayes 286, Noes 131.

Division No. 345]

[8.8 pm

AYES

Afolami, Bim
 Afriyie, Adam
 Aldous, Peter
 Allan, Lucy (*Proxy vote cast
 by Mr Marcus Jones*)
 Anderson, Lee
 Andrew, rh Stuart
 Ansell, Caroline
 Argar, rh Edward
 Atherton, Sarah
 Bacon, Gareth
 Bacon, Mr Richard
 Badenoch, rh Kemi
 Bailey, Shaun

Baillie, Siobhan
 Baker, Duncan
 Baker, Mr Steve
 Baynes, Simon
 Bell, Aaron
 Benton, Scott
 Bhatti, Saqib
 Blackman, Bob
 Blunt, Crispin
 Bowie, Andrew
 Bradley, Ben
 Bradley, rh Karen
 Brereton, Jack
 Bridgen, Andrew

Brine, Steve
 Bristow, Paul
 Britcliffe, Sara
 Browne, Anthony
 Bruce, Fiona
 Buchan, Felicity
 Buckland, rh Sir Robert
 Burghart, Alex
 Butler, Rob
 Cameron, Dr Lisa
 Campbell, Mr Gregory
 Carter, Andy
 Cartlidge, James
 Cates, Miriam
 Caulfield, Maria
 Chalk, rh Alex
 Chishti, Rehman
 Clark, rh Greg
 Clarke, rh Sir Simon
 Clarke, Theo
 Clarke-Smith, Brendan
 Clarkson, Chris
 Clifton-Brown, Sir Geoffrey
 Coffey, rh Dr Thérèse
 Colburn, Elliot
 Collins, Damian
 Costa, Alberto
 Courts, Robert
 Coutinho, rh Claire
 Cox, rh Sir Geoffrey
 Crabb, rh Stephen
 Crosbie, Virginia
 Daly, James
 Davies, Gareth
 Davies, Dr James
 Davies, Mims
 Davies, Philip
 Davis, rh Mr David
 Davison, Dehenna
 Dinenage, Dame Caroline
 Dines, Miss Sarah
 Djanogly, Mr Jonathan
 Docherty, Leo
 Donaldson, rh Sir Jeffrey M.
 Donelan, rh Michelle (*Proxy vote cast by Mr Marcus Jones*)
 Double, Steve
 Doyle-Price, Jackie
 Drax, Richard
 Drummond, Mrs Flick
 Duddridge, Sir James
 Dundcan Smith, rh Sir Iain
 Dunne, rh Philip
 Eastwood, Mark
 Edwards, Ruth
 Ellis, rh Sir Michael
 Ellwood, rh Mr Tobias
 Elphicke, Mrs Natalie
 Eustice, rh George
 Evennett, rh Sir David
 Everitt, Ben
 Fabricant, Michael
 Farris, Laura
 Fell, Simon
 Firth, Anna
 Fletcher, Katherine
 Fletcher, Mark
 Fletcher, Nick
 Foster, Kevin
 Frazer, rh Lucy
 Freeman, George

Freer, Mike
 French, Mr Louie
 Fysh, Mr Marcus
 Garnier, Mark
 Gibb, rh Nick
 Gideon, Jo
 Glen, rh John
 Goodwill, rh Sir Robert
 Gove, rh Michael
 Graham, Richard
 Grant, Mrs Helen (*Proxy vote cast by Mr Marcus Jones*)
 Gray, James
 Grayling, rh Chris
 Green, Chris
 Green, rh Damian
 Griffith, Andrew
 Grundy, James
 Gullis, Jonathan
 Hall, Luke
 Hands, rh Greg
 Harper, rh Mr Mark
 Harris, Rebecca
 Harrison, Trudy
 Hart, Sally-Ann
 Hart, rh Simon
 Hayes, rh Sir John
 Heapey, rh James
 Henderson, Gordon
 Henry, Darren
 Higginbotham, Antony
 Hinds, rh Damian
 Hoare, Simon
 Holden, Mr Richard
 Hollinrake, Kevin
 Hollobone, Mr Philip
 Holloway, Adam
 Holmes, Paul
 Howell, John
 Huddleston, Nigel
 Hudson, Dr Neil
 Hunt, Jane (*Proxy vote cast by Mr Marcus Jones*)
 Hunt, Tom
 Javid, rh Sajid
 Jayawardena, rh Mr Ranil
 Jenkin, Sir Bernard
 Jenkinson, Mark
 Jenkyns, Dame Andrea
 Jenrick, rh Robert
 Johnson, Dr Caroline
 Johnson, Gareth
 Johnston, David
 Jones, Andrew
 Jones, rh Mr David
 Jones, Fay
 Jones, rh Mr Marcus
 Jupp, Simon
 Kawczynski, Daniel
 Kearns, Alicia
 Keegan, rh Gillian
 Kniveton, Kate
 Kruger, Danny
 Kwarteng, rh Kwasi
 Lamont, John
 Largan, Robert
 Latham, Mrs Pauline
 Leadsom, rh Dame Andrea
 Leigh, rh Sir Edward
 Lewer, Andrew
 Lewis, rh Sir Julian
 Liddell-Grainger, Mr Ian

Lockhart, Carla
 Logan, Mark
 Longhi, Marco
 Lopez, Julia (*Proxy vote cast by Mr Marcus Jones*)
 Loughton, Tim
 Mackrory, Cheryl
 Maclean, Rachel
 Mak, Alan
 Malthouse, rh Kit
 Mangnall, Anthony
 Mann, Scott
 Marson, Julie
 May, rh Mrs Theresa
 Mayhew, Jerome
 Maynard, Paul
 McCartney, Jason
 McCartney, Karl
 Menzies, Mark
 Mercer, rh Johnny
 Metcalfe, Stephen
 Millar, Robin
 Mills, Nigel
 Mitchell, rh Mr Andrew
 Mohindra, Mr Gagan
 Moore, Damien
 Moore, Robbie
 Mordaunt, rh Penny
 Morris, Anne Marie
 Morris, David
 Morris, James
 Morrissey, Joy
 Mortimer, Jill
 Morton, rh Wendy
 Mullan, Dr Kieran (*Proxy vote cast by Mr Marcus Jones*)
 Mumby-Croft, Holly
 Neill, Sir Robert
 Nici, Lia
 Nokes, rh Caroline
 Norman, rh Jesse
 O'Brien, Neil
 Offord, Dr Matthew
 Opperman, Guy
 Pawsey, Mark
 Penning, rh Sir Mike
 Penrose, John
 Percy, Andrew
 Poulter, Dr Dan
 Pow, Rebecca
 Prentis, rh Victoria
 Pritchard, rh Mark
 Pursglove, Tom
 Quin, rh Jeremy
 Quince, Will
 Randall, Tom
 Redwood, rh John
 Richards, Nicola
 Richardson, Angela
 Robertson, Mr Laurence
 Robinson, Gavin
 Ross, Douglas

Russell, Dean
 Rutley, David
 Saxby, Selaine
 Scully, Paul
 Selous, Andrew
 Shannon, Jim
 Shelbrooke, rh Alec
 Skidmore, rh Chris
 Smith, rh Chloe
 Smith, Greg
 Smith, Henry
 Smith, Royston
 Solloway, Amanda
 Spencer, rh Mark
 Stafford, Alexander
 Stephenson, rh Andrew
 Stevenson, Jane
 Stevenson, John
 Stewart, rh Bob
 Stewart, Iain
 Stuart, rh Graham
 Sturdy, Julian
 Sunderland, James
 Swayne, rh Sir Desmond
 Syms, Sir Robert
 Thomas, Derek
 Throup, Maggie
 Timpson, Edward
 Tolhurst, rh Kelly
 Tomlinson, Justin
 Tomlinson, Michael
 Trott, Laura
 Truss, rh Elizabeth
 Tuckwell, Steve
 Tugendhat, rh Tom
 Vara, rh Shailesh
 Vickers, Martin
 Vickers, Matt
 Villiers, rh Theresa
 Walker, Sir Charles
 Walker, Mr Robin
 Warman, Matt
 Watling, Giles
 Whately, Helen (*Proxy vote cast by Mr Marcus Jones*)
 Wheeler, Mrs Heather
 Whittaker, rh Craig
 Whittingdale, rh Sir John
 Wiggin, Sir Bill
 Wild, James
 Williams, Craig
 Williamson, rh Sir Gavin
 Wilson, rh Sammy
 Wood, Mike
 Wragg, Mr William
 Wright, rh Sir Jeremy
 Young, Jacob

Tellers for the Ayes:
Jo Churchill and
Stuart Anderson

NOES

Abrahams, Debbie
 Ali, Rushanara
 Ali, Tahir
 Amesbury, Mike
 Anderson, Fleur
 Ashworth, rh Jonathan
 Barker, Paula

Blake, Olivia
 Blomfield, Paul
 Brennan, Kevin
 Brown, Ms Lyn
 Brown, rh Mr Nicholas
 Burgon, Richard
 Byrne, rh Liam

Campbell, rh Sir Alan
 Carden, Dan
 Chamberlain, Wendy
 Champion, Sarah
 Cooper, Daisy
 Creasy, Stella
 Cruddas, Jon
 Cummins, Judith
 Cunningham, Alex
 Davey, rh Ed
 Davies-Jones, Alex
 Debbonaire, Thangam
 Dhesi, Mr Tanmanjeet Singh
 Dodds, Anneliese
 Doughty, Stephen
 Dowd, Peter
 Duffield, Rosie
 Dyke, Sarah
 Eagle, Dame Angela
 Edwards, Jonathan
 Efford, Clive
 Elliott, Julie
 Elmore, Chris
 Eshalomi, Florence
 Esterson, Bill
 Farron, Tim
 Fovargue, Yvonne
 Foxcroft, Vicky
 Foy, Mary Kelly
 Furniss, Gill
 Gardiner, Barry
 Glindon, Mary
 Greenwood, Lilian
 Greenwood, Margaret
 Griffith, Dame Nia
 Hardy, Emma
 Harris, Carolyn
 Hayes, Helen
 Healey, rh John
 Hobhouse, Wera
 Hodgson, Mrs Sharon
 Howarth, rh Sir George
 Hussain, Imran
 Jarvis, Dan
 Johnson, rh Dame Diana
 Johnson, Kim
 Jones, rh Mr Kevan
 Jones, Ruth
 Kane, Mike
 Khan, Afzal
 Kinnock, Stephen
 Lavery, Ian
 Leadbeater, Kim
 Lewis, Clive
 Lightwood, Simon
 Lloyd, Tony
 Long Bailey, Rebecca
 Lucas, Caroline
 Lynch, Holly
 Madders, Justin
 Malhotra, Seema

Maskell, Rachael
 McCabe, Steve
 McCarthy, Kerry
 McDonald, Andy
 McDonnell, rh John
 McKinnell, Catherine
 McMahon, Jim
 McMorris, Anna
 Mearns, Ian
 Mishra, Navendu
 Moran, Layla
 Morgan, Helen
 Morgan, Stephen
 Morris, Grahame
 Murray, Ian
 Murray, James
 Nandy, Lisa
 Osamor, Kate
 Owatemi, Taiwo
 Pennycook, Matthew
 Perkins, Mr Toby
 Powell, Lucy
 Rayner, rh Angela
 Reed, Steve
 Rees, Christina
 Reynolds, Jonathan
 Ribeiro-Addy, Bell
 Rimmer, Ms Marie
 Russell-Moyle, Lloyd
 Shanks, Michael
 Sharma, Mr Virendra
 Siddiq, Tulip
 Smith, Cat
 Smith, Jeff
 Sobel, Alex
 Spellar, rh John
 Stevens, Jo
 Stone, Jamie
 Stringer, Graham
 Sultana, Sarah
 Tami, rh Mark
 Tarry, Sam
 Thomas, Gareth
 Timms, rh Sir Stephen
 Turner, Karl
 Twigg, Derek
 Twist, Liz
 Vaz, rh Valerie
 Wakeford, Christian
 Webbe, Claudia
 West, Catherine
 Western, Andrew
 Whitehead, Dr Alan
 Whittome, Nadia
 Wilson, Munira
 Zeichner, Daniel

Tellers for the Noes:
Samantha Dixon and
Gerald Jones

Question accordingly agreed to.

Lords amendment 329 disagreed to.

Government amendments (a) and (b) made in lieu of Lords amendment 329.

Lords amendments 5, 7 to 9, 11, 12, 15 to 17, 19 to 21, 23 to 29, 32 to 43, 47 to 79, 83 to 89, 91 to 101, 104 to 116, 118 to 132, 135, 136, 138, 140, 141, 143 to 155, 158 to 171, 173 to 179, 181 to 198, 200 to 230, 232 to 236,

238, 245 to 248, 250 to 272, 274 to 279, 281 to 284, 286, 287, 289 to 326, 328, 330 to 368 and 370 to 418 agreed to, with Commons financial privileges waived in respect of Lords amendments 73 to 75, 78, 301 to 326 and 349 to 367.

Motion made, and Question put forthwith (Standing Order No. 83H(2)), That a Committee be appointed to draw up Reasons to be assigned to the Lords for disagreeing with their amendments 1, 3, 13, 22, 45, 46, 80, 82, 133, 134, 137, 139, 142, 156, 157, 172, 180, 199, 241, 244, 249, 280 and 327;

That Rachel Maclean, Mr Gagan Mohindra, Paul Holmes, Sara Britcliffe, Matthew Pennycook, Mary Glindon and Ms Anum Qaisar be members of the Committee;

That Rachel Maclean be the Chair of the Committee;

That three be the quorum of the Committee.

That the Committee do withdraw immediately.—(*Robert Largan.*)

Question agreed to.

Committee to withdraw immediately; reasons to be reported and communicated to the Lords.

Business without Debate

DELEGATED LEGISLATION

Motion made, and Question put forthwith (Standing Order No. 118(6)),

SENIOR COURTS OF ENGLAND AND WALES

That the draft Courts (Prescribed Recordings) Order 2023, which was laid before this House on 17 July, be approved.

Question agreed to.

Motion made, and Question put forthwith (Standing Order No. 118(6)),

RETAINED EU LAW REFORM

That the draft Retained EU Law (Revocation and Reform) Act 2023 (Revocation and Sunset Disapplication) Regulations 2023 which were laid before this House on 4 September, be approved.—(*Robert Largan.*)

Question agreed to.

PETITIONS

Hinckley National Rail Freight Interchange

8.22 pm

Alberto Costa (South Leicestershire) (Con): I rise to present a petition that urges the Government to oppose granting development consent for the Hinckley national rail freight interchange, a proposed 440-acre logistics hub in South Leicestershire.

In an area with more than its fair share of warehouses, logistics parks and new housing, my constituents, as well as many represented by my hon. Friend the Member for Bosworth (Dr Evans), have overwhelmingly spoken out against the proposed development, including Conservative-led Blaby District Council, with its excellent councillors, who have done so much to listen to my constituents. I present the petition on behalf of the

[Alberto Costa]

local residents who have signed it, and the additional 1,549 constituents who expressed support for it in a recent survey.

The petition of residents of the constituency of South Leicestershire,

Declares that the construction of the Hinckley National Rail Freight Interchange goes against wishes of some constituents in South Leicestershire, further notes the potential detrimental impact it may have on the local environment, infrastructure, and surrounding communities.

The petitioners therefore request that the House of Commons urge the Government to take into account the concerns of the petitioners and take immediate action to ensure that the Hinckley National Rail Freight Interchange is not built.

And the petitioners remain, etc.

Parked vehicles and emergencies

[P002843]

Cat Smith (Lancaster and Fleetwood) (Lab): I rise to present a petition that I have worked on with the pupils and children of Ellet St John's Primary School in Galgate regarding parked vehicles and emergencies following a, frankly, false fire alarm at their school. A fire engine was unable to access the school due to parked vehicles. The children have organised this petition with me and collected many signatures. The petition states:

The petitioners therefore urge the House of Commons to urge the Department to raise this issue with Lancashire County Council in order to prevent this incident from happening again.

Following is the full text of the petition:

[The petition of residents of Galgate,

Declares that recently a fire alarm went off at Ellet St John's Primary school; further declares that during the fire alarm, fire services were unable to access Chapel Lane as vehicles were parked in a way which did not allow access; notes that on this occasion it was a false alarm but in a real emergency this blockage could have prevented fire services from reaching the school in time.

The petitioners therefore urge the House of Commons to urge the Department to raise this issue with Lancashire County Council in order to prevent this incident from happening again.

And the petitioners remain, etc.]

[P002861]

Childhood Cancer Outcomes

Motion made, and Question proposed, That this House do now adjourn.—(*Robert Langan.*)

8.25 pm

Mrs Emma Lewell-Buck (South Shields) (Lab): Thank you, Sir Roger, for granting me this important Adjournment debate following September's Childhood Cancer Awareness Month.

I know that many of us have experienced the suffering of a loved one with cancer, but there are very few of us who have had to endure the unimaginable pain of seeing your child suffer with cancer and, worse, losing a child to cancer. Yet cancer remains the leading cause of death by disease in children and young people, with 490 cancer deaths in the UK each year. That is 490 lives lost and families forever changed. The lack of a bespoke, stand-alone children's cancer strategy leaves those children with aggressive cancers even more vulnerable.

In the short time I have this evening, I want to focus my comments on a little boy, a "tough cookie" from South Shields called Ethan Adams. Ethan attended the dentist with toothache in November 2020. The dentist treated him for a tooth infection, but Ethan was still not right, so he and his family returned to the dentist and Ethan was given some antibiotics. A week later, he developed a lump on the roof of his mouth. The dentist thought that this was an abscess because of infection and removed his tooth, but Ethan continued to be unwell. He was referred to an oral specialist at Sunderland Royal Hospital and, after an emergency MRI, the family were told that it was a benign tumour and to expect a follow-up call in a few weeks from the Royal Victoria Infirmary in Newcastle.

The very next day, the family received an urgent call asking them to head to the accident and emergency department as soon as possible. That is when the worlds of his mam and dad, Tracey and Mark, crashed. They were told that Ethan had an aggressive cancer and that it was eating up through his skull and pressing against his brain. Ethan was diagnosed with rhabdomyosarcoma, often referred to as RMS. A large tumour was present in his face, pushing through on to his brain. A large tumour was also found attached to his spine and traces were visible in his lungs and bone marrow.

His family were given a glimmer of hope when they were told that Ethan's diagnosis was embryonal RMS, the lesser of two evils, and that the medics could shrink the tumours, but they were not sure that they could stop it coming back due to the aggressive nature of the cancer. Little Ethan had 32 days solid of chemotherapy and radiotherapy. He did not complain once. After going through so much, the family felt hopeful for a good result, but after an MRI they received the heart-breaking news that the cancer was buried in layers of his brain and it was terminal.

The family made sure that Ethan spent his final days carrying out his bucket list of all the places that he wanted to see and all the things that he wanted to do. This very determined independent little boy, even at his weakest and when losing his sight, would insist on climbing the stairs at home instead of being carried. On 5 August 2021, just a week after his ninth birthday, Ethan passed away at home, with his mam Tracey, his dad Mark, his sister Ellie and his brother Evan.

Ethan loved Yoda, Sunderland football club and the colour gold. He loved entertaining people and was a mischievous and funny kid with a big heart. Even when unwell in hospital, he was found sharing his toys and helping another little boy. He was all about friends and family, and talked about being a daddy himself one day. His school, Harton Primary, has named a sports hall after him and has buddy benches in each yard. His grave, which his brother calls his forever home, has on it "Ethan, a friend to all". Ethan left a hole not just in his family's and friends' lives, but in our community. South Shields will never forget him.

Ethan's family, in an effort to ensure that no one else ever has to go through what Ethan did, have become part of the charity Alice's Arc, founded in memory of Alice Wakeling, who lost her life to RMS aged seven. The charity has created a community of families through Arcs. Alice's Arc, Ethan's Arc and all the other Arcs represent children who have had or are fighting RMS. The Arcs exist to find a cure, to find kinder treatments for RMS and to raise awareness. However, I gently say to the Minister that they should not need to exist; such charities exist because the state has failed them, and it continues at times to fail these children. As Mark said, it should not be left to charities to fund research.

The hon. Member for Gosport (Dame Caroline Dinenage) held the first ever debate on childhood cancer in this Chamber back in April 2022. I pay tribute to her and all hon. Friends and Members who took part in that debate. It was a rare moment of this House coming together, regardless of politics, in unanimous agreement that there needs to be a children's cancer strategy combining early diagnosis, research funding and increased training for GPs and healthcare professionals.

Mark Tami (Alyn and Deeside) (Lab) *rose*—

Jim Shannon (Strangford) (DUP) *rose*—

Mrs Lewell-Buck: I will give way to my right hon. Friend first.

Mark Tami: I am a parent who was told the devastating news that my son had leukaemia, and he subsequently had to have a stem cell transplant. It is devastating news. Fortunately, we were lucky, but something I have campaigned strongly on is the fact that we address the physical side of the illness, but not the psychological support that those children need, and that they might need in later life as well. We need a more rounded approach. People should not have to go out there and seek that support as something extra; it should be part of the overall treatment path.

Mrs Lewell-Buck: I thank my right hon. Friend. I know he has spoken movingly before in this Chamber about his son Max. He is right that, for those who are lucky enough to recover from cancer, there is always an after-effect; it remains with them for life and there should be more support. I give way to my other hon. Friend.

Jim Shannon: I commend the hon. Lady on bringing this debate forward. Her constituents should be very proud of their MP and how she has illustrated and put forward the case on behalf of one of her constituents. She has referred to others having big hearts, but I think she has a heart the size of an elephant, if that is possible.

Estimates suggest that around 75% of children diagnosed with cancer survive. However, that statistic has not seen an increase in many years. Does the hon. Lady agree that the 25% who do not survive must never be accepted as a statistic, but must be fought for with more funding and greater research resources, exactly as the right hon. Member for Alyn and Deeside (Mark Tami) has said, and that those must be put in place as a matter of form and not just granted for one or two years? I know that the Minister will respond in a positive fashion, and I commend the hon. Lady on what she is doing.

Mrs Lewell-Buck: I thank the hon. Gentleman for that very kind intervention. He has pre-empted what I will talk about later in my speech.

The Under-Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, the hon. Member for Lewes (Maria Caulfield), in responding to the debate last year, said that GPs had access to training and that National Institute for Health and Care Excellence

"guidelines are trying to support GPs".—[*Official Report*, 26 April 2022; Vol. 712, c. 656.]

However, having access to training is not the same as mandated training, and NICE guidelines are for all cancers. It is widely known that many signs and symptoms of childhood cancer are the same as those for many common childhood illnesses, and that the types of cancer diagnosed in children are different from those seen in adults. In short, those guidelines are not enough.

The Under-Secretary of State also said that, despite some progress in treatment for childhood cancers, for

"conditions, such as rhabdomyosarcoma, that is not yet the case. Research is crucial to how we deal with it in the long term."—[*Official Report*, 26 April 2022; Vol. 712, c. 658.]

Yet no breakdown is available for how much funding is directly linked to childhood cancer research, let alone RMS. What we do know is that funding for research of all cancers has dropped from £132 million in 2018-19 to £101 million in 2021-22, and that Great Ormond Street hospital has found that, on average, only 2p of every £1 spent each year on cancer research goes towards dedicated research projects for childhood cancers.

So here we are, over a year later, and it appears that nothing has improved. The Government's change in approach to their cancer plan has not been welcome either. In February 2022, the Government launched their call for evidence for a standalone 10-year cancer plan for England, which was intended to be a new vision for how we will lead the world in cancer care. Yet in January this year, they announced that cancer would be incorporated into a new major conditions strategy, effectively scrapping the dedicated 10-year cancer plan. As Cancer Research UK said:

"by bundling in cancer alongside other conditions via a short-term strategy, ministers will fail to give cancer the due care and attention it requires... Cancer isn't a single disease...in medicine it's one of the hardest problems to solve and scientific discovery takes time... Ultimately, beating cancer requires a long-term approach."

The Children's Cancer and Leukaemia Group and Young Lives vs Cancer rightly note that this strategy will not give sufficient attention to children with cancer, and are asking the Government to commit to a children and young people's 10-year cancer plan addressing diagnosis, treatment, patient experience, research, psychosocial support and living beyond cancer. The Royal College of

[Mrs Lewell-Buck]

Radiologists, which represents specialist paediatric radiologists and clinical oncologists, has said that after years of under-investment, the workforce is stretched and shortages are causing backlog and delay.

Access to paediatric radiologists already depends on postcode. In the north-east, there are 0.2 consultants per 100,000 people, compared with 0.7 per 100,000 in London. It takes seven years to train in this specialty, and as a percentage of specialists are due to retire, I am not sure that the Government's workforce plan will sufficiently address the shortfall in those paediatric specialties. International comparisons show that the countries with the biggest improvements in cancer survival are those with long-term, adequately funded cancer plans. Every single parent who has lived in this painful cancer bubble knows what works, too: proper training, early diagnosis, research and access to treatment.

Carla Lockhart (Upper Bann) (DUP): I commend the hon. Lady for her speech. Ethan really sounds like an amazing little boy whose memory will live on, as we have heard tonight. He reminds me of a little boy called Adam in my constituency, who will also be forever in our memory after losing his battle to childhood cancer. His mum and dad, Sara and David, are fighting not only for what the hon. Lady is fighting for, but for financial support for families in the initial weeks after diagnosis—currently, children have to wait three months to receive disability living allowance. Does she not think that the Government should introduce immediate payment for families whose children's care needs start immediately?

Mrs Lewell-Buck: I thank the hon. Member for her intervention. My heart goes out to her constituents, and I could not agree more with what she suggests.

This remarkable little boy had his future taken from him, and without a robust and long-term plan from the Government, other children's lives will be lost to this terrible disease. I know that the Minister is a decent man and that he does care and will want to give some words of comfort to my constituents, but we would like to know from him what progress, if any, has been made since last year's debate and how, against the backdrop of decreased funding for research, a dwindling workforce and limited training, he believes cancer outcomes for children will improve. As Ethan's parents said,

"We shouldn't be putting children through this... Children deserve to be invested in, they deserve a future".

I am sure we can all agree that little Ethan definitely did deserve a future.

8.40 pm

The Minister for Health and Secondary Care (Will Quince): I thank the hon. Member for South Shields (Mrs Lewell-Buck) for securing this important debate. I begin by sending my sincerest support and sympathy to Ethan's family and every family involved in the work of Alice's Arc. Their mission to find a cure and kinder treatment for rhabdomyosarcoma is one that I am sure the whole House can support.

As the hon. Lady rightly mentioned, September was Childhood Cancer Awareness Month, and I think I speak for the whole House when I say that our thoughts are with every family touched by childhood cancer, particularly those who have felt the bitter grief of losing

a child. I commend the efforts of so many to bring light to the darkest of situations and support families in need, including the hon. Lady, who made such a powerful and emotive speech. I also join her in paying tribute to my hon. Friend the Member for Gosport (Dame Caroline Dinenage) for her tireless efforts to improve childhood cancer care.

I want to assure the House and all families affected that cancer services for children are an absolute priority for this Government. Working alongside the NHS, we have three priorities to improve childhood cancer outcomes: improving early diagnosis, delivering more research and driving progress in genomic medicine. Let me take each one in turn.

First, improving early diagnosis will give more children the best chance of beating cancer. The NHS is working to deliver the ambition it set in its long-term plan to diagnose 75% of cancers at stages 1 and 2 by 2028. Achieving that will mean 55,000 more people surviving cancer for five years or more. That is why the Government are investing more than £2.3 billion to transform diagnostics services. Thanks to that investment, we have opened 123 new community diagnostic centres, giving millions of patients the chance to access quicker, more convenient checks outside of hospitals, and we are on track to open 160 CDCs by March 2025.

In this year's operational planning guidance, NHS England announced £390 million of funding to cancer alliances in each of the next two years to support the operational priorities for cancer treatment capacity. That includes commissioning key services in early diagnosis and supporting systems to develop local cancer plans. We are now expanding direct access to diagnostic scans across all GP practices, helping GPs to recognise cancer symptoms, cutting waiting times and speeding up diagnosis.

Secondly, as the hon. Member for South Shields rightly pointed out, delivering more research is key to understanding the causes of cancer and increasing survival rates further. Over the past five years, the National Institute for Health and Care Research has invested almost £14 million in 38 research projects into childhood cancers. Alongside Cancer Research UK, health Departments across the UK are jointly funding a network of 18 experimental cancer medicine centres, collectively investing more than £35 million between 2017 and 2022.

Our world-leading scientists and clinicians are driving the discovery, development and testing of new treatments. That includes the paediatric network that the National Institute for Health and Care Research co-funds with the Little Princess Trust, which is dedicated to early-phase research on childhood cancers. NHS children's cancer services are provided by highly specialist principal treatment centres that manage care through multidisciplinary teams across diagnosis, treatment and research, making research breakthroughs available to every child.

Turning to our work to drive progress in genomic medicine, the UK is a world leader in that sector, and cutting-edge research already benefits children with cancer. However, the Government are committed to going further: our priority is ensuring that all children with cancer get access to genomic medicine. The NHS now offers all children with cancer whole-genome sequencing to enable comprehensive and precise diagnosis, along with personalised treatments. In July this year, the Government announced a multi-year partnership agreement with the pharmaceutical giant BioNTech, which will accelerate

that company's clinical trials here in the UK and could provide up to 10,000 patients with personalised cancer immunotherapies by 2030. It will work with NHS England's new cancer vaccine launchpad to improve access to treatments and trials. This Government will continue to support groundbreaking genomic medicine to give children with cancer the high-quality personalised treatments they deserve.

Children with cancer also deserve a supportive experience in hospital, as do their families. That is why I am pleased that NHS England is working with the Starlight Children's Foundation charity to review and improve play facilities and guidance to hospital trusts, and we will learn from the first under-16 cancer patient experience survey. More than three quarters of children with cancer said they are looked after very well by healthcare staff, and almost 90% of parents or carers rated the care their child received as eight or more out of 10. That shows what our brilliant cancer workforce does so well, and also where we have more work to do.

Once again, I thank the hon. Member for South Shields for tabling this vitally important debate.

Mrs Lewell-Buck: I sense that the Minister is coming to the end of his comments. I have listened carefully to him, but he has largely referred to funding and research into cancers overall. He knows full well that childhood cancers are distinct from adult cancer, so could he offer us any clarity on how much money goes into childhood cancer research, and what the workforce plan is for those specialists working in paediatric cancer?

Will Quince: I am very happy to take both those questions. First, in relation to childhood cancer research specifically, my officials in the Department are working really closely with the National Institute for Health and Care Research to set up an expert roundtable on childhood cancer research. Many trials will be applicable to both adults and children, but by their nature, some will need to be childhood cancer-specific. I welcome that important initiative, which is designed to encourage more research into cancers affecting children.

The Government do not, in effect, commission research directly. Bids are made to NIHR; around £1 billion a year is spent directly on research through NIHR, but it is reliant on those bids. That is why it is so important that we get more bids for research into childhood cancer coming forward.

Jim Shannon: I thank the Minister for his response and also for his clear understanding of the issue. We appreciate his words. On Saturday past, we had our

party conference. There were a number of stalls, including for a cancer charity. It has a charter, and at the top of that was a target that 70% of those who have cancer will survive and heal. Can the Minister indicate whether he and his Department have the same ambition to secure 70% of people with cancer surviving and being cured, especially children?

Will Quince: Where I very much agree with my hon. Friend is that research is so much at the heart of this matter. The hon. Member for South Shields asked specifically how much funding is going directly into childhood cancer research, and my understanding is that over the past five years, the National Institute for Health and Care Research specifically has funded 38 projects relating to childhood cancers and has spent just under £14 million on research specifically into childhood cancers. She is absolutely right that children's cancer risk factors are not very well understood, as this group of cancers is rare and diverse—I think it makes up around 1% of all cancers. That is why the expert roundtable on childhood cancer research is so important, and I will continue to consider with colleagues across the House what more we can do on this important matter to get more bids for funding specifically for research into childhood cancers to come forward.

A handful of months ago, the Government published the NHS long-term workforce plan. Although it does not go into specific detail on speciality or cancer services, we are working closely with cancer charities and others to determine what the requirement would be going forward. To ensure that we get it right, I would be happy to meet the hon. Lady and any others with an interest in this area to feed into the team looking at implementation of the NHS long-term workforce plan.

I again thank the hon. Lady for tabling this vital debate, and I thank all Members who have contributed today. Families who have been affected by childhood cancer have a right to know that the Government and everyone across this House stand with them. I assure the House that improving childhood cancer outcomes is a top priority for this Government and for me personally. I will continue to work with the NHS to ensure faster diagnosis, further and broader research and greater access to groundbreaking treatment. I assure you, Mr Deputy Speaker, and the House that we will leave no stone unturned in our mission to beat cancer.

Question put and agreed to.

8.52 pm

House adjourned.

Westminster Hall

Tuesday 17 October 2023

[MRS PAULINE LATHAM *in the Chair*]

Water, Sanitation and Hygiene: Sustainable Development

[Relevant documents: Oral evidence taken before the International Development Committee on 28 February 2023, on WASH (Water, Sanitation and Hygiene), HC 1174; Written evidence to the International Development Committee, on WASH (Water, Sanitation and Hygiene), reported to the House on 19 April 2023, HC 1174.]

9.30 am

Dr Matthew Offord (Hendon) (Con): I beg to move,

That this House has considered water, sanitation, hygiene and sustainable development.

It is a great pleasure to serve under your chairmanship, Mrs Latham. This is the first time that I have had the opportunity to do so, and I am particularly pleased that the debate is about an issue that I know is important to you personally. It is also important to those here to speak today, and I thank them for their attendance. I also thank the Backbench Business Committee for granting time for a very important debate.

When the 17 sustainable development goals were set out by the UN in 2015, at the heart of that was one goal—to produce a blueprint for peace and prosperity. The 17 goals range from objectives such as economic growth to affordable energy, but they are all intrinsically interlinked and many of them will be unachievable without the others. Improving access to water, sanitation and hygiene—commonly known as WASH—is vital to many of the goals. Without the correct sanitation facilities, how can we expect women and girls to access education and workplaces? Without prioritising water resources, we reduce the ability to accurately manage and anticipate climate hazards. I will touch on these later in my speech, but I will start by saying that over the last 20 years we have seen that real progress is possible when WASH is prioritised in national development. However, we have also seen that many with the power to accelerate progress do not think that water, sanitation and hygiene are sufficiently important. That has led to progress being unacceptably slow, particularly among the poorest and most vulnerable groups and in the least developed countries and regions.

Now is not the time to slow down. Over the next decade, the populations in the areas of the globe with the worst access to WASH will grow—particularly in sub-Saharan Africa, where the population is expected to double by 2050. An increase in extreme weather events, political instability, conflict, disease outbreaks and the global economic crisis pose huge threats to WASH. This has resulted in a depressing image for the future of WASH. Currently, 1.9 billion of the world's poorest people live in severely water-scarce areas that risk security for WASH services. It is predicted that by 2050 that will increase by between 42% and 95%, potentially meaning that 3.2 billion people will be affected.

Jim Shannon (Strangford) (DUP): I thank the hon. Gentleman for bringing this debate forward. I spoke to him beforehand to highlight an issue that I feel is very important, as I know he does as well. Some 600 million children around the world still lack safe drinking water; 1.1 billion lack safe sanitation; and 690 million lack basic hygiene services. The worst affected are women and children who are internally displaced persons, refugees and from minority communities.

Research by Open Doors, an organisation that the hon. Gentleman and I understand very well, shows that there is a worrying tendency for Christian communities to be deprived of access to development aid, including WASH programmes. That is also highly likely to be the case for other religious minority communities. Does the hon. Gentleman agree that these programmes must be monitored to ensure access for religious minority communities and displaced persons in particular?

Dr Offord: I certainly agree. Any IDPs or people who are removed from their homes or the places where they live will have an immediate problem with access to water in some parts of the world. That is particularly difficult, as we are seeing in Gaza at the moment, for example; we also see it in parts of sub-Saharan Africa as people move as a result of climate change or political instability. It is one of the important issues that link many different communities and religions as well.

Water is vital to many individuals not only on a practical basis but, as the hon. Member for Strangford (Jim Shannon) says, on a religious basis. The practice of many religions involves using water—I am thinking, for example, of not only Hindus but Muslims—for their daily rituals, and these are very important. It is a point well worth making, and I thank the hon. Gentleman for making the point, which I had not covered.

The UK has traditionally been a leader in the WASH sector. Given the multitude of challenges facing us, I ask my hon. Friend the Minister today: how will the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office project WASH funding increasing? Investing in sustainable and safe WASH is fundamental for countries to have a healthy workforce—the foundation for a thriving economy. The consequences of inaction would be monumental for many people. Left unchecked, diseases will become more frequent, leading to an increased demand for national spending on healthcare and reduced productivity.

WASH is often framed as simply building infrastructure, delivered with little thought to how it will be managed over time to deliver any benefits. But WASH is not about one-time access; it is a group of services and related behaviours that need to be accessed or practised several times a day and sustained over time. That means WASH systems need to be strong enough to deliver services continually to entire populations and to ensure that good hygiene behaviours are reinforced. I saw that on a recent visit to Ghana, where we saw not only water but the idea behind WASH procedures being delivered. Good practice was certainly reinforced.

The FCDO shift towards supporting WASH systems and away from just delivering infrastructure is very welcome, but we need to see more such programmes. The FCDO has a vital role in ensuring that others follow suit so that all interventions lead to a stronger

[Dr Offord]

sector. Similarly, it should encourage the integration of WASH within health, as it has done with its ending preventable deaths approach.

At the moment, despite progress on such programmes, we are seeing an international decline in investment in WASH. Since 2018, UK aid for WASH has been cut by two thirds, falling to approximately £70 million in 2021. For comparison, we spent £364 million on education and £548 million on health. The total share of the aid budget going to water supply and sanitation was just 1% in 2021. That is despite polling indicating that 53% of the British public list water, sanitation and hygiene as one of the top three most important ways of spending UK official aid development assistance. There is clearly a mismatch between spend on WASH and the popularity of the issue among the UK public.

With the upcoming international development White Paper due to be published soon, I ask the Minister to carefully consider the evidence provided. As the Foreign Office Minister of State, my right hon. Friend the Member for Sutton Coldfield (Mr Mitchell), said in his statement on 18 July, the White Paper

“will chart the long-term direction for UK international development up to 2030”—

just in time for the review of the sustainable development goals. Can the Minister here today indicate what level of prioritisation WASH will have in the international development White Paper?

I stress to the Minister that Governments and countries as a whole stand to gain hugely if investment in sustainable WASH services is provided. Sanitation alone can have huge economic returns, contributing to the world economy. On top of that, the return on that investment is vast, with basic WASH services providing up to 21 times more value than their cost. Action on this matter overseas will provide direct benefits to people here in the United Kingdom. As covid-19 has shown, infectious diseases do not respect international borders.

Despite the global pandemic, the UN predicts that 3 billion people globally do not practise hand washing with soap, and over 2 billion simply do not have access to basic hand-washing facilities. As a result, diseases spread fast and most easily in places where preventive measures such as WASH do not exist or are inadequate. Most importantly, in some countries this can push health workers, who cannot rely on the availability of soap and clean water, to over-prescribe antibiotics as a preventive measure, contributing to the rising threat of resistance to antibiotics. Yet investing in basic services and healthcare facilities decreases the demand for antibiotics, breaks the chain of infection and removes the opportunities for resistant infections to become dominant.

It is important at this point to say that most resistant infections treated by the NHS originated elsewhere in the world, particularly in low and middle-income countries. Tackling that problem is critical to UK public health and to protect the NHS. Healthcare-acquired infections already cost the NHS at least £2.1 billion a year—costs that will increase as infections become increasingly resistant to antibiotics. As the Minister will be aware, a high-level meeting on antimicrobial resistance will be happening at the UN General Assembly next September, which could provide a significant moment to drive the political

prioritisation of WASH and fighting disease abroad and here in the United Kingdom. Will the Minister commit to the UK encouraging political dialogue and drive financial commitments for WASH in the build-up to the conference? Of course, beyond the economic benefits and those for the UK, we are looking at action such as saving the lives of up to 300,000 children each year.

Touching back on achieving sustainable development goal 5—gender equality—women and girls face particular challenges when it comes to WASH. A lack of WASH facilities undermines the specific needs of women when it comes to menstruation, pregnancy, childbirth and menopause. Improving the future prospects of women and girls can be as simple as providing clean water and toilets at home, which would prevent women and girls from wasting 77 million days every year on walking long distances in search of water. That is time they can spend in education or, indeed, working. Beyond that, their direct health outcomes will vastly improve when investment is made in improving access to water and sanitation in workplaces and public spaces.

As the Minister will be aware, the UK will be working towards sustainable development goal 6, which is primarily split between two Departments: the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, which focuses on improvements here in the United Kingdom, and the FCDO, which is working to improve international results. I am positive that ministerial colleagues will work together to ensure that progress is made to achieve the international targets, but I would be interested to hear what those collaborations will actually mean. However, we understand that this is not always the case in countries struggling with access to WASH. Institutional fragmentation occurs, which undermines the effectiveness of the WASH sector.

Drinking water, sanitation and hygiene typically have their homes within different Ministries, and often the responsible Ministries may vary for rural and urban services. Hygiene, for example, cuts across many sectors, Ministries and Departments, including WASH, health, education, gender and nutrition, meaning that it is everywhere and nowhere. That contributes to problems when it comes to generating political leadership, setting policies and raising finance. It gives rise to co-ordination difficulties, weak regulation and accountability, fragmentation in capacity-building efforts and different—sometimes competing—monitoring systems. Ultimately, this results in a clear lack of ownership and prioritisation by decision makers and budget holders. What assistance are the UK Government providing to other nations to adopt approaches to WASH similar to the UK’s, including the establishment of development banks?

Despite huge progress, WASH is facing significant challenges. The world is changing rapidly. When disease and war hit, water and sanitation are often forgotten first but the consequences are experienced immediately by those displaced. I urge the Minister not to forget the issue. Water is not just the source of all life; it is the source of all future prosperity and peace for billions of people in this world.

9.43 am

Sarah Champion (Rotherham) (Lab): It is a pleasure to serve under your chairship, Mrs Latham. You are the perfect person to be chairing this sitting, as I believe that you have served on the International Development Committee for 12 years now.

Mrs Pauline Latham (in the Chair): Thirteen years!

Sarah Champion: Thirteen years—let me correct myself. You probably know more about this issue than any of us in the Chamber, so I am grateful that you are here today.

I congratulate the hon. Member for Hendon (Dr Offord) on securing the debate. I have been reminded of our trip to Uganda together many years ago; I know that his absolute passion for low and middle-income countries has stemmed from that. He has been a true champion of the cause ever since, and I thank him for that.

Access to clean water, sanitation and hygiene is one of the most basic human needs and is fundamental for development. The importance of global action in this area is set out in the UN sustainable development goal 6, which is about working towards clean water and sanitation for all. The International Development Committee, which I chair, held an evidence session on this topic—known by its acronym WASH—in March this year. We heard about the devastating impact of the lack of access to WASH on the world's poorest people and the most marginalised groups. It is crucial that we continue to shed light on this problem, which can have devastating impacts on those living in lower-income countries across the world.

According to a joint report from the World Health Organisation and UNICEF, in 2022 2.2 billion people lacked access to safely managed drinking water, 2 billion people lacked access to basic hygiene services and 3.5 billion people still lacked access to safely managed sanitation. It is hard to comprehend the scale of those figures or the cost of that inaction. A lack of access to clean water, sanitation and hygiene has serious consequences for health and wellbeing. It increases the risk of diseases such as cholera, dysentery, typhoid and polio.

According to the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, a lack of access to WASH contributes globally each year to 3 million cases of cholera, resulting in an estimated 95,000 cholera deaths. In recent days, Zimbabwe has banned large gatherings as the threat of a cholera outbreak grows. The problem will only get worse with water shortages and poor sanitation systems. Those problems also contribute to 11 million cases of typhoid fever, resulting in 129,000 deaths; and 1.7 billion cases of diarrhoea among children younger than five, resulting in an estimated 446,000 deaths.

As the hon. Member for Hendon said, women and girls suffer most acutely from a lack of access to WASH. According to Water Witness, women and girls spend a total of 200 million hours fetching household water each day. My Committee heard that in hilly areas of Nepal, for example, women have to wake up at 3 am to collect water and return home before beginning their daily household tasks as the primary carer. That reduces their ability to attend school and work, and limits their political, social and economic participation.

In certain regions, water collection can increase the risk of women contracting diseases. As part of our inquiry into the FCDO's approach to sexual and reproductive health, my Committee heard that women risk getting infected with the neglected tropical disease, female genital schistosomiasis—I am very happy for you to correct my pronunciation of that, Mrs Latham—through snails carrying parasites in bodies of water. It is a serious and painful condition, which also increases the risk of contracting HIV.

UNICEF and the WHO have found that half of the world's healthcare facilities do not have basic hygiene services, rising to two thirds across the least developed countries. That meant that in 2021, 3.85 billion people lacked basic hygiene services at their healthcare facilities, 1.7 billion lacked basic water services and 780 million had facilities with no sanitation services.

Practising hygiene during antenatal care, labour and birth reduces the risk of infection, sepsis and death for children and their mothers. Right now, there are pregnant women receiving care and giving birth in places without basic access to clean water, soap and sanitation. WaterAid told my Committee that babies born in hospitals in low and middle-income countries are up to 20 times more likely to develop neonatal sepsis than hospital-born babies in high-income countries such as the UK. Those are shocking statistics, which emphasise starkly the global inequality of the issue.

Efforts across the world to achieve access to clean water and sanitation for all are being set back by climate change. Natural disasters such as floods and earthquakes destroy and damage water and sanitation infrastructure, and pollute water sources. My Committee heard that in coastal regions, due to sea level rises, saline contamination of water is increasing in countries such as Bangladesh. Saline water is a breeding ground for cholera. The UN also recognises that water shortages undercut food security and the income of rural farmers. Farmers often use waste water because it is the only reliable supply of water, which then increases the risk of infection for both farm workers and those who consume their crops. This is an act of desperation: 34 million people are facing acute levels of food insecurity in 2023.

On top of that, there is a vicious cycle of conflict and water scarcity that we must work to break. Scarcity of access to water is increasingly recognised as the likely multiplier of conflict, and it contributes to the creation of refugees. That conflict then increases the likelihood of destruction of water supply systems, and so the cycle continues. As we speak, we know that the people of Gaza have limited access to water, and nearby Jordan is now the second most water-scarce country in the world. Jordan's resources are stretched by instability in the region, and it needs a sustainable strategy for long-term refugees, which my Committee has also published on. Two million Palestinian refugees are in Jordan and, given what is happening, that is likely to only increase.

The UN's high-level panel on water predicts that 700 million people are at risk of being displaced by 2050 because of intense water stress. It is clear that access to water, sanitation and hygiene impacts on all aspects of a country's development. I welcome the UK's involvement in the declaration for fair water footprints at COP26, which brings together the needs of communities, businesses and ecosystems to stop water pollution and maintain the sustainable and equitable withdrawal and use of water.

Making water usage more equitable and sustainable will be key to achieving SDG 6 by 2030. However, since 2018 the UK aid budget for WASH has been slashed by nearly 80%, falling from £206.5 million to £45.6 million in 2022. The percentage of bilateral ODA spent on WASH has more than halved between 2021 and 2022. My Committee heard that

“The scale and the speed of the cuts have been shocking to those working in the sector.”

[Sarah Champion]

That is despite the FCDO approach paper on ending preventable deaths of mothers, babies and children by 2030, which included commitments to work with countries, partners and the private sector to strengthen WASH delivery systems.

As I have highlighted, WASH is crucial to the empowerment of women and girls, which again is a stated aim of this Government. To achieve SDG 6 in low and middle-income countries, WaterAid has stated that investment in WASH needs to triple by 2030, with at least \$200 billion a year needing to be invested into WASH systems. That is where the UK Government could play a significant role in catalysing investment and bringing stakeholders together. I urge the Minister to reconsider the Government's ODA spending on WASH so that it aligns with their own goals and priorities. Without action, the most vulnerable will continue to be at risk of dehydration, disease and death.

9.52 am

Maggie Throup (Erewash) (Con): It is a pleasure to serve under your chairmanship, Mrs Latham. I thank my hon. Friend the Member for Hendon (Dr Offord) for securing this extremely important and timely debate. Access to safe, clean sources of water, alongside basic levels of sanitation and personal hygiene, is essential within the realms of public health, for both prevention of, and protection from, infectious diseases.

Although hon. Members may be somewhat reluctant to do so, if we cast our minds back to the beginning of the pandemic in 2020, before the vaccine, masks, lockdown and social distancing, the first thing we asked the public to do was to wash their hands regularly for the amount of time it took to sing "Happy Birthday" twice. I am sure that we will never forget that, and we probably still sing "Happy Birthday" when we wash our hands even today. That may seem simplistic, yet in a country where clean water is in abundance and a bar of soap costs merely pence, it is the public health measure that is often the most overlooked. It is largely taken for granted, even by those of us who are washers not walkers after using the loo.

Although handwashing was commonplace in most medical settings involving doctors and surgeons by the mid-19th century, it was Florence Nightingale with her strong Derbyshire roots who truly brought it to the masses. While the true potential of regular handwashing was still to be fully understood, it was her intuitive approach towards promoting the importance of cleanliness and personal hygiene that led to a rapid improvement in public health in the years that followed the Crimean war.

In a similar vein, our understanding of how infectious diseases spread and the vital importance of providing good sanitation facilities have their roots in the Broad Street cholera outbreak of 1854, less than a few miles from this Chamber. It claimed the lives of 616 people and was eventually tracked back to a single contaminated water pump. Here in the UK we may have come a long way since that time, but shockingly even now, in 2023, the UN estimates that 2.2 billion people across the world do not have access to safe, clean drinking water or basic handwashing facilities, while 3.5 billion people lack safely managed sanitation facilities.

Earlier this year, I was privileged to take part in a parliamentary delegation to Kenya hosted by World Vision, during which I saw first hand how climate change is increasingly affecting people's access to water. I had a discussion with a group of schoolchildren, who shared their experience of how extended periods of drought are causing crops to fail and boreholes to dry up. I hope in responding to the debate that my hon. Friend the Minister will look closely at not only how we can further prioritise water, sanitation and hygiene through the remit of international development, but how the Government can build on the UK's track record of action to help to tackle climate change on the global stage.

The burden continues to fall disproportionately on females—WaterAid estimates that around 60% of all household water is collected by women and girls. At the same time, over 266 million are thought to be without access to proper WASH or sanitary materials to manage their periods, which can lead to deadly infection and disease. Similarly, waterborne diseases caused by poor WASH and leading to complications including diarrhoea and malnutrition are responsible for around 13% of all deaths among children under five, the majority of which are preventable.

While WASH facilities at home are thankfully of a good, modern standard, the lack of WASH in low and middle-income countries still presents a significant threat to the UK, with most resistant infections treated by the NHS originating from elsewhere in the world, at a cost of some £2 billion per year. The lack of hygiene in low and middle-income countries leads to the overuse of antibiotics, which in turn leads to the threat of antimicrobial resistance becoming even more real. When she was chief medical officer, Dame Sally Davies stated that, after terrorism, AMR poses the greatest threat to the world.

I would like to pay tribute to a young scientist, Kirsty Smitten, who, at the age of 29, lost her life to a rare cancer just a few days ago. Kirsty, while still a student at Sheffield University, and working in a spin-off company, worked on developing a new class of antibiotics, which I am sure will make a huge difference. Kirsty had a great future ahead, but I know that she has left a great legacy and that her work will help to tackle antimicrobial resistance for many generations to come.

With the global cost of AMR set to grow exponentially over the next decade, the Government must prioritise aid spending for WASH to allow more time for new antibiotics to come online, and in the meantime help to defend the NHS from being overwhelmed. We cannot just sit back and let this situation continue to play out. As we all know, having lived through the pandemic, access to WASH is the very foundation on which good public health is built. We must do everything we can, through the vehicle of the UK international development strategy, to ensure that it is properly prioritised and funded accordingly.

9.58 am

Fleur Anderson (Putney) (Lab): It is a pleasure to serve under your chairship in this very important debate, Mrs Latham. I congratulate the hon. Member for Hendon (Dr Offord), my co-chair in the all-party parliamentary group for water, sanitation and hygiene, on securing this debate.

I declare an interest as co-chair of the all-party parliamentary group. I also spent seven years working for WaterAid before I became a Member of Parliament. That was not because it was the only job available to me at the time. I wanted to work for WaterAid, campaigning with people around the world for clean water, sanitation and hygiene, and deliberately did so because I had worked in development for many years before that and seen that WASH is fundamental to tackling poverty and achieving equality—to achieving what the British public want to see achieved from the support they give to international development. WASH and conflict are the two biggest issues that undermine progress in development.

As co-chair of the all-party parliamentary group, I am glad of this opportunity to talk about the global crisis, the rise of antimicrobial resistance, the impact on women and WASH at home and in the UK, and how investing in that will tackle poverty and inequality, and yield results far into the future. As previous contributors to the debate have said, 1.9 billion people live in severely water-scarce areas, and that number is growing all the time. It is a climate crisis. Also, 2.2 billion people do not have access to clean water and sanitation. That undermines our progress on so many of the sustainable development goals, and not only No. 6, which is dedicated to that issue, but those on climate, health, gender equality, food security, conflict and economic growth, so it is vital that we get this right.

The World Health Organisation has reported that two thirds of healthcare facilities in the world's 46 least developed countries do not have access to hygiene facilities. Let us just pause to think about that. If my local hospital, St George's, did not have water, it would be closed. It would not be open and would just not be seen as an acceptable place to offer healthcare. However, healthcare facilities around the world do not have water. That leads to a new-born baby dying every minute from infection caused directly by a lack of safe water and a clean environment.

Last week, I had the pleasure of becoming a grandmother. My granddaughter is in an incubator at the moment in a special care baby unit and it breaks my heart to think that she would not have access to hygiene. It is so important. We are terrified of that baby getting infected. Yet there are mothers around the world giving birth in places that are not hygienic and they do not have the healthcare facilities they need. It is not a matter of living in a hot country or one where it is difficult to access water. This is about political choice. Water can be provided to all those healthcare facilities and communities with the right amount of political will, support and focus.

In recent years, we have been on a steep decline in both investment and leadership on WASH. That is having a detrimental impact on the delivery of lifesaving basic services. Since 2018, UK aid for water and sanitation has been cut by two thirds and, shockingly, the total share of the aid budget going to water supply and sanitation was barely 1% in 2021. That does not tally, and as the hon. Member for Hendon said, there is a mismatch with what the UK public would like to see done with UK aid. They can understand that if a water supply is cut off, within hours and days people are absolutely desperate. They do not know what to do; their lives are turned upside down. The UK public understand how vital water is, but Government aid funding just does not seem to be in step with that.

Like others, I want to highlight the vital issue of antimicrobial resistance, which will be the leading cause of death in the UK by 2050, according to the Government's own statistics. The current lack of water, sanitation and hygiene services in healthcare facilities increases infection, disease and death rates. The level of contamination means that antibiotics need to be used more often as a regular form of prenatal care in many countries and over longer periods of time, causing their effectiveness to be reduced in the long run. The World Bank has reported that if the current trend continues, antimicrobial resistance could push up to 28 million people into poverty by 2050, with global increases in healthcare costs predicted to range from \$300 billion to more than \$1 trillion by the same year.

The all-party parliamentary groups for water, sanitation and hygiene and the all-party parliamentary groups on antibiotics have produced a report on that subject called "Prevention first". We took evidence from the World Health Organisation and from experts around the world about the need to curb the spread of antibiotic resistance. We found that a lack of hygiene means

"that doctors and nurses are unable to wash their hands before and after touching patients, new mothers are unable to clean themselves or their babies,"

and health workers are unable to clean as much as they would want to. Also, patients do not have a safe and hygienic toilet in their healthcare facilities. That causes repeated disease outbreaks that need to be treated with antibiotics, which contributes to the ever-increasing resistance.

Despite our inaction so far, there is a way to avoid this catastrophe—this ticking time bomb. Investing in WASH now, especially in low-resource nations, can go a long way towards containing the spread of antimicrobial resistance and save countless lives in the decades to come. It is such a good value-for-money investment and could be the huge step change that we need.

Another area is clearly gender equality. Women and girls have been said to be the priority for UK aid for many years now, under successive Ministers. Women make up 70% of the world's healthcare workers and 90% of the world's nurses, so the lack of WASH in healthcare facilities disproportionately impacts women, who are working in those facilities. Women face unique needs at times of pregnancy and childbirth; they need that clean and safe environment. Having access to WASH facilities prevents up to 1.4 million maternal and neonatal sepsis-related deaths each year—such preventable deaths, and such heartbreaking stories.

Equally distressing is the impact that the lack of WASH is having on women's trust in healthcare. A White Ribbon Alliance survey of 1.2 million people from 114 countries found that women's second highest priority was access to water, sanitation and hygiene. We have heard from previous contributors about the effect that this has on education. Walking to fetch water often takes away from time spent in schools. Having to care for sick relatives and family members takes time away from education, and I have met girls around the world who have to spend one week a month missing school when they are having their periods because they do not have toilets in their schools. That impacts on their education.

However, there are also good stories about WASH. I am constantly thinking about the women I have met in many towns and villages around the world whose lives

[Fleur Anderson]

were changed when they got access to water and sanitation. Their lives were changed; they became leaders in their communities; they were able to go out to work; their families were well and healthy. WASH can enable an enormous amount of women's empowerment.

I want to be direct and tell anyone who may believe that this is an issue for other countries to worry about, and that it remains a problem of little consequence to the UK, that they are wrong. Unless we invest in WASH abroad, we will see a significant, prolonged and costly impact here at home. The most resistant infections treated by the NHS originated elsewhere in the world. Healthcare-acquired infections already cost the NHS at least £2.1 billion a year, and that will go up as infections become increasingly resistant to antibiotics. So while I am delighted to have the Minister here, we really need a Health Minister here, to accept the impact that this will on the NHS here.

To conclude, I was pleased to learn from the Minister for development, the right hon. Member for Sutton Coldfield (Mr Mitchell), that FCDO officials worked hard to lobby for the inclusion of water, sanitation and hygiene language in the political declarations at the recent UN high-level meetings on universal health coverage and pandemic preparedness and response. We also had several meetings with the Minister in advance of those meetings. But it was disappointing not to see the vital importance of WASH reach the messaging in UK Ministers' speeches and press releases. They are constantly saying that WASH is a priority, but that does not come out at the highest level at the moment it is needed.

Can the Minister ensure support for WASH at the most senior level and ensure that these undervalued issues are given the political priority they deserve at future international events? Given that WASH is a top priority for MPs and the public, and is so clearly in Britain's own best interests, will he commit to prioritising investment in water, sanitation and hygiene services across the developing world, and to say, "What about WASH?" in all development projects?

How do the Government plan to increase the prominence of antimicrobial prevention measures in any future WASH investments? Will the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office be restoring UK official development assistance funding for WASH—which has fallen by two thirds between 2018 and 2021—as part of its women and girls strategy? I thank hon. Members very much for this debate, and I look forward to the Minister's responses.

10.9 am

Patrick Grady (Glasgow North) (SNP): It is a pleasure to serve under your chairship, Mrs Latham; as others have said, it is very appropriate that you are in the Chair. I congratulate the hon. Member for Hendon (Dr Offord) on securing the debate, and I am proud to serve as a vice chair of the all-party parliamentary group for WASH, which he and the hon. Member for Putney (Fleur Anderson) so ably co-chair. I also refer to my entry in the Register of Members' Financial Interests regarding a visit to Malawi earlier this year with the APPG on malaria and neglected tropical diseases.

Malawi is a country very close to my heart. There is a popular saying in that country, "madzi ndi moyo": water is life. That probably encapsulates everything we have heard in this debate. As the hon. Member for Putney said, lots of interventions and policy areas are often cited as key to sustainable development and ending poverty, but access to clean, safe water is inarguably right at the very top. A human being can survive several weeks without food but only days without water. Access to water is a basic human right, and yet 2.2 billion people go without ready access to safe drinking water, and more than half the world's population do not have access to safe sanitation. We take access to clean water so much for granted here in the west—particularly in this country, where it falls out of the sky with such frequency—that it can be hard to comprehend just how difficult life can be without access to safe water.

If water is life, the inverse must be true. Lack of access to water deprives people of life—sometimes quite literally, with 13% of all deaths among children under five attributed to inadequate water, sanitation and hygiene. If unsafe water does not kill, it certainly makes life much more difficult. Water-borne diseases cause terrible sickness, particularly diarrhoea and fluid loss, as the Chair of the International Development Committee said. That can make recovery from illness and the ability to retain nutrition from food even more difficult. Experiencing such illnesses in childhood can have long-term consequences for mental and physical development, which reduces life expectancy and life chances.

Lack of access certainly impacts quality of life: as we have heard, 29% of schools globally do not have access to clean water. I have taught in some of them. About 443 million school days are lost every year because of water-related diseases. As others have said, that disproportionately affects women and girls. Girls are more likely to miss school because of a lack of sanitary facilities—frankly, that is as true here in the United Kingdom as anywhere else in the world—and it is women in developing countries who bear the largest burden of water collection needs, as the hon. Member for Hendon said.

Water Aid estimates that more than 77 million working days could be freed up for women if there were universal access to water and sanitation. The hon. Member for Putney spoke passionately about the difference that that can make. Again, I have been in exactly the same situation; I have travelled to villages and communities in Malawi and other parts of Africa, where water has transformed the lives of the whole community, particularly empowering women and allowing them to assume leadership roles.

The climate crisis is also increasingly experienced as a water crisis. In many places there is either too much or too little or it is too contaminated. That is not just in developing countries. In the United Kingdom, we are experiencing both floods and droughts, and the situation puts massive pressure on our sewerage system. Where efforts are made, benefits can be seen by all, and the potential for benefits can be predicted.

Earlier this year, I and other members of the APPG on malaria and neglected tropical diseases had the privilege of visiting Malawi. We met people in communities where trachoma had been eliminated, thanks to the adoption of WHO's SAFE strategy: surgery to treat blindness; antibiotics to clear infection; facial cleanliness

and hand hygiene to reduce transmission; and environmental protection to stop the infection spreading. Malawi has now been declared a trachoma-free country—something that many other countries in that part of the world aspire to.

As we have heard, the WASH APPG published an important report earlier this year—I took part in some of the evidence hearings—that demonstrated how WASH interventions as simple as cleaning hands and hospitals with soap and clean water can decrease demand for antibiotics, break that chain of infection and remove the opportunity for resistant diseases to become dominant. The hon. Member for Erewash (Maggie Throup) spoke of the importance of cleanliness in hospitals in particular.

A few months ago, Lord Boateng hosted a really inspiring event, appropriately enough in the River Room, celebrating the work of Water and Sanitation for the Urban Poor, a charity that he is very closely involved with. It works to improve the delivery of clean water to increasingly densely populated areas of towns and cities in developing countries in Asia and Africa. Many stories were featured of lives transformed as a result of putting in sometimes quite complicated and sometimes very simple infrastructure. Again, that has a transformative effect on people's lives.

The Scottish Government are investing, again, in Malawi in its Water Futures programme, supporting Malawi's National Water Resources Authority and the Malawi Environmental Protection Authority to map, monitor and enhance that country's water infrastructure.

I can see that the Minister shares the enthusiasm and inspiration that many of us do on this matter, and it is clear from this debate that water, sanitation and hygiene flow through the development agenda. Making sure that people have access to clean, safe water and a water infrastructure that protects them against floods and droughts helps to unlock so many other aspects of the sustainable development goals. We know that there will be a wider debate on progress towards those goals later in the week. I do not know whether the Minister for Europe will respond to that debate with the same enthusiasm with which he is gearing up to respond to this one.

Questions arise for the Government about how they can support the kind of positive interventions that we have heard about today and what action they will take to overcome the many challenges that remain to ensure that everyone around the world has access to water, sanitation and hygiene. We have heard about the level of public support for these kinds of interventions that exist here in the UK. That needs to be reflected in the White Paper when it is published and it needs to be heard more clearly, as the hon. Member for Putney said, at the highest possible level when the Government make representations on these matters on an international level.

The Government's own statistics show the dramatic reductions to WASH funding since the ODA cuts were announced. Many of us said at the time that effective aid cannot be turned on and off like the taps that we all take for granted. Government cuts have a long-term impact, so even if funding is slowly being increased and bilateral aid is being increased in some countries, that does not change the fact that there has been a loss of capacity and a loss of progress resulting from the previous cuts. That will not be easily undone.

I do not think we can allow the debate to conclude without addressing the question of access to water in Israel and Palestine—as the Chair of the International Development Committee did—and particularly at this moment in Gaza. Denying people access to water is a fundamental breach of their human rights. Cutting off water supplies to hospitals in Gaza will condemn to death innocent people who have nothing to do with the terrorist atrocities perpetrated by Hamas. The Government of Israel must not use the denial of civilian access to water as part of siege or any other military tactics. I hope that the Minister will echo that statement.

Water is life and, in this part of the world, all too often we take it for granted. The Government have to do more—much more—to make sure that everyone has the access they need to water and to the life that it brings.

10.18 am

Ms Lyn Brown (West Ham) (Lab): It is a genuine pleasure to serve under your chairship, Mrs Latham, and I am well aware of your expertise in this issue. I also thank the hon. Member for Hendon (Dr Offord) for securing this debate. He is clearly a dedicated and knowledgeable member of the all-party group for water, sanitation and hygiene. He is right: we know that when communities have comprehensive access to clean water and sanitation, it mitigates the spread of diseases, reduces maternal and infant mortality, slows the rise of antimicrobial resistance, reduces poverty and so much more. It is part of a prevention-first approach, not just in international development, but, as my hon. Friend the Member for Putney (Fleur Anderson) said, for our health security here in the UK. It is a real shame that the Government's cuts saw aid for WASH fall by more than three quarters between 2018 and 2022.

In most households without running water, women and girls are responsible for fetching it. Every hour a girl spends fetching water is an hour not spent in education; and, for the reasons stated by the hon. Member for Hendon, when a school does not have clean water, that is a massive barrier to girls' inclusion in education. Every hour a woman spends fetching water is an hour not spent earning a livelihood.

Why am I focusing on women and girls? It is because, as hon. Members have stated and repeated, women and girls globally spend 200 million hours each day collecting water. When the journeys are too lengthy or dangerous to risk, families can be left reliant on unsafe water or none at all, which we know leads to terrible illness and needless death. Preventable diseases caused by inadequate water, hygiene and sanitation are sadly all too common, with 1.4 million lives lost each year. Almost half a million children under the age of five die of diarrhoea every year, and many of those deaths are caused by unsafe water or a lack of sanitation. Imagine being a mum who has successfully delivered a healthy baby, only to have that life snatched away because the clinic lacks clean running water. It is the cruellest outcome, but sadly one that is all too common around the world.

In December 2021, the Government published a very welcome approach paper on ending the preventable deaths of mothers, babies and children by 2030. I ask the Minister a very simple question: does he think that goal will be met? How much progress does he think has been made over the two years since the publication of

[Ms Lyn Brown]

that paper? Perhaps he could also say a little about the work his Department is doing to ensure that the particular needs of women and girls are reflected in both the design and the implementation of WASH programmes.

I am sure that the Minister and I agree that WASH systems can have so many positive impacts when done right. They can underpin global health security, which impacts positively on our citizens too: if we cannot ensure that health clinics around the world have water and sanitation, we cannot minimise the risk of superbugs and infectious diseases coming to the UK; if half the world are not able to wash their hands, we cannot slow the rise of antimicrobial resistance. Right now, one in four people cannot wash their hands at home, and half the world's healthcare facilities do not have even basic hand hygiene services. This impacts on the health of the entire world—not just on the health of impoverished communities, but on the health of the UK too—so we need a solution for those mums whose children cannot survive, and for us.

The solution goes beyond installing water pumps. Whole-system approaches are needed, where WASH is incorporated into health facilities and accompanied by information campaigns. System building will require significant long-term investment in institutions and infrastructure, and working with communities: in a word—partnership. Is the Minister confident that the FCDO has retained enough country-level technical expertise in WASH to enable genuine, respectful partnerships, and does he feel that the information about FCDO plans and budgets is being given to our in-country partners early enough so that they can make the most effective use of funds?

There are, of course, challenges in many places most in need of better WASH, including poor infrastructure and weak governance. I would be grateful if the Minister could say a little about his approach to managing those challenges because—let's face it—many of those countries in need have fast growing urban populations who put pressure on water systems, often including large numbers of people displaced by violence and hunger.

In February, we heard that earthquake victims in some shelters in Aleppo were without clean water, and up to 150 people were having to share a single toilet. Syria has the highest population of internally displaced people in the world, so it can hardly be a surprise that today 7.6 million people in Syria are in acute need of WASH services.

In Cameroon—where 1.1 million people are internally displaced, and there are almost half a million refugees and asylum seekers—over 1 million people badly need support with clean water and sanitation. In shelters and camps that do not have WASH facilities, disease can spread quickly. Both Cameroon and Syria have had serious cholera outbreaks.

Clearly, if more displaced people and refugees have clean water, the spread of diseases across borders will lessen. Ultimately, this is about supporting the conditions that enable people to live with security and dignity. To me, that is what international development is all about—actually, I think that is what politics is all about.

This issue is about looking ahead, and thinking about what we can do now to head off the rise in resistance to antibiotics and even the next pandemic. As we have

heard, antimicrobial resistance already impacts patients in the UK, and will affect us more and more over the coming decade. The challenges will not go away, so I say gently that I was a bit disappointed that the Deputy Prime Minister did not mention water, sanitation and hygiene even once in his speech to the United Nations General Assembly last month.

How can we tackle health threats that affect us in the UK unless we work in partnership across the world to improve access to clean water and sanitation? We are some way off meeting our sustainable development goal of universal access to safely managed drinking water, sanitation and basic hygiene services by 2030. To achieve that goal, we would need a fourfold increase in current rates of progress. I also add my words to the concerns expressed by colleagues today about depriving the people of Gaza of their basic human right to water.

We in this Chamber and in this Parliament need to get real. In no way will we see universal access to WASH without meeting the threat of climate change. The Minister knows that UK leadership on climate change is expected at COP28. I therefore finally ask him—I know he has been taking copious notes of all my questions—what he will do to secure strong global action, and recognition that WASH and climate vulnerability are strongly linked. That is a building block in cutting poverty, improving global health security, securing our own population's health and building gender equality. Our own communities and those around the world need to see action on this agenda now.

10.28 am

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs (Leo Docherty):

I am pleased to serve under your chairship, Mrs Latham. I am grateful to my hon. Friend the Member for Hendon (Dr Offord) for securing this important debate, and all Members present appreciate his ongoing work as vice-chair of the APPG for water, sanitation and hygiene. He spoke with knowledge and passion.

The Minister with responsibility for development and Africa, my right hon. Friend the Member for Sutton Coldfield (Mr Mitchell), would like to have been here, but he is attending to his duties in Cabinet this morning. It is therefore my pleasure to respond on behalf of the Government. I am grateful for the contributions of all hon. Members this morning and will seek to cover the various points raised. It has been an extremely knowledgeable and passionate debate, for which I am grateful.

Let me start by addressing the comments made about the situation in Gaza. Some colleagues will have seen the Prime Minister's statement to the House yesterday, including the announcement of £10 million in additional funding for humanitarian use in Gaza. That is on top of the £27 million that already goes to the UN Relief and Works Agency and the UN Office for the Co-ordination of Humanitarian Affairs. It is right that I put that on the record at the start.

As has been discussed, water and sanitation are basic human needs and a central part of our effort to improve global health and end preventable deaths. All people should be able to enjoy what are fundamental aspects of their health and dignity without discrimination or barriers. As has been described this morning, billions worldwide

are unable to do so, lacking access to safely managed water, sanitation and hygiene services. It has been interesting to hear reflections on the dire and far-reaching consequences that that has not just for individuals, but for the goals that we are all striving towards.

Without equitable access to WASH worldwide, we will fail to achieve our sustainable development goal on clean water and sanitation. We will also miss other important global health goals, including our commitment to end the preventable deaths of mothers, babies and children, which has been raised this morning. Our fight against antimicrobial resistance will be compromised, as will global efforts to educate all girls, build climate resilience and protect natural resources. For all those reasons, the UK Government continue to drive progress on the WASH agenda.

Let me share some of the details of what we are doing, as well as reflecting on the scale of the challenges that we face. I should say that we invested last year in excess of £100 million of ODA spend into WASH. There has been a shift in focus from direct delivery to helping Governments establish sustainable WASH facilities. Despite the overall shape of the ODA package, we remain committed to that extremely important agenda.

Hand hygiene, as has been described, is one of the simplest and most cost-effective methods of protecting our health, as we witnessed during the pandemic. That is why we joined forces with Unilever on our innovative Hygiene and Behaviour Change Coalition, which helped to limit the spread of the virus in lower-income countries. The coalition supported nearly 15,000 healthcare facilities with critical supplies and services and trained close to half a million health workers on hygiene.

However, two thirds of healthcare facilities in the least developed countries lack basic hygiene services. Millions of patients and staff are unable to keep their hands clean, meaning that infections spread and antibiotics must be used, which of course increases antimicrobial resistance. Mothers and babies are at risk of dying from infections caught in hospitals, where they ought to be safe. Women and girls often bear the brunt of poor access to water, sanitation and hygiene and suffer higher rates of diarrhoea from the lack of clean facilities. They are most often the person responsible for fetching water, as has been said—a task that can often expose them to physical violence and injury.

Meanwhile, schoolgirls deserve to focus on their education without the burden of worrying about menstrual hygiene. That is why the Foreign Office supports training on menstrual health and helps to construct suitable toilets in schools in Mozambique and Ethiopia.

We cannot forget the links between WASH and climate change. Natural disasters are wreaking havoc on water, sanitation and hygiene systems just when they are needed most. That is why the UK backs UNICEF's efforts to support climate-resilient WASH services by developing national adaptation plans in countries across Asia and Africa, identifying climate risk and providing technical support to Governments.

The UK will continue to play a leading role, prioritising system-wide approaches, supporting political leadership and strengthening data and evidence. We had previously focused on providing first-time access to basic services. Our programmes supported more than 120 million people with sanitation or water services between 2010 and

2020. We now have greater reach and impact by supporting Governments to make enduring changes themselves. This includes building systems to provide long-term, safe and climate-resilient services to communities.

Our WASH Systems for Health programme is leading that approach. Working closely with Governments and non-governmental organisations, the UK will support the long-term provision of services, benefiting people far beyond the lifespan of the programme. That work must be founded on the bedrock of political accountability and leadership, so we are working with Sanitation and Water for All to raise the profile of WASH and build commitment through high-level presidential compacts. Alongside that, the UK will continue to lead the way in pushing this agenda at the highest levels.

At the UN General Assembly, we made sure that the new declarations on pandemic prevention, preparedness and response, and on universal health coverage, explicitly noted the WASH crisis. At the recent landmark UN Water Conference, we led the conversation on WASH and health, and amplified the voices of representatives from the global south. Since the conference, we have worked to ensure that political momentum is kept up and that the hundreds of commitments made as part of the water action agenda are actioned, and we will continue to do that.

An important part of this effort is bolstering vital evidence and data to underpin our actions. We support the joint monitoring programme hosted by UNICEF and the World Health Organisation, which provides reliable data to which the whole sector can be held. Our work with the private sector includes TRANSFORM, a partnership with Unilever and EY that is generating evidence on behaviour change, including on sanitation. I am pleased to reconfirm to colleagues that WASH will also feature in the forthcoming international development White Paper, which will outline our plans for the next seven years and will be a fundamentally important strategy paper for future development until 2030. Meanwhile, our programmes are bringing people from finance, water resources, health and gender ministries together around the same table to tackle the challenges head on.

We are conscious of the obstacles we face in achieving our shared WASH goals, including poor healthcare facilities and the impacts of climate change, but I can give colleagues an absolute assurance that we will continue to forge and promote partnerships—the key word mentioned today, and we endorse that—with NGOs, Governments and the private sector, while advocating at the highest levels for increased financing and political leadership. We will continue to lead by example by supporting stronger systems, driving progress on WASH worldwide, in order to build a fairer, healthier and safer future for billions of people.

10.37 am

Dr Offord: I am very grateful for the contributions from the Members who have come along today. What has struck me is that so many people have not only developed a passion for this subject, but have seen the situation on the ground when they have visited countries where WASH projects have been undertaken.

The hon. Member for Rotherham (Sarah Champion) mentioned the Ugandan visit that she and I made several years ago, and we certainly saw benefits occurring

[Dr Offord]

in that country. She also raised the issue of diarrhoea, which is very important: according to the US Department of Health and Human Services, 2,195 children die from diarrhoea each day—more than the number of children who die from AIDS, malaria and measles. Some 1.6 million people die each year from diarrhoeal diseases globally, and that is more than the number who die from suicide, homicide, conflict and terrorism in a single year. We often laugh about things such as diarrhoea in this country, but the statistics emphasise that this is a mass killer that we could easily overcome.

My hon. Friend the Member for Erewash (Maggie Throup) spoke about her visit to Kenya through World Vision, as well as the issue of eye health—that is also very important to me—and sanitation. She mentioned that antimicrobial resistance kills more people than terrorism, and that fits in with the statistics I have mentioned.

The hon. Member for Putney (Fleur Anderson) says that she did not fall into her role with WaterAid, and she certainly did not; she has had a long and illustrious career in the international development sector. I was particularly interested to see that she worked in Serbia during the time of the war. As global head of campaigns at WaterAid, she will know, without any doubt, the importance of this subject, but I want to add to one of her points. She spoke about the unique experience of women and girls with access to water. One thing that I did not mention in my earlier speech is my understanding that the number of sexual offences against women and girls has a direct link with access to toilet facilities. Many girls do not use toilets at night or simply do not have the opportunity to, and those who do run the risk of sexual exploitation. So the issue of WASH is about not just health and sanitation, but sexual offences against women.

The hon. Member for Glasgow North (Patrick Grady) mentioned his visit to Malawi, the issue of access to water and the three-day survival rule. The Minister may be a military man; I am not, but I am certainly someone who is interested in the outdoors. He knows the three-day survival rule, which is that human beings cannot survive for more than three days without access to water. They cannot survive for more than three minutes in extremely cold temperatures. They cannot survive for more than three weeks without food. But they cannot survive for more than three days without access to water.

The hon. Member makes a very good point about Gaza. It is certainly something that I will take on board. I think the Israelis should allow access to water. I defend

them for not allowing access to other things, but I think that they should allow access to water. But I gently remind him that the EU did spend €100 million on putting 30 miles of water pipes into Gaza, and Hamas decided to remove those water pipes because they felt that they could make rockets out of those. I would certainly condemn that action.

The hon. Member for West Ham (Ms Brown) emphasised the issue of hand washing and how it affects the entire world. I would point to the issue of bedbugs, which have spread across the channel very easily, so we can recognise that microbial diseases will spread even more easily than something as large as bedbugs. She mentioned her visit to Cameroon. Again, that emphasises the number of people who have visited and seen WASH projects.

The hon. Member for Strangford (Jim Shannon) reminded us of the religious importance of water. I am aware that he had another important meeting to go to and was not able to stay for the rest of this debate.

I am grateful to the Minister, who outlined the Government's actions, the additional funding, which is very important, and the importance of health programmes overall. I have, with others, met the Minister with responsibility for overseas development—my right hon. Friend the Member for Sutton Coldfield (Mr Mitchell)—and he unofficially reminded us that the issue of WASH would be included as part of the international development White Paper. I am grateful that today this Minister has publicly announced that it will be included in the international development White Paper in the coming months. I am also grateful that he has reinforced the fact that political accountability and leadership are a priority for the Department and that these issues will be raised at the forthcoming UN conferences.

I am grateful for what the United Kingdom has done in this area. Although the issue of overseas development funding can be contested, the issue of overseas development funding being spent on WASH facilities is not. The people of the United Kingdom feel very strongly about that, and I certainly feel very strongly about it. Water scarcity is a problem across the world, but I hope that we can play our part, reduce the inequalities and improve the life chances of those around the world.

Question put and agreed to.

Resolved,

That this House has considered water, sanitation, hygiene and sustainable development.

10.43 am

Sitting suspended.

Northampton Gateway Rail Freight Interchange: Development Consent Order Waiver

11 am

Dame Andrea Leadsom (South Northamptonshire) (Con): I beg to move,

That this House has considered the matter of the development consent order waiver for the Northampton Gateway Rail Freight Interchange.

It is a pleasure to serve under your chairmanship, Mrs Latham. I am gravely concerned about the impact of insensitive overdevelopment in my constituency of South Northamptonshire. Local knowledge is too often overlooked in favour of the “national interest” by national planning inspectors who disregard the wishes and needs of communities. There is no better example of that than the strategic rail freight interchange—known as the SRFI—currently under construction at junction 15 of the M1, which offers no benefit to my constituents, yet means a huge increase in heavy goods vehicle traffic congestion. That is why I have called this debate: to highlight the plight that my constituents, by virtue of living the middle of England, are currently facing.

As per annex D of the Department for Transport’s “Strategic Rail Freight Network: The Longer Term Vision” document, the definition of a strategic rail freight interchange is a

“large multi-purpose rail freight interchange containing rail-connected warehousing and container handling facilities. The site may also contain manufacturing and processing activities. The aim of an SRFI is to optimise the use of rail in the freight journey by minimising some elements of the secondary distribution leg by road through co-location of other distribution and freight activities.”

The key point is this:

“SRFIs are a key element in reducing the cost to users of moving freight by rail and therefore are important in facilitating the transfer of freight from road to rail.”

SFRIs are designed to support the modal shift in our transportation network from road to rail. I support that in principle, but logically they should surely be located near ports and other starting points for freight coming into the country—not slap bang in the middle of it, where the obvious attraction is in fact the motorway network.

South Northamptonshire has been blighted by a massive increase in the number of unwelcome warehousing development applications in recent years. Those include major warehousing applications around Northampton, Towcester and Cosgrove, when in fact existing sites at DIRFT, Panattoni and Swan Valley—only a few miles away—are still not fully occupied. There is no identifiable need for yet another logistics park in our area, with massive warehousing that is justified only by a rail link, thereby suggesting it is somehow strategic.

The plan to build the SRFI was universally unpopular among my constituents, with hundreds objecting at the planning stage. At the planning inquiry, many questioned whether the promised rail link would ever be built to connect the SRFI to the west coast main line, which itself is already at full capacity with passenger trains. I even met Network Rail representatives in Parliament, who told me it is unlikely that a rail link would be

available until High Speed 2 phase 1 had been completed. As colleagues will know, that is likely to be still many years in future.

Previous development plans for the site of the SRFI had been blocked for many years by local planners who were concerned about maintaining this beautiful greenfield site, close to the nearby historic village of Collingtree. However, in what many residents saw as a cynical move to circumvent local planners, the land owners—a development corporation—searched around for a nationally significant infrastructure project and hit upon the idea of constructing an SRFI to achieve their lucrative development plans. Despite massive local opposition, planning permission was granted by the Government’s planning inspector for the SRFI to go ahead with the one, clear proviso that it would have to have completed its rail link before beginning any operation.

SEGRO took over the development of the site and—lo and behold—as the site neared completion last year, it applied for a development consent order waiver, asking the Department for Transport to overturn the condition requiring the rail link to be completed so it could start to fill up its warehouses and flood local roads with HGVs even before the rail link was established. It seems clear to me that this project was always about forcing more warehousing into the heart of England to take advantage of motorway access from south Northamptonshire and never about making it easier to move freight off the road and on to the rail network.

The Department for Transport granted the DCO waiver in April 2023, and while a rail link has now been offered by Network Rail, that was not the case at the time the waiver was granted. There is a now clear need to change the way such projects are evaluated and managed from a planning perspective. In the meantime, the residents of Collingtree, Roade, Blisworth, Stoke Bruerne, Shutlanger, Ashton and many others have had their lives blighted by endless road closures on the A508 and hours of delays at junctions 15 and 15A on the M1 as improvements required by the DCO have been carried out on the roads and roundabouts to make them suitable for the new warehousing and the endless HGV traffic.

South Northamptonshire residents are by no means NIMBYs. Most people in my area would recognise that in order to grow our economy and allow families to build their lives, we need new houses as well as employment sites. In fact, Northamptonshire is one of the fastest growing parts of the country and we have taken far more than our fair share of new development. All we ask is that developments should be in keeping with the character of the area and the established consent of local people.

At the SEGRO Logistics Park Northampton, we have a strategic rail freight interchange site full of warehousing in an area with existing warehousing that is not even fully in use, a rail link that is not yet functioning and yet more of our countryside concreted over. This madness must end. National infrastructure planning must take account of local needs. Can the Minister tell me what the Government can do to ensure that, where developers apply for nationally significant infrastructure projects, the planning inspector looks at the local need and the local infrastructure, as well as the national interest, so we can stop these cynical plans to make a fast buck?

11.8 am

The Minister of State, Department for Transport (Huw Merriman): It is a pleasure to serve under your chairship—if such a word exists—Mrs Latham. I congratulate my right hon. Friend the Member for South Northamptonshire (Dame Andrea Leadsom) on securing this debate on an issue that I am well aware is of great importance to both her and her constituents. Although the decisions were not made during my tenure, I have found the correspondence submitted by my right hon. Friend to the Department over the years to be interesting reading. I recognise the case she raises and hope I can address some of those points. She specifically asked what can be done by Government to ensure that the planning inspector balances local needs with the national interest. I hope I can give her more detail on that.

To give some background, strategic rail freight interchanges, or SRFIs as I will refer to them, and their associated infrastructure are key to enabling the efficient transportation of goods around the country and supporting modal shift of freight from road to rail. Indeed, as a Department, we are looking to increase the volumes of freight and set targets to increase growth when it comes to rail freight. However, SRFIs are privately funded projects and it is therefore for industry to come forward with applications for new schemes in locations that they consider to be operationally and commercially viable.

I note my right hon. Friend's view that SRFIs should be located near ports or other starting points for freight coming into the country. However, to maximise the use of rail in the freight journey, freight needs to be loaded on to trains at ports, which have their own rail terminals, and then transported by rail to an SRFI. There, the goods are unloaded on to another route mode—usually a heavy goods vehicle—for distribution to the final destination. Hence, SRFIs must be placed inland near the populations that require the goods to minimise the length of heavy goods vehicle journeys.

It is essential that the impact of such schemes is fully considered. With regard to the new nationally significant SRFI schemes, these require a development consent order under the Planning Act 2008. That Act includes a provision to ensure that relevant local authorities can submit a local impact report setting out details of the likely impact of a proposed development on the authority's area. There is a legal duty for those to be fully considered as part of the decision-making process. Applications for nationally significant SRFI projects are tested during the planning process against the national networks national policy statement. It provides a robust policy framework that outlines the impacts that developers and decision makers need to consider when submitting and deciding an application for an SRFI.

To come to my right hon. Friend's last point and key question about ensuring that things are done differently in future, I should say that the current national networks NPS, which has been in place since 2015, is being reviewed following an announcement in July 2021. Within the revised draft national networks NPS consulted on earlier this year, there are requirements for developers to engage with local stakeholders on and mitigate the impacts of SRFIs on local communities. The consultation draft included new text to ensure that the location of existing SRFIs is considered to ensure that they are strategically located, that they do not abstract traffic

from a nearby extant SRFI and that consideration is given to proposals for SRFIs in areas where there is lesser provision.

I will provide more context. My right hon. Friend might be more interested in the bullet points that I list of where changes may ensue, and she may reflect on how that would work with the particular application that she references. The differences introduced in the draft but not yet finalised are the new version references providing appropriate parking facilities to support HGV driver wellbeing—not as relevant, I admit. Rail infrastructure capable of rail connections should be present from the outset and delivered in a timely manner.

Dame Andrea Leadsom: Will my hon. Friend give way?

Huw Merriman: I will complete these points and then I certainly will. There is recognition that warehousing may be needed before the rail terminal is connected to the rail network, but the applicant has to provide evidence of discussions with Network Rail on connection, and the DCO may include requirements for the rail terminal to be operational within a certain timescale or development threshold. I know that that will also no doubt cause interest. The last point is that it is specified that consideration should be given to ensuring that existing SRFI locations are taken into account when making an application to ensure there is a strategic network of SRFIs and that a new SRFI does not just take traffic from an existing facility. These are all points that will be of interest.

Dame Andrea Leadsom: I am grateful to my hon. Friend for giving way. Exactly as he says, the key point is that the development consent order waiver was given without any evidence of the rail link being provided. That is outrageous because it shows that the issue was always just about warehousing.

My hon. Friend said that the idea of a rail freight interchange is that the freight could come by rail to the SRFI or, indeed, go from the SRFI by rail. In fact, what the DCO waiver did was to allow freight to come in by lorry and leave by lorry—in other words, it is just a logistics park. At the time the waiver was given, there was no such guarantee that there would ever be a rail connection. I find that utterly objectionable. For the sake of local communities, if a DCO waiver is strategic and has therefore ridden roughshod over the views of local planners, it should never be allowed until that rail network has been committed to. Otherwise, it just becomes a means for developers to sneak in under the radar, disregarding the views of local communities.

Huw Merriman: My right hon. Friend makes a compelling point, and that is the reason why I went off script and into the detail of where the changes would specifically be made in a manner that would be more reflective of where she sees the issues and challenges. She would be right: when I look at the correspondence she raised and the meetings that she had with Network Rail, Network Rail confirmed that it had no plans to see the link up between the west coast main line and that terminal. I totally understand how she would see the entire scheme as a road freight logistics warehouse rather than a rail freight one. I can give her comfort on that particular point, and she is right that, if the points I listed had been in place at the time the application was made, things might have been viewed differently.

At least there would have been more assurance or requirement to ensure that the rail link was either delivered at the time or that there was confirmation from Network Rail that a rail link would be in place. I know she did not receive that, which is why I have given her that information. Perhaps she can reflect that she would have had a strong point with the arguments she made.

I would like to make a little more progress. I am aware that the nature of nationally significant infrastructure projects, or NSIPs, means that they can have a range of construction and operational impacts on local places and communities. Early engagement between developers and those impacted is key to ensure that impacts are understood and appropriately mitigated where they cannot be avoided, and that benefits to local communities are maximised. That is why, as part of the Government's NSIP action plan, brought forward in February of this year, measures are included to support local authorities to engage earlier and more effectively with the NSIP process to support better outcomes for communities.

As part of those reforms, the Government have committed to developing more prescriptive guidance on community engagement expectations, to ensure developers consider at the outset how projects can address concerns of affected communities, and demonstrate how views have been responded to as part of the DCO application. I know that my right hon. Friend the Member for South Northamptonshire has made representations on behalf of her parishes at Blisworth and others in that regard, so I hope that this will strengthen her arguments and case, and shows that her support has been ahead of the game.

I note that my right hon. Friend was prompted to call this debate as a result of concerns about the consent granted in April 2023 by the Secretary of State for Transport for a non-material change to a DCO granted

in 2019 for the Northampton strategic rail freight interchange. I acknowledge the concerns that granting that removed the need for a rail link to be delivered. However, the approved amendment granted consent for the occupation of some of the warehousing floor space in advance of the rail connection to the west coast main line, but still required the rail terminal to be delivered, although I hope the points I made earlier give my right hon. Friend more comfort on her views.

At the time when the application for the non-material change was submitted, Network Rail was unable to commit to the precise timing for the construction of the connection to the main line, which harmed the commercial viability of the site. I am pleased to confirm, as my right hon. Friend mentioned, that Network Rail completed the works to connect the facility to the main line in September. I understand that the rail terminal is expected to be fully open later in 2024, so I can reassure my colleague that this is an SRFI with a required rail link, albeit I note her point that it had not been previously.

In conclusion, I hope that I have set out for my right hon. Friend the measures already in place in the DCO process to ensure that the local element of NSIPs is fully considered, as well as future plans to strengthen community engagement and deliver NSIPs that not only deliver a national benefit but optimise local ones. I thank my right hon. Friend for calling the debate. The correspondence I have looked at about the policies impacted and the proposed changes shows that the matters she has brought forward make a good test case for why change is needed. I thank her for giving me that interest and in-depth research into the matter.

Question put and agreed to.

11.19 am

Sitting suspended.

British Sign Language

[ESTHER McVEY *in the Chair*]

2.30 pm

Chloe Smith (Norwich North) (Con): I beg to move,

That this House has considered the British Sign Language report 2022 and implementation of the British Sign Language Act 2022.

It is a pleasure to serve under you, Ms McVey—or is it Dame Esther nowadays?

Esther McVey (in the Chair): It isn't, but thank you for that sharp elevation—I hope people are listening.

Chloe Smith: Thank you, Ms McVey—I wanted to get that correct.

I first declare an interest relevant to the debate: I have worked with the RNID, the Royal National Institute for Deaf People, for some time. Currently, I am in discussion with the chairman and chief executive of the charity about how I can continue to support it through my last term in Parliament and beyond. That is not yet at a stage that I have been able to register it formally under chapter 1 of the code of conduct, but I declare the interest under paragraph 5(c) of chapter 2—although unpaid, it is clearly an “expected future interest” and clearly relevant to the debate.

I was pleased to see the first report under the British Sign Language Act 2022 published in July this year. That is why I called for this debate about the Act and its implementation, and what the report tells us about progress.

Let us look back to the autumn of 2021. Rose Ayling-Ellis was on our screens in “Strictly Come Dancing”, helping millions of mainstream viewers to see that deafness and signing is no barrier whatsoever to participation. Here in Parliament, Rosie Cooper was promoting a private Member's bill to recognise British Sign Language as a language in the UK. As the then Minister with responsibility for disabled people, I was determined to work with her to achieve that. The result of our cross-party work, deeply rooted in the deaf community, is the BSL Act 2022.

Why did we need to do that? It was because, for decades up to that point, deaf people have suffered exclusion. Linguistic exclusion leads to social and educational exclusion, and it leads to worse services and to being left out in the workplace. That is wrong, and the Act is there to help put a stop to it in Britain. I was deeply proud to play my part, but it was just the start.

Today's debate is about implementing all those good intentions. The journey begins now to achieve better for deaf people, built on official status for a vibrant and historic language, and on improvements in communications and public services. I urge hon. Members to look at the work of the British Deaf Association, in particular its 10-year strategic vision—rooted in consultation with the community and in learning for its own organisation—which sets out aspirations for deaf people in the UK for the next decade and beyond, following the historic legal recognition of the language. Deaf people and BSL allies alike are reaching for a more inclusive Britain, where all deaf children, young people and adults can thrive.

In my own instance, a deaf family member inspired me to take action. My father left the work that he loved, his profession and his passion, because he could no longer hear his customers. As an MP, I have seen how some constituents have struggled to get basic public services such as accessible health appointments or education.

I hope that the Act will provide a clear light by which to navigate. Its symbolism is central, but its practicality is essential, too—the guidance that is to be produced must improve public services. I also hope that the Act will spur greater understanding and accessibility in private services and throughout society. Our task today and in years to come is to closely scrutinise the delivery of progress in promoting and facilitating BSL within and beyond Government. I will ask three sets of questions of the Minister.

First, let us look at the reporting duty and the inaugural report. The report captures data on BSL usage in Government communications for the first time. It sets a baseline for ministerial Departments from which they can improve their promotion and facilitation of BSL in the months and years ahead. I am glad that the Government recognise that accessibility is essential in Government communications and engagement. That is of course so that everyone has access to important information and can engage with the Government, and indeed Parliament, on issues that will affect them.

Of course, I include Parliament in this process, and I am heartened to have seen the efforts of interpreters here—I understand that today's debate is of course being supported by signing provision. That will make sure that a growing proportion of this institution's work is signed and accessible. But there is more to do, including by Government. The report reveals some important good practice and case studies but also some concerning gaps—literally zeroes on the page. What will the Minister do to ensure that BSL is provided with all public announcements about policy or changes to the law, all publications such as plans, strategies and consultations, and in all Government press conferences, social media and websites, including at the highest levels of Government, led by the Prime Minister, for very significant communications that affect all citizens?

I am encouraged that the report sets out going further than the 2022 Act demanded. For example, although the Act requires a BSL report to be published only once every three years, the Government have said that they intend to do so every year for the next five years, which is welcome. It is also welcome that my successor as the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions will ask each ministerial Department to produce a five-year BSL plan, setting out how they intend to improve the use of BSL within their Departments. There will be a five-year plan and an annual checkpoint for each year of those five years, which I hope will help to drive improvement, highlight successes and ensure accountability. Therefore, today I ask the Minister: is he confident that the Departments are doing that work? What steps he is taking now to drive progress in this year, which we will all want to see in the report that he would wish to be able to present next July? For example, will he set targets for Departments?

It is good to see reference to ministerial responsibility to improve BSL use. Will the Minister give an assurance today that the ministerial disability champions have now met, that—as promised—July's report has been discussed

at their meeting, and that these Ministers, who after all have been asked by the Prime Minister to provide a personal lead and commitment to championing accessibility and opportunity for disabled people within their Departments, have all given him clear plans for doing so? Will he also give us an update on how he plans to use his forthcoming disability action plan to respond to the needs of deaf people and say what level of response he has received to the consultation, which closed earlier this month?

Secondly, let us consider the guidance that needs to be produced. When legislating, we were clear that there must be an advisory board that will ensure that the deaf community is at the heart of the Act's effect. I am pleased that the Minister has been able to take this forward, completing the necessary appointments and launching the board. As July's report confirms, the BSL advisory board will advise the Government on the guidance detailed in the BSL Act, and its implementation, to best represent the deaf community. This guidance will be published by the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions during the next BSL reporting period. I expect that we will see it between now and next April, although it would be helpful if the Minister also confirmed today that he intends to table the statutory instrument that I understand is required to enact part 3 of the BSL Act, which will allow Departments to publish that guidance.

Will the Minister also please give the House an update on the expected contents of that guidance and tell us what priorities he has received from the deaf community? I anticipate that those priorities will span every part of public services, because we know that our deaf constituents face compound problems. For example, the National Deaf Children's Society reports:

"Access to family sign language support is currently a postcode lottery with too many families forced to pay to learn how to communicate with their own child."

There are examples from people I chatted with at the Norfolk Deaf Festival earlier this year. Some deaf constituents are being advised that they must telephone the audiology department at one Norfolk hospital. Another constituent had a month-long in-patient stay in another Norfolk hospital, which must have been a lonely, distressing and indeed dangerous experience, because I am told that no signing was provided. I have, of course, pursued both these issues locally.

I can give a further example from a small business in Norwich, which has used AI to provide digital BSL services. It says:

"Many larger enterprises do not see a commercial value in BSL translation for their customers. Some BSL-dependent banking customers got banking products using interpreters and relay services, but when it was time for changes in terms and conditions, these were only offered in written English. As a direct result, people have suffered unnecessary debt and"—

my constituent was told—

"some have lost their homes."

Building on the ministerial disability champions' pledge to discuss the communications data arising from the Act and the first report, how will Ministers work together to enact effective improvement in what a person can expect when they attend a hospital, start school, look for a job, or look for private goods and services?

Dr Dan Poulter (Central Suffolk and North Ipswich) (Con): I congratulate my right hon. Friend on securing today's debate. She has rightly outlined some of the

public service barriers faced by deaf people. A number of senior educationalists have suggested that British Sign Language be introduced as a GCSE in schools. Does she agree that that is worth exploring further? Will she urge the Minister to look at how that could not just break down barriers, but better support a lot of young people to understand the needs of deaf people and communicate with them better?

Chloe Smith: My hon. Friend, who is extremely well qualified, makes absolutely the right point. Indeed, I will urge the Minister not just to look at introducing a GCSE in BSL, but to tell us how he is getting on with doing so, because is a long-standing piece of work that the Government have focused on for some time. Actually, this goes much further than merely one qualification in the education system. What about the deaf children who start school at five? What about those who are learning to speak between, say, 18 months and pre-school age? From the perspective of those deaf children and their families, doing a GCSE would look like a very long time away.

Let me return to my questions for the Minister. What data do the Government collect on BSL users, and does he have plans to improve it? Will he also set out how he hopes the board will work and how it will respond to feedback? I have heard some deep concerns about representation on the board, and the BDA, which I have mentioned already, has said:

"a common theme emerging from the UK Deaf community is a desire for more Deaf leadership in BSL service delivery; for these services to be delivered by Deaf BSL signers themselves; for support to enable Deaf-led professional planning and budget setting on BSL issues."

Will the Minister give us an update on progress in increasing the number of interpreters? That is a key issue for the deaf community. Will he give us a brief update on how Access to Work is being improved for deaf and other users? That was another key point heard throughout the passage of the Act, and it is fundamental to the work of his Department.

I want to ask the Minister a final set of questions about how the Act may be used to drive up standards via redress. We knew at the time that the BSL Act must work in tandem with existing legislation—most obviously the Equality Act 2010, which requires reasonable adjustments to be made by a wide range of people and sectors to ensure that disabled people have equal access to goods and services. What has the Minister learned so far about how the architecture is working together? Can he share case studies—either today or by writing to me and, no doubt, the chair of the all-party parliamentary group on deafness, the hon. Member for Nottingham South (Lilian Greenwood), who is present—that show how individuals have used the BSL Act and the Equality Act to get the right standard of access or service? Will the Minister explain how our constituents will be able to get redress in future, and how the tandem legislation will hopefully enable us to stop indignities and injustices happening again and again to deaf people? Does he agree with charities such as the RNID that the guidance should outline the minimum standards that BSL users are entitled to as a reasonable adjustment under the Equality Act? That would force service providers to meet the needs of deaf BSL users and increase the chance of people using legal redress when providers have failed to do so.

[Chloe Smith]

Ms McVey, thank you for allowing me to open today's debate. I really welcome the fact that a number of right hon. and hon. Members from different parties, and from all parts of the United Kingdom, have come to speak for their deaf constituents. We all celebrated the British Sign Language Act and would all agree that hard work is needed to ensure that it is properly implemented and that our constituents benefit from the opportunities it presents. Only with granular focus such as this and determined attention will we see the strides we need in early years, education, employment, healthcare, social care, business, the workplace and the community. There has been linguistic exclusion for too long, and we can do better.

Esther McVey (in the Chair): I will call the Front Benchers no later than 3.30 pm, after which Chloe Smith will wind up.

2.45 pm

Jim Shannon (Strangford) (DUP): Thank you, Ms McVey—I did not expect to be called right away, so I thank you for doing so and for the opportunity to contribute. I am certainly used to always being near the end, but that is not a bad thing, as long as I get the chance to speak. I congratulate the right hon. Member for Norwich North (Chloe Smith) on leading the debate, with the detail, the evidential base and her clear requests for the Minister. As she said, it is fantastic to see the cross-party support in the Chamber from those who wish to contribute, from all parts of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

In Northern Ireland—I always bring the Northern Ireland perspective; you know that, Ms McVey—we have a slightly different approach. We have our own guidelines, which I will speak about soon, but it is great to be here to discuss the provision of British Sign Language across this great United Kingdom. Mr Speaker brought in provision of sign language in the Chamber some time ago, and with a real zest, to ensure that it was available for everyone—both those watching and those in the Chamber who need it. In Northern Ireland, we have two sign languages: British Sign Language and Irish Sign Language. Both BSL and ISL were embraced in the Good Friday agreement, and on 20 March 2004, the Secretary of State announced the formal recognition of BSL and ISL as languages in their own right. That is something we welcome, and it is clear that this caters for those who need it on both sides of the community in Northern Ireland.

BSL is the first or preferred language of communication of approximately 3,500 members of the deaf population of Northern Ireland, while approximately 1,500 people use ISL. It is important that deaf people who use sign language as their first or preferred language are not looked at as a cultural or linguistic minority. Their choice to use BSL, or indeed ISL, should be respected, celebrated and encouraged, and I am glad to say that that is the case in Northern Ireland.

In March 2016, the Department for Communities in the Northern Ireland Assembly consulted on a sign language framework, which contained proposals for legislation clearly setting out the way forward at that time. The consultation was referred to in the New Decade,

New Approach agreement in January 2020, with a commitment to introduce a sign language Bill. While other legislation—I say this respectfully—has been imposed on Northern Ireland through Westminster, I would argue that the full implementation of a sign language Bill should have been prioritised, because it is vitally important.

Sign language is something that we are all becoming more aware of and are certainly seeing more in society, and I will give some examples of that. I am glad to say that most of my staff members in my office know the most basic of sign language. It is important that we do because people come to see us in the office who use sign language. I am not smarter than anybody else—I do not pretend to be—but it is about ensuring that, when people who have communication issues come to the office, we are able as a staff to respond to that. It is great having that assurance for constituents who perhaps require assistance and are, in some cases, either partially or totally deaf. It is something that should be normalised more in society, and that is what I and everyone here wants to see. We should all try to know and understand the basics at least.

The basics are certainly being taught in schools across Northern Ireland, and I want to touch on that as well. The right hon. Member for Norwich North did not do so—well, maybe she did and I missed it. I have six grandchildren, including two granddaughters. The oldest ones were taught some sign language in school. I think there is an indication in the education system in Northern Ireland that where possible, because of those who have communication issues because of their deafness, people are able to engage with sign language. I am quite encouraged by that because of what it means for children at an early age. We always want our children and grandchildren to have an appreciation of those who perhaps do not have the same access to things. I think it makes them a better person. The education system in Northern Ireland is, I believe, doing the right thing.

Many Members here today have raised and will raise concerns in relation to ensuring that there is a sustainable number of interpreters in the NHS. I am not sure whether there is, but there needs to be. I think the right hon. Lady referred to that in her contribution too. It is another thing on which the Minister, although it is not his direct responsibility, might be able to give us some indication and encouragement. I have heard stories of patients who have had to rely on friends and family to interpret for them at hospital appointments. I know that the nurses and other staff are under pressure; I understand that, but it is always good to have someone with sign language capability. The situation was exacerbated—incredibly so—by the covid pandemic, in which appointments were extremely limited and there was a time when people were not allowed to have anyone attend their appointment with them. That was a real issue for the two and a half or three years of covid.

More than 70,000 deaf people across the UK use British Sign Language, and that must be accommodated in a completely normal way. There is certainly an argument that there should be a sign language module—an opportunity to study it—as part of university training for nurses and those studying medicine. I am keen to hear the Minister's thoughts on that, because I think there is a real need for it. I think the right hon. Member

for Norwich North, who set the scene so well, would think the same; indeed, I think everyone here would think the same.

More than 200,000 people in Northern Ireland have some element of hearing loss, as do some 12 million—almost 18%—of the whole UK population. Our attitudes to sign language and provision to help those with hearing issues must be changed in order for this to become an inclusive society in which people who are hard of hearing feel comfortable using public services. I chaired a series of meetings to do with the eye disease wet AMD—age-related macular degeneration. It was suggested that people should perhaps have a better understanding of what that means: the person's central vision is off, but they have the outside of their vision. That is just another example of where we perhaps need a better understanding.

I encourage the Minister, through the implementation of the British Sign Language report in England, to have conversations—I know that he is always keen to do so; he has done so in the past and will do so in the future—with the Department for Communities in Northern Ireland to ensure that we have the same approach to dealing with this issue. It is clear to me and, I am sure, to him that when we are discussing how better to ensure the implementation of British Sign Language—and, indeed, Irish Sign Language for those in Northern Ireland—our approach should be the same. Most importantly, we need to do as much as we can to learn as much sign language as we can. That is one of the goals that I hope to achieve and it is one that everyone here will subscribe to. The important thing is that we recognise that there is an issue. I am sure that the Minister, in his response, will encourage us all that we are going in the right direction, but it would be good if we all went in the same direction together.

2.53 pm

Angela Richardson (Guildford) (Con): It is a pleasure to serve under your chairship, Ms McVey. It is also a pleasure to follow the hon. Member for Strangford (Jim Shannon). I think this might be the first time that I have followed him in a debate in the four years that I have been in Parliament, but it is always a pleasure to be in a debate with him and listen to what he says.

I thank my right hon. Friend the Member for Norwich North (Chloe Smith) for her excellent speech, for all the work that she has done to support the deaf community over many years and for the important questions that she laid out for our hon. Friend the Minister. It would be good to hear some answers today. I will not repeat those questions, but they are very important.

I welcome the first British Sign Language report and its findings following Royal Assent of the British Sign Language Act 2022. The annex to the report shows all the BSL activity done by each Department, which is important.

Quite rightly, British Sign Language is recognised as a language of the United Kingdom. According to the report, the UK is home to 12 million people who are either deaf or hard of hearing. We can consider it a great success that BSL users have been recognised and represented in this House. As that figure rises to 14.2 million by 2035, it is essential that we support BSL users and encourage the use of BSL so that the figure of 151,000 users can continue to increase.

The report states that the Government's communications could be improved when they are engaging with BSL users, especially on the policy changes that have been made and the financial support packages that the Treasury is putting in place. On that note, there is probably more that needs to be done in terms of how financial support is allocated at local authority level. It seems from my conversations that there is a bit of a postcode lottery and that support is not rolled out equally across the country. Some who are deaf or hard of hearing are not able to access the same financial support as others.

Although we must focus on the improvements that we can make, I must commend the Department for Work and Pensions on the work it is doing, such as its BSL-specific YouTube channel and the 26 videos that it has already produced in BSL. I encourage the Government to continue delivering on their promises to the deaf and hard of hearing community by publishing a BSL report every year for at least the next five years. Making Government more accessible is important, so I commend the work put into producing improvement plans for each Department, issuing internal guidance to civil servants, covering best practice and things to consider when planning communication for BSL users, and providing advice on how to procure BSL translation or interpretation. That is a vital way in which those who are deaf or hard of hearing will feel they are supported by the Government. As work continues to tackle accessibility issues, a key device will be consultation of the BSL advisory board.

At the weekend Guildford hosted the wonderful BSL Fest. People came from the local area and from far away. Members of the deaf community and the deafblind community came together to celebrate British Sign Language. I was pleased to receive one-to-one sign language training from Kathleen from Dot Sign Language and I had the pleasure of giving a speech at the festival, the first sentences of which were entirely in sign language. It is a daunting prospect for anyone to learn something new and different, but I encourage all of my colleagues to see whether they can engage and have a few British Sign Language lessons from experienced professionals. The reception from the deaf community—how they felt being addressed by not just a Member of Parliament but the mayor and the lead councillor for the community in sign language before we gave our speeches—was heartwarming to see.

We have come a long way since the introduction of the Act. However, I am sure we agree that we must not rest on our laurels. There is much progress to be made. I hope that my constituents in Guildford and those who are deaf and hard of hearing will continue to see the benefits of our support.

2.58 pm

Lilian Greenwood (Nottingham South) (Lab): I am proud to speak today as the chair of the all-party parliamentary group on deafness and as a patron of the Nottinghamshire Deaf Society. I congratulate the right hon. Member for Norwich North (Chloe Smith) on securing today's debate and on setting out so clearly the context of the British Sign Language report 2022. She posed important questions for the Minister. As the former Minister for Disabled People in the Department for Work and Pensions, she played an important role in the BSL Bill's becoming law. She once told me that she considers it her proudest achievement in Government.

[Lilian Greenwood]

The annual general meeting of the APPG on deafness takes place next Wednesday. I hope some Members here today will be present and I hope that the right hon. Member will become an officer of the group. I look forward to working with her to ensure that the needs of deaf people and those who experience hearing loss are properly represented here in Parliament and lead to real improvements for them.

It is a testament to the skill and determination of my former colleague Rosie Cooper, the former Member for West Lancashire, that she was able to unite the House in support of the landmark piece of legislation that finally set official recognition for British Sign Language in statute. That was an important achievement. As Rosie said in her speech on the Bill's Second Reading,

"I want to finally recognise BSL in statute—not just a gesture but a law that requires positive action from the Government, with real progress to put deaf people on an equal footing with those of us who hear. For every deaf person, like my parents, who has been ignored, misunderstood, or even treated as unintelligent simply for relying on BSL, this recognition will be clear and a message that their language is equal and should be treated as equal."—[*Official Report*, 28 January 2022; Vol. 707, c. 1227.]

The passing of the Act was a huge moment for all the members of the BSL Act Now! coalition, including RNID, the British Deaf Association and David Buxton, and many other organisations that had campaigned for many years to secure that recognition.

But recognition alone was never enough and never the intention of the Act, which was only the first step on an equally if not more important journey towards equality for deaf people. The BSL Act will have succeeded only if it leads to better access to communication for deaf people and real, meaningful change in their life chances and experiences. That means ensuring that Government communications on new laws, policies, proposals and publications, which affect all our lives, are produced in BSL to better serve the deaf community. It means ensuring that Departments' social media posts and websites are accessible to BSL users. If deaf people who are BSL users cannot access that information, they will be denied the support, information and activities they need and excluded from full participation in decision making.

As has already been said, part 2 of the Act requires the Secretary of State to publish a report on the promotion and facilitation of BSL by each Department—essentially, to set out how they will provide information to deaf BSL users in their communications—and it is that report that we are debating. As the RNID briefing points out, the lack of accessible information from official sources can lead to people feeling anxious, feeling angry and, in some cases, being at risk of believing fake news. That is why it is so disappointing to learn that 11 Departments produced no communications in BSL at all during the reporting period, and that only six reported having used BSL for publicity. As RNID set out, only the DWP and the Cabinet Office made public announcements about policy or changes to the law in BSL, and the Treasury produced no BSL publications during the cost of living crisis, leaving BSL users in the dark about what support is available for them. The Department of Health and Social Care had only one consultation document translated into BSL.

Much as I welcome the report and the fact that we now have transparency and can see what the situation is, it tells us that the Government are simply not doing enough. That has to change. I hope that the Minister, who I suspect is very committed to this issue, agrees that there is much more to do and is determined to ensure that much more happens. It is welcome that the Government have committed to providing annual reports for the next five years, and I hope that next year's report will show a significant improvement in the provision of BSL content across Government. I look forward to hearing what the Minister has to say about how he is going to ensure that that happens. There needs to be an understanding across all Departments that BSL really matters and must be prioritised, and that if it is not we will be letting down a significant proportion of the deaf population.

There are some omissions from the BSL Act. For example, it does not require No. 10 to report on its BSL provision. Will the Minister commit to reporting on No. 10's BSL provision? That would send a clear message of leadership. We all remember the deep concern and anger at the lack of BSL interpretation at daily briefings during the covid pandemic, which left BSL users without access to essential health and other information. That was rightly challenged, and I am sure the Government have learned from it. By including No. 10 in their reporting, they would send a clear message that lessons have been learned and about their commitment to making things different in the future.

Part 3 of the BSL Act requires the Government to produce guidance about the promotion and facilitation of BSL use, and the non-statutory BSL advisory board has a vital role in ensuring that deaf people's lived experience is fully acknowledged and that they are a partner in the co-creation of that guidance. As the right hon. Member for Norwich North said, there is concern in the deaf community that they are still not sufficiently involved in departmental actions to ensure that changes truly meet the needs of BSL users. The slogan of the disability community is often, "Nothing about us without us," and measures to ensure that those with lived experience are not just consulted about the guidance but partners in its creation would be very welcome.

As has already been said, the guidance can empower the deaf community if it sets out how public services should make reasonable adjustments for deaf BSL users. If it provides those minimum standards, those users will be better able to hold our public services to account and better able to seek redress when they fail to reach their needs. Setting that standard of expectation is clearly something that the guidance can and should do. I look forward to the Minister's comments on that.

For too long, BSL users have faced unacceptable barriers to their full participation in society. For too long, their voices have been unheard, their independence undermined and their opportunities limited. The BSL Act must fulfil its potential and make a real difference to the lives of deaf BSL users, and the all-party parliamentary group and I will do our very best to ensure that those things happen.

3.8 pm

Kirsty Blackman (Aberdeen North) (SNP): Thank you for chairing this debate, Ms McVey. I congratulate the right hon. Member for Norwich North (Chloe Smith)

on securing it. I think this is the right time to discuss this issue and to ask the Minister pertinent questions that need answers.

I am not going to do what I often do and talk about how dreadful a job the UK Government are doing, because this is genuinely really good progress. This is a really good report highlighting the issues and making clear what needs to be done to get to a better place. All Governments have more to do in this regard.

Let me take a moment to celebrate the fact that next week will be the eighth anniversary of the passage of the historic British Sign Language (Scotland) Act 2015 by the Scottish Parliament. Our strategy, which ran from 2017 until this year—it is about to be superseded by the next one—contained 70 actions across 10 long-term BSL ambitions.

Before I go into some of the actions we are taking in Scotland, I will take a moment to recognise how unique British Sign Language is. For many people, English is not their first language; BSL is, and those are not people who have come from another country. BSL is an indigenous language throughout these islands. The Scottish Government have continued to promote and support the teaching of BSL, because it is one of Scotland's vibrant indigenous languages. We have said that we want to make Scotland the best place in the world for a BSL user to live, work and visit, which means that people whose first or preferred language is BSL will be fully involved in daily and public life in Scotland as active, healthy citizens, and will be able to make informed choices about every aspect of their life.

As I said, we have taken 70 different actions. We have not made the progress that we would like on all of them, and there is definitely significantly more to do. As the hon. Member for Nottingham South (Lilian Greenwood) mentioned, we are trying to ensure that the principle of “nothing about us without us” is enshrined in everything we do. When the Scottish social security system replaced the personal independence payment with the adult disability payment, we ensured that people with lived experience were at the table, telling us how they wanted the system improved. We are ensuring that when we consult on the new progress and action plan on British Sign Language, the deaf community will be as involved as possible, making the case for the action and improvement that they want. No Government can make good decisions if they do not have an adequate amount of lived experience informing those decisions.

We took some of our actions during the covid pandemic. For example, our former First Minister, Nicola Sturgeon, said that she

“couldn't have done my job over the past few years”

without BSL interpreters. She said:

“They were crucial in making sure that we were able to communicate properly and fully the public health messages that were so essential in the country during that time.”

We are also taking action in relation to schools and learning. The hon. Member for Central Suffolk and North Ipswich (Dr Poulter) mentioned the possibility of creating a GCSE in BSL. I am not entirely sure what the equivalent is, but we in Scotland have SCQF qualifications available in British Sign Language at a number of levels. Edinburgh University is looking into introducing a primary teaching degree that includes British Sign Language, to help tackle the decline in the

number of teachers who are able to teach in BSL. It is incredibly important that at all levels—whether at pre-school, primary school or secondary school, in the workplace or public life, or even in accessing shops and services—we do everything that we can to ensure that people who use BSL have access to it. We have ensured that all our colleges and universities in Scotland have a BSL plan in place, which is available both in English and in sign language.

We are also ensuring that each of our local authorities—we are not there yet—does what it can to increase access to the services they provide. In 2021, 24 of Scotland's 32 local authorities taught BSL in primary schools—a total of 113 schools across Scotland. Obviously, we would like BSL to be taught in all 32 local authorities; as part of the action plans, our local authorities are working towards that.

I want to take this opportunity to celebrate this vibrant, dynamic and exciting language that so many of our constituents use, and to make it clear that we all have the same direction of travel. We are all trying to improve access to services, to public life and to information for users of British Sign Language. Any work that the Minister wants to do with Scotland, either to promote good practice on the part of the Government, or to learn from good practice in Scotland, would be wholly welcomed by my Scottish Government ministerial colleagues in Holyrood.

3.14 pm

Vicky Foxcroft (Lewisham, Deptford) (Lab): It is a pleasure to serve under your chairship, Ms McVey. I am grateful for the opportunity to respond on behalf of the shadow Work and Pensions team, and I congratulate the right hon. Member for Norwich North (Chloe Smith) on securing the debate. We were opposite numbers for a time. I remember her enthusiastic support for the British Sign Language Act 2022 when it was progressing through Parliament, and she worked closely with our colleague at the time, Rosie Cooper. On the day the Bill received its Third Reading, I remember the right hon. Member for Norwich North saying:

“Today is a momentous day and I truly hope it will transform the lives of”

deaf-disabled

“people across the country.”

It has therefore been very telling to hear some of her concerns this afternoon. I genuinely hope that the Minister will work with her and others to ensure that the Act delivers what was hoped for on that day. It is interesting to find myself sharing common ground with her for once. I hope that the Minister will respond in detail to the many excellent points that have been raised. I am certainly glad that we have BSL interpretation today; that should happen a lot more across Parliament.

Like others before me, I will take a moment to pay tribute to the countless disabled people, friends, families, advocates, disabled people's organisations and charities who campaigned for the Act. I had the absolute pleasure of meeting some of them along the way. As we have heard, the BSL Act was a major milestone for disabled-deaf people in the UK, not least because it led to BSL finally being recognised as a language. However, as has been said, progress on implementation of other parts of the Act has been a little disappointing.

[Vicky Foxcroft]

The 2022 British Sign Language report recorded shockingly low figures for the amount of BSL communications being produced by Government Departments. That has important implications for co-production—something I am keen for Labour to deliver on if it wins the next general election. That word is thrown around quite frequently, but it is not always fully understood. Co-production means more than just engaging with or consulting the community we are working with, which in this case is the disabled-deaf and disabled communities. Proper co-production involves everyone working together on an equal basis right from the start, and coming to a decision or creating a service that works for all. One of the most basic steps on the path to successful co-production is ensuring that all communications are accessible.

The Minister often assures me that he and his civil servants are consulting or working with disabled people on policy. The 2022 BSL report shows that the Department for Work and Pensions and the Cabinet Office were the only Departments to make public announcements about policy or changes to the law in BSL. What is his response to the Royal National Institute for Deaf People's observation that the Treasury, for example, produced no BSL publications about the cost of living crisis, leaving BSL users in the dark about what support is available to them? No. 10 is not required to report on its provision of BSL—something that I know the RNID and others would like changed.

As my hon. Friend the Member for Nottingham South (Lilian Greenwood), chair of the all-party parliamentary group on deafness, said, all Government communications must be in BSL, and recognition of the issue alone is not enough. We succeed only if everyone has equal access. That is why we need No. 10 to report on BSL provision; we have to lead from the top. Many hon. Members will remember the “Where is the Interpreter?” campaign, which did an excellent job of highlighting that BSL users were excluded from the daily covid-19 briefings.

The third part of the Act offers the Government an important opportunity to create guidance on reasonable adjustments under the Equality Act 2010 for BSL users. It places a duty on the Secretary of State to issue guidance on the promotion and facilitation of BSL. As hon. Members will know and others have highlighted, the Equality Act obliges public authorities to make reasonable adjustments to remove the barriers that disabled people face in accessing their services. However, there is a lack of precedent on what constitutes a reasonable adjustment for a BSL user in that context. I would appreciate an update from the Minister on that, as I know BSL users are concerned that their adjustments are often seen as too expensive. As many Members have said, including the hon. Members for Strangford (Jim Shannon), and for Central Suffolk and North Ipswich (Dr Poulter), we have to make progress with a BSL GCSE.

I want to touch briefly on the lack of available data on BSL users. I have found that to be a significant issue across the Department for Work and Pensions, not just in relation to the issues that we are discussing. Without meaningful data on the number of people who use BSL, and the barriers that they face, it is incredibly difficult

to identify their access needs accurately. At present, Government data includes them in other groups, such as those who are hearing impaired and those with difficulty hearing. That means there is no way to focus specifically on BSL users as a stand-alone group. The Government have committed to reforming and standardising the data that they capture on disability in both the national disability strategy and the draft disability action plan. Will the Minister tell us whether those documents will include BSL users as a stand-alone group? I end by saying that the Act was an important first step, but as this debate has shown, there is still a lot more work to do.

3.21 pm

The Minister for Disabled People, Health and Work (Tom Pursglove): It is a pleasure to serve under your chairmanship, Ms McVey. I start by thanking my right hon. Friend the Member for Norwich North (Chloe Smith) for securing this debate; for her ongoing passion and leadership on this issue; and for her determination to deliver this landmark legislation, working with Rosie Cooper. She takes a close interest in the Government's performance on this issue, and in wider issues affecting the deaf community. She wants us to take further steps to ensure that BSL is used more widely in society, and that more people can communicate through it.

Interestingly, one of the key assurances that my right hon. Friend gave during the passage of the legislation was to the hon. Member for Nottingham South (Lilian Greenwood), Chair of the APPG. She assured her, in Committee, that the Government would be open to scrutiny of the BSL Act, and that the first BSL report would be published on 31 July this year. That has happened, and today's debate flows from that. I was heartened to hear that BSL will be a subject of interest to my right hon. Friend beyond her time in the House, and is something that she will campaign on passionately. Her advocacy on this issue, and that of Members from across the House—not just those who are here—is something of which Parliament can be proud. All of us, cross party, want to do our best to ensure accessible communication for everybody in society. It is to the Government's credit that they got behind the Bill, and worked intensively with Rosie Cooper and the coalition, as was touched on, to shape and craft the legislation and ensure that we got it right.

The British Sign Language Act 2022 was the first private Member's Bill drawn 20th in the ballot to become law in more than 20 years; that was a bit of parliamentary trivia for everybody this afternoon. That is not an insignificant achievement. It speaks to the cross-party support for the Act. Everybody came together from across the House to support that legislation, here as well as in the other place.

Many good, pertinent questions were raised in the debate, and I want to touch on them. As I say, the British Sign Language Act 2022 was warmly welcomed by the deaf community, and particularly by the BSL Act Now! campaign. Its members worked so hard, and in such a determined way, to put the issue firmly on the agenda. Arguably, that passion was reflected at BSL Fest in Guildford at the weekend. I was delighted to hear that my hon. Friend the Member for Guildford (Angela Richardson) was in attendance, was part of the celebrations and part of that important community in

her area. We see those celebrations reflected in community initiatives up and down the country, which is heartening. They give ever greater prominence to the issue. All of us parliamentarians, and those of us in government, should place real emphasis on working in partnership with communities, charities and representative bodies to continue to evolve our work on this issue, and make sure that we live up to the ambition out there in our society for BSL.

It is a privilege to report today on the progress that we are making on the BSL Act, and to discuss the findings of the first BSL report, but candidly, there is more to do. The first BSL report is an important baseline to help us understand how the Government communicate vital information to a group of people with specific, distinct communication needs, and to encourage us to go further.

There are a couple of points that I want to touch on early in my remarks. One is the judicial review of BSL interpretation of the covid briefings during the pandemic. The judicial review found that the Government were meeting their obligations under the Equality Act 2010 with regard to BSL interpretation during the covid 19 briefings, and were compliant with the public sector equality duty. The court ruled that our policy of using on-screen British Sign Language interpreters during the pandemic was lawful. The judge ruled that it is not a legal requirement to provide an in-person BSL interpreter. There had been over 175 covid briefings by the date of the judgment, and in only two instances were they found to be unlawful because BSL was not provided on screen. Our priority has always been to reach the largest possible audience with important public information, and we will continue to ensure that BSL interpretation is made available where appropriate.

On No. 10, the BSL Act places a duty on the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions to collate and publish a report on BSL use in the ministerial Departments listed in the schedule to the Act. The intention behind the five-year plans mentioned in the BSL report is to build on the work already being done across the Departments that are placed under that reporting duty. No. 10 and the parliamentary estate are not ministerial Departments, and there is no statutory requirement on them to report on their use of BSL. However, guidance was recently published by the Government Communication Service that covers all of Government. I am assured that it will help communicators across Government to determine what public information should be produced in BSL, so that we meet the obligations set out in the public sector equality duty and the Equality Act 2010. I am very happy to explore that area further.

As for the parliamentary estate, I would be delighted to work cross-party with colleagues on engaging with the House authorities to see what they might be able to do. It is welcome that there is BSL interpretation of our proceedings this afternoon, but we should always strive to go further. I am very willing to engage constructively with others to achieve that.

Vicky Foxcroft: I welcome that offer, and will most certainly take the Minister up on it. As shadow Minister for Disabled People, I have struggled with the question of where funding for BSL interpretation should come from, including as regards the Independent Parliamentary Standards Authority. The Minister is absolutely right: we should be leading on this issue. On No. 10 and

interpreters at covid briefings, we should always strive to do better, and I do not think we did well enough at the time. We should keep the ambition to continually do better, instead of saying, “We weren’t done by the courts, apart from in two areas.”

Tom Pursglove: On the first part of the hon. Lady’s intervention, I am delighted to work with her to try to take that forward. At the start of my remarks, I said consistently that I recognise that we have further to travel, and I am certainly not complacent when it comes to performance across the whole of Government. As has been touched on, some of the performance around my Department—the Department for Work and Pensions—is at the top of the charts, which shows the emphasis that my ministerial colleagues in the Department and I place on this issue. I am trying to lead by example by ensuring that I demonstrate a real commitment and willingness to set a standard that I want Ministers and Departments across the board to follow. It is in that spirit that we move forward with this work.

To delve further into the issue of communications across Government, I could not be clearer that people who use BSL as their native language should be able to access the same information as native English speakers, whether that information is about their rights and responsibilities, their ability to access support or the opportunity to have their say on Government policy development by participating in a consultation. In the last year alone, the Government have ensured that BSL communications have been available for deaf BSL users across diverse subjects: providing timely updates about cost of living payments, sharing important information about the Home Office’s tackling domestic abuse plan and ensuring that BSL users could join in the celebrations for the coronation of our new King.

Individual Departments have focused their BSL communications on areas of greatest importance to deaf BSL users: the Department for Education published its “Special Educational Needs and Disabilities and Alternative Provision Improvement Plan” with BSL interpretation, the Ministry of Justice published advice in BSL for victims of rape and sexual assault, and the Department for Transport included BSL interpretation in its “it’s everyone’s journey” campaign.

I want to provide updates on two specific areas that have been raised in relation to cross-Government work and different parts of Government communicating those messages. The first is around the use of BSL in health services. The Department of Health and Social Care is committed to supporting the use of BSL and has used it in communications, such as to support the Down Syndrome Act 2022 call for evidence. The Department continues to look for further ways to promote the requirements of the BSL Act, including by sharing lessons learned from the production of the DSA call for evidence BSL videos with a view to improving BSL usage, monitoring and reporting across the Department.

Under the Equality Act 2010, health and social care organisations must make reasonable adjustments to ensure that disabled people are not disadvantaged when it comes to interpreters for GP and medical appointments. NHS organisations and publicly funded social care providers must comply with the accessible information standard to meet the communication needs of patients and carers with a disability, an impairment or sensory

[Tom Pursglove]

loss. NHS England has completed the review of the AIS, and the updates are now in the publication approval process.

Following Royal Assent for the British Sign Language Act and the legal recognition of British Sign Language as a language of England, Wales and Scotland, the Government Communication Service will promote and facilitate the use of British Sign Language in communication with the public where appropriate. Colleagues in the Department of Health and Social Care keep those matters under review. Again, I want Departments to set a standard that we then ask our public services, communities and society as a whole to follow.

The other area that I want to provide a brief update on is the BSL GCSE, for which there is huge appetite in this House and beyond. The public consultation on it has now closed. The Government are analysing the results of the consultation and working up the course content, and we will publish that as soon as we can. I recognise that there is a real demand for that BSL qualification, not least because of all the opportunities it will provide. Educating the next generation to have such skills at an early stage will have knock-on benefits: more people in our society will communicate with BSL and then, we hope, go on to have successful careers, promote the language, encourage others to adopt those skills, and participate in our communities and society in that way. I know that we all want to see that, and that is welcome.

The variety of case studies in the first BSL report show pockets of good practice across the Departments named in the schedule to the BSL Act. Around half of policy Departments produced communications in BSL during the reporting period. But we know that we can go further, and produce more and better BSL content. It is important to note that different Departments will communicate with the public, whether in BSL or otherwise, in different ways, because of the fact that they have different responsibilities, different remits, different areas of interest and different communications, related to their specific areas of Government.

The Departments listed in the schedule to the BSL Act range from large operational Departments—like my own, the Department for Work and Pensions, which produces a large number of public communications every year—to much smaller Departments and offices that may not have had occasion to produce many public communications during the reporting period. Not all Departments are the same—one size does not fit all—but we know that there is room to improve and we have committed to doing so. With that in mind, there are four specific commitments that are recognised within the need to improve, which I will describe, because the Secretary of State has been clear about our determination to take greater action to drive forward progress, with four separate commitments to help us make progress.

First, although the BSL Act only requires for a BSL report to be published once every three years, I am pleased to confirm that the Secretary of State has made a commitment to publish a BSL report every year for at least the next five years. Again, that goes to the very point about transparency, and arguably is a tool to aid our conversations within Government around individual departmental performance, allowing us to continue to

drive improvement, highlight successes, learn from the case studies in the first BSL report and remain accountable to the deaf community.

Secondly, we are committed to discussing the findings of the report at the next meeting of the ministerial disability champions, who are Ministers appointed by the Prime Minister to provide a personal lead in championing accessibility and opportunity for disabled people within their Departments. We have already done that, and the ministerial disability champions will work with their Departments to increase the use of BSL in their communications. The ministerial disability champions are specifically appointed to lead the inclusion agenda within their Departments, but I want to explore what more we can do to drive greater accountability and ownership of those actions, making sure that this inclusion agenda is right at the forefront of our thinking—and that we are doing these things up front, rather than their happening as an afterthought—when it comes to policy development, legislative change or any other announcements that we might make.

Lilian Greenwood: I was reflecting on the Minister's comments just a few moments ago about the differences between Departments, and the way in which the information in the report is set out under different headings, such as "Public announcements about policy or changes to the law in BSL" and "Publications (plans, strategies...)". That information is presented as a number, but it might be more useful if it the proportions were presented. For example, if we knew how many public announcements the Department had made and how many were also produced in BSL, we would have a better gauge of whether the Department was doing well or not so well, because I would hope that when a Department is making important announcements, it would automatically produce them in BSL as well as in English. Is that something that the Minister might consider in future reporting?

Tom Pursglove: I am of course very happy to consider suggestions as to how we can try to provide greater transparency around this performance and better itemise the output that Departments are making around communications, because I genuinely want this process to be a success. Getting it right is an important barometer of the inclusion agenda. Anything we can do to give people confidence that we are getting this right can only be a good thing, and I am willing to explore anything that aids transparency, so I will gladly take away the hon. Lady's suggestion in the spirit with which it was made.

I return to the four commitments. Thirdly, building on these ongoing discussions, the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions will ask each ministerial Department to produce a five-year BSL plan, setting out how it plans to improve its use of BSL. These plans will be included in the next published BSL report.

Fourthly, the Government Communication Service has published internal guidance for Departments that covers how to plan and deliver British Sign Language content where it is needed, to meet the needs of deaf BSL users. It has been written with the help of professionals and those with lived experience of British Sign Language.

In addition to those measures, I am pleased to confirm that officials will be working with the BSL Advisory Board to formulate the guidance specified in section 3 of the 2022 Act. That section places a duty on the

Secretary of State for Work and Pensions to issue guidance promoting the facilitation and use of BSL. It is important to recognise both that all members of the advisory board have lived experience of BSL, and that we went through a thorough and proper process in making appointments to the board. Their work will include advice for relevant Departments on best practice to support BSL users in accordance with the Equality Act 2010, the public sector equality duty and the British Sign Language Act 2022. It will also contain broader advice on best practice for communicating with BSL users, including case studies to illustrate the value of providing BSL interpretation in communications with the public both in our central communications and in frontline services.

During the debates on the British Sign Language Act 2022, we heard Members recount the everyday experiences of their constituents in accessing public services. Again, let me be clear that it is not good enough to ask the hearing child of a deaf parent to relay an intimate health diagnosis or to deal with financial issues on behalf of their family. There should be a professional BSL interpreter in those circumstances to ensure dignity and respect to the deaf adult and their family members.

Angela Richardson: On the incredibly important point the Minister is making, although this issue is not necessarily for his Department, people fleeing domestic abuse need very specialist support, and often the person who would act as interpreter is the person perpetrating the abuse. There are instances where Departments need to step up the support for the interpretation needs of those fleeing domestic abuse.

Tom Pursglove: My hon. Friend raises a point that all of us will want to give due care, attention and thought to. We all want to ensure that the very best support is available for victims of domestic abuse to ensure they get the care and support they need, and that such matters are handled with the utmost sensitivity. The right support must be in place to allow them to be cared for and supported, and to have the recovery that we all want them to. If my hon. Friend provides me with more detail about whether there is a specific underpinning to that question, it is something I would be willing to ask the ministerial disability champion in the Home Office and the Ministry of Justice to look into. That would mean they are aware of those experiences as part of their policy development when taking that important agenda forward.

Jim Shannon: I want to cast the Minister's mind back to when the SNP spokesperson, the hon. Member for Aberdeen North (Kirsty Blackman), referred to the GCSE and the need for sign language to do that course. I mentioned that my oldest grandchildren had done some rudimentary sign language at school, which enables them to have a compassion for, and an understanding of, those who use it. When it comes to schools, as we all know, we do rudimentary first aid; it is elementary, but it does provide some understanding of the subject matter. It is not the Minister's responsibility, but can I ask that he engages with Education Ministers on that?

Tom Pursglove: I am very willing to obtain an update for the hon. Gentleman on the work that we are doing to try to drive forward the uptake, availability and usage of BSL in our schools. I touched on the opportunity of

the BSL GCSE, which is something that is welcome and an important part of that jigsaw. I will go and get him an update from the Department for Education. He also raised in his remarks—I scribbled down in my notes—whether there were steps we could take to engage with the Department for Communities in Northern Ireland on this agenda more broadly. Again, I am very willing to take that away and ask my officials to reach out to Department for Communities colleagues and counterparts to see what we can do to ensure that across England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland we are approaching these matters in an inclusive and joined-up way, and that where we can collaborate we do so in order to take this important agenda forward.

Chloe Smith: Before the Minister moves on from the guidance, will he confirm that he will lay the statutory instrument that enables part 3 to happen?

Tom Pursglove: My right hon. Friend the former Minister is trying to draw me out early on this point—I will get there imminently.

More needs to be done to enforce the obligations outlined in the Equality Act 2010, and Departments must strive to ensure that BSL signers have appropriate access to their services. A point was raised on the availability of data and the join-up between services to ensure that we understand needs. Specifically, the question was about the number of responses to the disability action plan. We received approximately 1,350 responses to the disability action plan. We are working through those responses and will come forward with a final version of that plan, having given proper consideration to all the feedback.

My right hon. Friend will know that one of the areas we consulted on was data. We want to take forward commitments in a joined-up way. Of course, we are now in a different place in relation to the national disability strategy, where commitments were also made around data. I want there to be proper joined-up, collective working across those two pieces to ensure the maximum impact when it comes to better understanding disability and people's needs, and identifying which interventions best support people. We will come forward with that work in the near future, and I hope that there will be some opportunity to set out the steps we will take to improve that understanding and the quality of data that we have as a Government, working in partnership with others. Colleagues across the House were right to ask those questions.

The BSL Advisory Board will advise the Government on the guidance detailed in the BSL Act and on its implementation to best represent the deaf community. This external guidance will be published by the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions during the next BSL reporting period—summer 2024—with support from the Cabinet Office Disability Unit.

I am hugely appreciative of the interest shown this afternoon by colleagues from across the House. I am determined that we as a Government must set the standard by which we ask others in our society and our communities to follow, ensuring that we deliver on this important agenda in the spirit of partnership, driving inclusion and broadening opportunity. A lot of questions and points were raised during the debate. I will go away

[Tom Pursglove]

and look at *Hansard*, and I will gladly place an update in the Library if there are any areas that I have not had the opportunity to touch on this afternoon.

3.48 pm

Chloe Smith: It has been a pleasure for all of us to serve under your chairmanship, Ms McVey, and I thank you for helping us to have a constructive debate in an excellent tone. The debate has allowed us to hear, in some cases, new pieces of information from the Minister, for which we are grateful, and to draw out examples that are deeply important to our constituents. That is what we are all here to do.

I will draw the threads of the debate together by way of a number of thank yous. The first is to the Minister, who has given a great deal of his time to go through the span of issues raised this afternoon, and we are grateful for that. I am glad to hear how willingly he has responded to colleagues' various requests and interests. As the hon. Member for Nottingham South (Lilian Greenwood) said, the APPG and many others in Parliament will seek to do much more, and I am glad to hear the Minister's attitude towards working with parliamentarians to do that.

Secondly, I echo the credit, underlined once again in this debate, to the members of the deaf community who have brought us to this place. I want to be absolutely clear that their voices must ring out loud and clear and be heard, used and listened to in the work that we do. As an aside, is it not interesting how so many of our verbs and adjectives are about hearing and speaking? I hope that all of us can take those choices of language with the breadth that I intend them in order to be able to communicate; that is what we are here to do.

The achievement we have in front of us is a huge credit to the deaf community and the alliance that has brought us to this point. However, to go further, we need to continue to work together in that manner. For that reason, I mentioned in my earlier remarks that an alliance such as this contains both deaf and hearing people; it contains all of us in society who want to see these kinds of goals achieved. I am glad that we in Parliament have had a chance to contribute to keeping

this campaign moving forward, so that we see what is needed in terms of changes for deaf children, deaf hospital patients, deaf jobseekers and many others in the examples used this afternoon.

The other area of thanks goes to the many organisations that have made an appearance in our contributions. We have heard, genuinely, from all corners of the country and it is important that we do so. It is vital that Members of Parliament can seek to speak for all their constituents. However, in doing so we need data, which we have touched on in today's debate; we need frameworks and structure, which these reports give us; and we need the clear view that there will be the possibility of change and progress ahead, which I would like to think the Minister is giving us.

In drawing today's work to a close, I am really grateful to all those who contributed in their many different ways to the debate and to the prior work that took place, and who are looking ahead to what needs to be done. I thank the Minister again for his full response. If he were able to return to *Hansard*, as he has promised, and pick up a number of the more granular questions, I would be very grateful to receive that response in a letter. As he wishes, I can then share that with other colleagues who were here today. I will not leave the officials of the Department out of this, who have worked extremely hard on this matter over many years. That is part of the challenge; they are part of the team that will push this forward in the spirit of what good, inclusive, accessible, forward-thinking and proud government for everybody in this country really looks like.

Thank you, Ms McVey, for bearing with me as I seek to wrap up what has been a fulsome debate. I am very glad that we have been able to surface these issues. We may or may not return to do this next year with the next report, given the timings of other things that may happen in the calendar year of 2024, but we will be watching very closely. The Minister can be absolutely sure that there will be people who are hanging on every word of what he is able to do in this territory in the future.

Question put and agreed to.

Resolved,

That this House has considered the British Sign Language report 2022 and implementation of the British Sign Language Act 2022.

Safe Asylum Routes: Afghan Refugees

3.56 pm

Barry Gardiner (Brent North) (Lab): I beg to move,

That this House has considered safe asylum routes for Afghan refugees.

It was a pleasure to serve under your chairmanship, Ms McVey. I declare a non-pecuniary interest: my daughter is the chief executive of the child refugee charity, Safe Passage.

I do not know what the Minister's majority was at the last election, and I do not know what his strategy is for the next one, but I am sure that he does the math. So let us do the math on the Government's promises to the people of Afghanistan. When the Government announced the ACRS—the Afghan citizens resettlement scheme—they said that they would provide safe passage for 20,000 people over the next four years at a rate of about 5,000 a year. Although the scheme was launched in January 2022, it effectively backdated itself to August '21 and the Government said that they were going to count towards their quota all the people who had already been evacuated under Operation Pitking. That was pathway 1.

Since the first year, the number of Afghans arriving under the scheme has plummeted. Pathway 2 allocated 2,000 places. In the last full year to June, just 66 people had been resettled under pathway 2. Pathway 3 allocated 1,500 places, but only 41 were resettled under this pathway. According to my maths, that makes 5,000 promised, 3,500 allocated and 107 actually resettled. If the Minister's election agent managed to get just 2% of the electorate and just 3% of the actual turnout to vote for him, I think he would sack that election agent because he certainly would not be sitting here.

In June last year, when pathway 3 of ACRS was launched, the Government said that they would prioritise certain groups over the next 12 months, so can the Minister tell the House how many of those 41 individuals were from those priority groups? How many had worked for the British Council? How many had worked for the GardaWorld contractors? How many were Chevening alumni, to whom this Government promised safe passage?

The Government also promised to extend the eligibility for this pathway to wider vulnerable groups in the second year, beginning in June 2023. It was mooted that that might include religious minorities and LGBTQ individuals, who face particular threat from the Taliban. Three and a half months into the second year, can the Minister tell the House why he has still not published the criteria for the wider eligibility? It is very difficult for someone to apply for a scheme when they do not know what the criteria are. In practice, it means that we recognise that there are many families that are unsafe and to whom we may have an obligation, but they still have no route to come to the UK safely. When will the Minister make a firm commitment to broadening the scope of pathway 3 and publish plans for the next stage?

If the Minister thought his majority was shaky when I compared it to the resettlement scheme, he ought to get even more jittery when I talk about the Afghan relocations and assistance policy. ARAP, according to data published by the Ministry of Defence, has received more than 141,000 applications. I will not embarrass the Minister by asking him to tell the House precisely how many Afghans managed to come to the UK and

build a new life under the ARAP scheme in the 12 months to June this year. I will just tell him: it was 73—not 730, and not 7,300 out of the 141,000 applications. That at least would have been 5%. The Minister would not have lost his deposit. It was not 5%, not 0.5%, but 0.05%.

We should remember that we set up the ARAP scheme to honour our debt to Afghans who worked with our UK forces on the frontline: the interpreters, the people that the Taliban regard as traitors, who risked their lives working alongside us then and whose lives continue to be in mortal danger now. Some of them have been waiting for more than two years, regularly contacting the MOD to show their documentation, and having to flee into exile in another country to escape the Taliban, who are hounding them down. What can possibly be delaying the processing of those applications? The Minister knows that many category 1 applicants are currently in Pakistan, but the Pakistan Government are threatening to deport them back to Afghanistan. What plans does the Minister have to expedite those applications?

Let me digress, because I want to give the Minister a moment of relief. I want to praise the Government for the way in which they have handled the Ukrainian resettlement scheme. It has been swift and efficient and our country should feel proud of the support that we have given.

We managed to achieve that for our fleeing European neighbours, so why have we not been able to do the same for the Afghans to whom we owe such a debt of honour? The answer is simple. We had 540 Government staff working on the Homes for Ukraine scheme. A freedom of information request by the Afghan Pro Bono Initiative revealed that the number of full-time staff handling the ARAP scheme was just 36—do the math, Minister. Why are there 36 times as many people processing Ukrainian applications as there are Afghan ones? Category 1 of ARAP is for people who served alongside British forces and who are

“at high and imminent risk”.

They urgently need to be brought to safety, yet the Minister knows that only five people received a positive category 1 decision in the whole period between April 2021 and January 2023. That is one every four months.

Will the Minister update the House and say how many positive category 1 decisions have now been made? Will he also reflect on the prioritisation of staffing resources and explain why there is less allocated to those we deem to be in serious and imminent danger of retaliation and persecution in Afghanistan because of their allegiance to us than there is to the general refugees from Ukraine, for whom I have every sympathy, who are fleeing their country in a time of war? Let me be clear: I do not want the Ukrainians to get fewer resources; I want the Afghans to get as many. Will the Minister commit this afternoon to increasing the number of caseworkers on the ARAP scheme?

I turn to the issue of family reunion. When Afghans were evacuated to safety in the UK in August 2021, many families were separated. Those who were subsequently resettled under ACRS pathway 1 were promised that their family members would also be resettled under the scheme. In April last year, the Home Office stated that further information would be “made available soon”. I do not know what counts for “soon” on whichever planet the Home Office is on, but let me tell the Minister

[Barry Gardiner]

that here in Blighty, it ain't 17 and a half months. The problem with pathway 1 is that it sounds great: "You have been granted indefinite leave to remain. You're safe." The problem is that even though someone thought they were a refugee, ILR does not confer access to refugee family reunion. Anyone applying under this route can simply be told that their application is rejected as invalid.

Families who have been separated in the most tragic circumstances, including parents who have not seen their children for more than two years, are waiting on the Government to simply do what they said they would do: publish a new mechanism to reunite them with their loved ones. Will the Minister commit this afternoon to a date when he will publish further information on how Afghans resettled under ACRS pathway 1 can bring their loved ones to safety?

I believe the Minister will have been briefed by his excellent officials that I am likely to bring up a specific case in the context of family reunion. It is the case of my constituent Mr Sayed Hassani, which I have spoken about before in the Chamber. Mr Hassani's wife, four daughters, two sons and sister were called forward as part of Operation Pitting back in August 2021, but they were unable to board the plane as scheduled because of the explosion at Kabul airport.

The five women are living under constant fear. I say five because last year my constituent sent me a photograph of his 15-year-old daughter in her coffin. She had committed suicide for fear of being taken by the Taliban and raped in a forced marriage. But her three sisters, her brothers and their mother are still there with her aunt. The boys and one of the daughters were born after their father became a British citizen, and they therefore have a right to British citizenship and a British passport. The three other women have had to put themselves at enormous risk by travelling across the border to Pakistan, where they were eventually able to get their biometric data done. Mr Hassani just needs his family safe and together again. I have the details of the case and would like to give them directly to the Minister after the debate for his urgent attention.

I welcome the unsafe journey policy that the Government introduced to mitigate the fact that there is no visa application centre in Kabul, but it is not working, Minister. The standard of proof is too high, and many women and unaccompanied children face horrendous dangers when trying to leave Afghanistan and cross the border, simply to prove that they really are who they say they are. Will Minister commit this afternoon to reviewing the criteria of the unsafe journey policy and make sure that we are not putting some of the most vulnerable people at even greater risk?

We need safe and effective routes for people from Afghanistan. The thing about safe routes is that they undermine the business model of people traffickers. In 2019, before the UK pulled out of Afghanistan, just 69 Afghans crossed the English channel in small boats. In the first eight months of this year, the number of Afghans crossing the channel in small boats was 4,800—one in every five people crossing the channel. If the Government really do want to cut the number of small boat arrivals in the UK, they know how to do it. It is in the title of this debate: create safe asylum routes for Afghan refugees.

4.9 pm

The Minister for Immigration (Robert Jenrick): It is a pleasure to serve under your chairmanship, Ms McVey. I congratulate the hon. Member for Brent North (Barry Gardiner) on securing the debate. I am grateful for his contribution, and I suspect that there will be some interventions from other interested right hon. and hon. Members. Clearly, 30 minutes is not long enough to do justice to a topic as complex and important as this, but I hope that I can provide some reassurance in my remarks and when answering interventions.

Mr John Baron (Basildon and Billericay) (Con): I thank my right hon. Friend for giving way. As chair of the British Council all-party parliamentary group, I put on the record our thanks to the Prime Minister for his direct intervention in changing the guidance to allow contractors who are hiding from the Taliban in Afghanistan to continue their applications in the safety of a third country, typically Pakistan. I put it to the Minister that there is now a logjam not only because there is a shortage of houses in the UK to which to send people from Pakistan, but because the ACRS pathway 3 scheme has a quota of 1,500, which we are nearing. Can the Minister provide an assurance or update as to what the Government will do, from a housing point of view, to get those contractors to the UK as soon as possible? Can the Minister also undertake to lift the cap to allow those eligible under ACRS to come to the UK?

Robert Jenrick: In a moment, I will come to the specific question around the numbers and how they relate to both British Council workers and GardaWorld employees. If time allows, I will come on to my hon. Friend's question about the limiting factor of accommodation as well. Clearly, it is a significant challenge for us. The primary responsibility rests with the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities and the Ministry of Defence. The Ministry of Defence in particular is responsible for bringing forward service family accommodation and ensuring that it is available and of a suitable quality, so that once families have been granted their visas, they can come to the UK safe in the knowledge that they will have somewhere to stay, rather than being housed in a hotel, which I think we all agree is an unsatisfactory way for anyone to live for a prolonged period and which we have consciously moved away from. My hon. Friend will have seen the effort to which the Government went in the first half of this year to close the hotels that were housing 8,000 Afghans who had arrived around the time of Operation Pitting.

Jim Shannon (Strangford) (DUP): The Minister will be aware of the case, which I brought to his and the Secretary of State's attention, of the gentleman who worked in the British Army alongside one of my constituents. He had to leave Afghanistan and live under threat in Pakistan with his wife and four children. We are keen to get him back to Northern Ireland—to Newtownards, to be specific. There is a job and house waiting for him; all we have to do is get him there, because he served our country. I gently remind the Minister that we still await a successful outcome for that gentleman.

Robert Jenrick: Let me make some progress, if I may, and I will return to those colleagues who wish to intervene. To address the hon. Member's point, we

sympathise deeply with the situation that many Afghans find themselves in, including those who are suffering because of their work in standing up for human rights and the rule of law, as well as those, such as women and girls and members of minority groups, who are facing wider persecution at the hands of the Taliban. Those are the reasons why we as a country have made the commitments that we have, and it is critical that we continue to deliver on those. The Government remain absolutely committed to the people of Afghanistan and the schemes that we established in the immediate aftermath of the fall of Kabul.

Since June 2021, around 24,600 people affected by events in Afghanistan have been brought to safety in the UK. They include British nationals and their families, Afghans who loyally served the UK and others identified as particularly at risk, such as campaigners for women's rights, human rights defenders, journalists, judges and members of the LGBT+ community. The number includes 7,000 individuals brought to safety after Operation Pitting. Because of the various ways in which cohorts are defined, detailed international comparisons have to be made with some caution, but on most measures the figure is significantly more than the numbers brought to safety by many of our European neighbours. I stress that this is not just about the number of Afghans who have arrived in the UK, but about the manner in which we support those people in order to integrate them into the United Kingdom and ensure that they can begin to establish themselves here and lead fulfilling lives.

Rachael Maskell (York Central) (Lab/Co-op): Will the Minister give way?

Caroline Lucas (Brighton, Pavilion) (Green): Will the Minister give way?

Robert Jenrick: I will finish this point and then I will give way, to the hon. Member for Brighton, Pavilion (Caroline Lucas) first. All Afghans relocated to the UK through ACRS and the ARAP programme are immediately granted indefinite leave to remain, including the immediate right to work, alongside access to the benefits system, healthcare, education and employment support. I will give way to the hon. Member for Brighton, Pavilion, because she contacted my office before the debate.

Caroline Lucas: I am grateful to the Minister for giving way. As he knows, I have a constituent who was instructed by the Government to make the dangerous journey, with his young family, to Pakistan for final checks, as he is eligible under ACRS pathway 3. They have been in Pakistan in one room—all of them in just one room—since May. Their documents are expiring. Pakistan has ordered Afghan asylum seekers out of the country by November, and this family are petrified that they will be sent back to Afghanistan in 13 days' time. I am desperately raising this case. The Minister will know that I have used all kinds of ways to try to reach him to ask, please, whether something be done this week to ensure that this family are not sent back to real danger in Afghanistan in less than 13 days' time.

Robert Jenrick: The case that the hon. Lady raised was brought to my attention today, but I will certainly ensure that my officials look into it and revert to her with a full and proper answer. We are aware of the recent statements by the Government of Pakistan, which

suggest their willingness to return some of those staying in Pakistan to Afghanistan. That is obviously a deeply concerning development and something that plays into all of our thoughts on how this scheme should operate in the days and weeks ahead.

Rachael Maskell: Will the Minister give way?

Robert Jenrick: I will in a moment. If I may, I will just finish this point. The Home Office is granting or rather is deciding visa cases every week, and those individuals will then have the ability to come to the UK, but clearly and understandably people want to come to the UK in the knowledge that accommodation is waiting for them and that they will be fully supported with the integration package. They are able, if they have had the decision made, to come to the UK, but what we need to do is to work with the Ministry of Defence, the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities and local authorities to bring forward as much accommodation as possible, so that those individuals can make the journey to the UK knowing that the full package is available to them from the moment that they arrive. As I said in answer to the intervention from my hon. Friend the Member for Basildon and Billericay (Mr Baron), none of us wants to see large numbers of individuals coming to the UK to languish in hotels for prolonged periods. I give way to the hon. Member for York Central (Rachael Maskell).

Rachael Maskell: I am incredibly grateful. I have in my constituency two children who came here under the UNHCR scheme. Both families went to Pakistan and were waiting to come here under the ACRS. One family has already returned to Afghanistan; and clearly, the other family is in danger of doing so. These are Hazara families at extreme risk, so what can the Minister say to give these families some comfort that they will be reunited with their children here in the UK?

Robert Jenrick: We do have a family reunion policy. I appreciate that the hon. Member for Brent North feels that it is insufficient, but it has enabled more than 40,000 people to come to the UK to reunite with other refugees. I would be very happy to look into the specific case that the hon. Member for York Central raises. I know that she raises it in a sincere way on behalf of her constituents and she is clearly very concerned.

As time is short, let me answer more specifically some of the other questions that were raised by speaking to the pathways that underlie the scheme. On pathway 1 specifically, we recognise the challenges of the evacuation, which caused families to be split, and are working to establish a route to address this. Once in operation, this will allow eligible individuals to refer one spouse or partner and dependent child for resettlement. We are working to get the route operational as quickly as possible, and I can say that we expect to receive referrals in the first half of 2024 if not sooner.

Mr Baron: Will my right hon. Friend give way?

Robert Jenrick: I will answer, if I may, my hon. Friend's first question. On pathway 3, I am pleased to share that we will now consider for resettlement all eligible, at-risk British Council and GardaWorld contractors and Chevening alumni who expressed interest during

[Robert Jenrick]

the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office's window of opportunity. This means that the Government will exceed the original allocation of 1,500 places for the first stage of ACRS pathway 3. These are individuals who directly supported the efforts of the UK and the international community in Afghanistan. It is important to ensure that all those who are eligible, at risk, and remain in Afghanistan and the region, are able to reach safety in the UK. The Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office will shortly contact all remaining individuals assessed as "eligible in principle" under the first stage of ACRS pathway 3 with advice on their next steps. We remain committed to honouring our commitments under these schemes, including, where capacity allows, working with international partners and non-governmental organisations to welcome wider groups under the second stage of pathway 3. I hope that answers my hon. Friend's question.

Mr Baron: I thank the Minister for that. It is excellent news that the quota system has now been pushed to one side for those individuals that he specified. I suggest to him, however, that there is still a sense of urgency. If people are stuck in Pakistan and cannot get over to the UK, with Pakistan suggesting that it is going to repatriate back to Afghanistan, there may still be a big problem. Will the Minister confirm that he will look at this as a matter of urgency? We need to cut through the red tape and help these people who helped this country.

Robert Jenrick: I can assure my hon. Friend, and indeed all right hon. and hon. Members here, that we are considering that with great urgency. Those who are in Pakistan are supported by the British Government, or by partner organisations such as the International Organisation for Migration, which will provide them with accommodation, food and support. I appreciate, however, that those conditions are not desirable, and the recent statements by the Pakistan Government are concerning. That is why we are looking again at what more we might be able to do. I will give way one more time.

Barry Gardiner: I am grateful to the Minister for giving way. On pathway 1, regarding those who had been separated during Operation Pitting, he said that a spouse and a dependent child would be able to come to the UK. Where there is a non-dependent child, or more than one—I think he said one—dependent child, is the Minister really now saying that those smaller families in Afghanistan who had been called under Operation Pitting, that perhaps because of the explosion were not able to get to the UK in safety, are now going to be divided yet further and separated yet further? Surely, that cannot be what he meant.

Robert Jenrick: No, I think the hon. Gentleman misheard me. I am happy to restate for the record that, once in operation, this will allow eligible individuals to refer one spouse or partner, and dependent children, for resettlement. There is no suggestion of splitting up children from their parents.

Barry Gardiner: And a non-dependent child?

Robert Jenrick: On the question of non-dependent children, that is not in our proposal, but I am happy to revert to the hon. Gentleman with more detail on that.

Sam Tarry (Ilford South) (Lab): Colleagues have covered many of the points I was going to make, but I want to ask a question just specifically on that point. My office has received many stories similar to those of hon. Members here about people in horrendous situations. Particularly on ACRS pathway 1, it would be very helpful if the Minister were able to publish some more guidance that offices can use. My understanding was that, under ACRS pathway 1, people cannot access the refugee family reunion procedure, so there is then a danger that if they apply, the application will be rejected as invalid. We do not want to advise them to do that then be deemed invalid, when actually we know from what the Minister has said today that there should be a pathway for family members to come to the UK safely. Some guidance on this from the Minister would be so helpful for all of our offices, if that is possible.

Robert Jenrick: I will be very happy to do that. I appreciate that all those represented here today, and in fact most Members of this House, are working with constituents in this situation. I will instruct my officials to review the information that we have available and send it to the hon. Gentleman and other interested Members. If he feels it is insufficient, then he should please give us guidance.

One of the questions at the heart of this debate is our ability to house people satisfactorily here in the UK. With the Minister for Veterans' Affairs, we worked intensively over the first half of this year to ensure that almost all individuals in the Afghan bridging hotels were moved on into settled accommodation. The remaining individuals are in pre-matched situations where they are awaiting their property becoming available, so will swiftly move out of that accommodation. That is a success, but we need to ensure that we do not find ourselves in that situation again. It is for that reason that we have exercised a degree of caution in bringing individuals to the UK without accommodation available.

We want to work with as many local authorities as possible to find further homes that we can then match with families in Pakistan awaiting entry to the United Kingdom. We all appreciate the pressures on local authorities: their own housing lists for the domestic population; handling Homes for Ukraine, the Syrian scheme and the Hong Kong scheme; and the consequences of illegal migration. Together, those factors make it an extremely challenging period for them. Since 2015, we have welcomed 530,000 people into our country on humanitarian grounds—more than at any time in our modern history—and much of that pressure lies with local authorities. That does not mean we should prevent individuals from coming to the United Kingdom. We need to work intensively with local authorities to bring forward more properties swiftly.

A further avenue is to ensure that service family accommodation units are brought up to scratch, made available and matched with individuals and their families in Pakistan, or indeed in Afghanistan. Understandably, the Ministry of Defence is leading that work, and we are doing everything we can to encourage them to bring forward their hundreds of properties very swiftly.

Barry Gardiner: Will the Minister give way?

Robert Jenrick: I will give way to the hon. Gentleman, as I know he is very keen, and this was his debate. Then I must wrap up.

Barry Gardiner: Will the Minister address the mismatch in staffing resource? It seems disproportionate that there were 540 staff working on the Ukraine scheme and there are 36 on the Afghan scheme. I do not want in any way to downplay the Ukraine scheme—it has been a great success. However, we need to see similar priority given to the Afghans.

Robert Jenrick: I would be happy to take away the hon. Gentleman's comment and consider it. In my experience, the challenges he has described in this debate are not primarily related to the number of caseworkers dealing with individual cases. The biggest challenge facing the UK on this issue is the availability of accommodation. The more homes we are able to bring forward—whether that be by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities procuring homes under the schemes they have available, the Ministry of Defence bringing forward service family accommodation, or each of our own local authorities bringing forward accommodation—the more families we will be able to bring into the UK with ease. The alternatives are for individuals to wait in Pakistan, to come to the United Kingdom of their own volition, having had their case decided by the Home Office, which is happening at significant pace, or to come and spend time in contingency accommodation. Our recent experience with that was not positive and I would be loth to return to it, although we do not rule it out.

I will bring my remarks to a close by thanking the hon. Member for Brent North for securing the debate, and all those who have contributed. I appreciate that 30 minutes is too short to address all the questions hon. Members have on this issue. The Government believe that the UK has a generous offer to those affected by events in Afghanistan, and we are delivering on that offer. That is most clearly demonstrated by the fact that 24,600 people are now beginning their new lives here, and that more will follow. We remain committed to our Afghan schemes, but we need to deliver those commitments in an orderly manner. That is the duty of a Government, and it is also what the public expects. We can only welcome, support and accommodate individuals arriving under our safe and legal routes as part of a sustainable and well-managed immigration scheme in partnership with others, in particular the local authorities who have to support those individuals and their families.

Finally, I call on all Members to support our Afghan schemes, work with their local councils, and support the work we are doing under the Illegal Migration Act 2023 to consult with local authorities on their capacity to take further individuals. That consultation will be published soon.

Question put and agreed to.

Plastic Packaging Tax on Imports: HMRC Enforcement

4.30 pm

Nigel Mills (Amber Valley) (Con): I beg to move,

That this House has considered HMRC enforcement of plastic packaging tax on imports.

It is a pleasure to serve under your chairmanship, Ms McVey. I am grateful for the chance, however long it might be, to raise this issue.

The tax has been enforced for about 18 months. As a Parliament, we are not brilliantly effective at reviewing taxes after we have introduced them to check that they are working how we intended. This is one of those unique taxes where the Environment Secretary said last week that she was disappointed at how much the tax was raising—I am not sure that she had checked with the Treasury before she said it. I will talk about an area where we could perhaps raise a little bit more money.

There is real concern in the industry about illegal imports which claim to have a sufficient amount of recycled plastic content, when that is not the case—and there is very little enforcement to try to work out whether it is or not. It is hard to do because we cannot look at stretch film—I actually have some here with me—and work out how much recycled content is in it: there are no tests that can be done. We need robust processes to make sure that the claims people are making have some basis, and they are following the rules.

I asked for this debate because the industry had a meeting with His Majesty's Revenue and Customs, and the latter said that enforcement was not its job—I am afraid that under the law, it clearly is. The idea that the job can be passed on to someone at the border who can check a pallet and see what is in the cling film will not work. It needs to be a process-driven situation. The law was clearly written, there is “joint and several liability” on both the importer who brings in the plastic film and claims that it has recycled content, and on the people who buy it from them and place it on the market. There is a whole of collection of ways we can enforce this on them. We can ensure that the big retailers and manufacturers, the ones that have robust supply chains, are doing the work they need to do before buying this stuff, so that they can be sure that they are not buying something that is undercutting the market.

Mark Pawsey (Rugby) (Con): Does my hon. Friend agree that, while the introduction of the plastic packaging tax was a really positive thing that ensured we got more use from recycled material, in this case, with no verification of products manufactured outside the UK, the grave danger is that we are doing a disservice to UK manufacturers?

Nigel Mills: That is the exact point that I am trying to make. We will not get more use of recycled content if we do not enforce the law and ensure that our domestic businesses are not undercut by the market. The fact is that plastic film that includes recycled content is 20% more expensive than using virgin polymer; that is why we need to have the plastic packaging tax. If we allow imports to enter which claim to contain that, and avoid the tax, clearly they can undercut the market for products that can be made here. That will mean that we cannot achieve the objectives that we want to achieve.

[Nigel Mills]

This is not a cheap industry to start up. If someone wants to mechanically recycle plastic so they can create 30% recycled plastic content, they need to have some very sophisticated machinery. It is a very difficult and intensive process, first to wash the plastic film, then shred it, and then turn it back into pellets, and the industry needs to invest millions and millions of pounds in the lines. This process happens in my constituency, and if the Minister wishes to come and see how it works, he is more than welcome.

We need enforcement to send the right signals out that it is safe to invest in this industry because there will be a market for the recycled pellet. Sadly, we have already seen at least one factory go bust because it could not find a market for its product, and others will be under threat.

We can be pretty sure that we have a problem because industry experts have assured me that there is no way that the film I have with me here, which is 12 micron film from India—film this thin, this strong and this stretchy—can be made with any recycled content. It is technically impossible with mechanical recycling to get the film either clear enough or strong enough to work like the film I have here does. If I tried to stretch film with recycled content, it would just tear. We can be absolutely sure that wherever the film I have is coming from, it is not complying with our plastic packaging tax.

I want to raise with the Minister, in the time we have, some questions about HMRC's enforcement strategy, the work it has done so far, and how we can get the message to people buying this stuff that they are committing an offence, and that there is a risk that they will be caught, with significant financial and reputational penalties. All manner of businesses using this stuff on their products would be horrified to find out that it has no recycled content. They are trying to comply with the law and want to be seen to be helping the environment by using recycled plastic. If we can get that message out, there is a real chance to improve performance.

Mark Pawsey: My hon. Friend is being generous with his time. If we know that shrink and wrap films are not using recycled content, why can it not be assumed that an imported product does not contain 30% recycled material? A piece of paper that is produced by an overseas manufacturer cannot possibly be evidence. Although it is unreasonable to expect HMRC inspectors to visit plants around the world, if we know that there cannot be recycled material in it, why can that not be the assumption?

Nigel Mills: I strongly agree that we could beef up the HMRC guidance. HMRC has published guidance on the due diligence checks that businesses buying this plastic film should make. It does require something stronger than just asking for a certificate.

My hon. Friend is right: if I were buying film from a reputable company in Germany that had all the accreditations under German and EU law, and had the annual inspections that we require in the UK to prove its process complied with the rules, we could be quite relaxed about that. That is fair competition and fair imports. Where we have a much greater issue is when we

import from the Pacific rim without those standards and inspection in place. How could anyone be sure that the piece of paper represents anything? Even if it represented something when it was first granted, how can anyone be sure it has been complied with? That is especially when what is coming in cannot possibly comply and there is no way that could happen.

I request the Minister to provide guidance or a list of territories where there could be a lower risk approach, and those territories with a higher risk approach if buying film sourced from there, and assume that the plastic packaging tax applies. It would be quite straightforward to work out which countries have an equivalent standards and inspections regime to ours, and be a little softer on enforcement for those, and which countries do not have that, where there should be a high-risk approach.

It is effectively tax avoidance, bordering on tax evasion. Buying a product that undercuts the market price in the UK, which research shows cannot be technologically produced in a way that meets UK standards, and turning a blind eye thanks to a piece of paper, is not behaviour that we would accept anywhere in the tax code as competent due diligence and an attempt to comply with the tax. There is progress we could make there.

4.38 pm

Sitting suspended for Divisions in the House.

8.18 pm

On resuming—

[PHILIP DAVIES *IN THE CHAIR*]

Philip Davies (in the Chair): The sitting is resumed! The debate may continue for another 52 minutes, which will take us to 9.10 pm.

Nigel Mills: It is a pleasure to serve under your chairmanship, Mr Davies; there has been a swift change of Chair in the last three and a half hours. I am grateful to everyone who has come back after the short interval for this crowd-pulling debate.

Before we disappeared, I was trying to convince the Government that, with a bit more work, they could raise extra tax, protect jobs in the UK and help achieve their environmental objectives. My case, which I hope is relatively uncontroversial, is that if we can find a bit more resource for enforcement, there will be significant potential advantages.

It is not that we do not know what we should try to do. HMRC published guidance for people involved in the supply chain of plastic packaging components containing 30% or more recycled plastic. They should be making checks, including

“checking that the price you pay for packaging components reflects the current market value—if components are offered at a lower market value, you should find out the reason for the low cost”.

That sounds quite reasonable. Checks also include

“getting copies of any certifications or audits that have been conducted on your suppliers, or the re-processors of recycled plastic”—

that is, looking for real evidence—and

“conducting physical inspections or audits on your packaging supply chain to prove information given by suppliers or customers”,

as well as

“checking details provided against other sources, such as supplier and customer websites”.

Those are all reasonable things that large companies buying these materials should have the resource to do. It would be helpful if the Minister could answer this, if he has the data from HMRC: in how many audits has HMRC found that people have been importing what they believe, or claim, to be recycled plastic, but are not paying the correct tax? How many of those audits have resulted in any kind of investigation or penalties being issued? How much are those penalties? How much extra tax has been collected?

The feeling across the sector is that there has been far more compliance enforcement against UK manufacturers—not unreasonably for a new tax—than there has been against the imports. However, it seems that the biggest risk to revenue leakage is from those imports. Perhaps the Minister could consider whether HMRC could do anything more to publicise the rules, and to really make it clear to the industry that the rules are there, that there are significant penalties, and that there are things that industry should be doing to protect its reputation and ensure that it complies. There is just a general lack of awareness. Given that there is a 20% cost saving available here, and given that times are quite tight, we can understand that people may get a bit tempted to not look too closely if we are not careful.

This is not a small problem. Roughly half of all stretch film that goes on the market in the UK is imported, either as rolls of film or on finished products. We are not talking about a small quantity. Think of the scale of the problem if we get enforcement wrong; there is a very large market out there that could end up avoiding tax in the UK. We really do not want that. I accept that it is early days for the tax—it has been around for only 18 months—and we must all learn how to comply with the processes, but hopefully there has been some use in having this debate to flag up something that seems to be going slightly awry. The issue is causing industry significant concern. If we cannot find a way of fixing this, it could cost us revenue and jobs, and securing the investment that we want in getting more plastic recycling will be very hard if business cannot see a viable market.

I suspect that the Government will want to increase the 30% requirement up to 40%. I think that the EU wants 70% by 2040, so I am sure that we will go in that direction. However, we can get there only if industry is prepared to invest, and we need to give it the confidence to do so. I hope that the Minister will be able to give the industry encouragement that it is worth investing in the sector.

8.22 pm

Steven Bonnar (Coatbridge, Chryston and Bellshill) (SNP): It is a pleasure to see you in the Chair this evening, Mr Davies. I thank the hon. Member for Amber Valley (Nigel Mills) for securing and leading this important debate. The focus of all Members across the Chamber should be on ensuring that the implementation of the plastic packaging tax aligns with our shared goal of reducing the quantity of virgin, non-recycled plastic in use in the United Kingdom by guaranteeing that importers will face the same tax rates as domestic producers.

It is an undeniable fact that PPT is a valuable tool in encouraging firms into a transition away from virgin plastics; I think we are all agreed on that. However, data released by HMRC in August reveals a stark discrepancy. Yes, it is indeed early days for the tax, as the hon. Member for Amber Valley said; however, although it was estimated that 20,000 businesses across various sectors would be affected by the PPT, only 4,142 had actually registered to pay by 8 August 2023. That is one fifth of the total expected. That raises a vital question: what has gone wrong with the roll-out of this scheme? We look forward to the Minister informing us of that.

Industry leaders have expressed the concern that many of us feel that certain countries’ businesses are exempt from paying PPT. Of course, that is just one concern, but it is one that creates a risk of importers undercutting our domestically produced goods and undermining the competitiveness of our home-grown industries. We must ensure that PPT is levied fairly, and make sure that tax is paid on all imported products without exception. The UK Government must address these concerns and provide industry leaders with the assurances that they clearly seek.

Furthermore, PPT is failing to encourage firms effectively to reduce their plastic usage, primarily due to the gaps that we find in the regulations. Firms are using recycled plastics created through chemical recycling, which is a process that poses serious environmental and pollution challenges to the Government. We cannot afford to overlook the carbon-intensive nature of this process either. Plastics created through chemical recycling should not be exempt from taxation.

Although the threshold of 30% recycled material is a positive step, we believe that it is unambitious when compared to the European Commission’s approach, which levies a uniform 80 cents per kilogram for non-recycled plastic. Perhaps, to drive a substantial transition towards 100% recyclable materials, we should consider increasing the threshold. I look forward to hearing the Minister’s views about that.

We know that PPT raised £276 million in the financial year 2022-23. However, although that revenue is welcome, it is imperative that we reinvest it in increasing the supply of recycled packaging alternatives that are available to consumers. Of course, the tax is designed to provide an economic incentive for businesses to use recycled plastics and we must ensure that the revenue generated by it supports that primary goal. The lack of supply of packaging materials is hindering the transition away from virgin plastics, so we must reinvest in creating high-value jobs, increasing wealth and reducing the amount of plastic sent to incineration, or indeed landfill.

We cannot ignore the substantial concerns surrounding PPT and its effectiveness in achieving its intended purposes. We must address the issues with the scheme’s roll-out, ensure that there is fairness in taxation for imports, eliminate exemptions for chemical- recycled plastics and raise the threshold to encourage greater use of recycled materials. It is our collective responsibility to safeguard our environment and economy through smart and effective policies.

8.27 pm

James Murray (Ealing North) (Lab/Co-op): It is a pleasure to speak with you in the Chair, Mr Davies.

[James Murray]

I congratulate the hon. Member for Amber Valley (Nigel Mills) on securing this debate on HMRC's enforcement of the plastic packaging tax on imports. I am pleased to respond on behalf of the Opposition.

As Opposition Members made clear throughout the introduction and implementation of the plastic packaging tax, we support it as a tool to tackle plastic pollution. The tax was introduced in April last year to provide an economic incentive for businesses to use recycled plastic in the manufacture of plastic packaging. By applying a tax on products that contain less than 30% of recycled plastic, the tax was expected to create greater demand for recycled plastic, which in turn would stimulate increased recycling and collection of plastic waste, diverting it from landfill or incineration.

Of course, today's debate has focused on the enforcement of the tax on imported plastics by HMRC. I understand that in 2022-23, the first year in which the tax applied, 48% of the plastics declared as being subject to it were flagged as plastics imported into the UK, so I would be very interested to hear the Minister's response to the points made by the hon. Member for Amber Valley about ensuring that the tax is applied correctly to imports and making sure that there is a level playing field for UK businesses.

More widely, as we make the transition to more sustainable plastics, we know that concerns have been expressed in the agricultural sector, among domestic manufacturers and in the wider business community about how they will adapt to the changing policy context. Indeed, I know that the hon. Member for Amber Valley has spoken before about his concerns about the way in which silage film was unexpectedly added to the list of items caught by the plastic packaging tax in guidance published in late 2021. He pointed out at the time that that meant that industries had not prepared for the change and that the cost would fall directly on farmers at a very difficult time for them. That point was also made by the National Farmers Union, which successfully secured a change of course by the Government, with HMRC concluding early in 2022 that silage film fell under an exemption from the tax.

Clearly, it would have been less disruptive if the Government had taken their ultimate position in the first place, rather than publishing guidance and then changing their mind. I would be grateful if the Minister could set out some detail about what the Treasury and HMRC have learned from the experience, and what they are doing more widely to work with the agricultural sector and businesses in the broader economy to assist with the transition to more sustainable plastics.

Furthermore, although it is important to tackle less sustainable packaging products from overseas, it is also important that we build resilience here in the UK and have a clear, stable policy environment to encourage investment in our country. I was therefore concerned to note that, in response to the Government's recent announcement that they would consult on a new, mass-balance approach to chemical recycling, the British Plastics Federation noted that a

"lack of clarity to date has prevented companies from investing in the UK and some have looked elsewhere to build facilities."

As the shadow Chancellor, my right hon. Friend the Member for Leeds West (Rachel Reeves), set out last week, we believe that Britain must rebuild its domestic resilience across the economy. We must make more here in Britain while developing robust supply chains so that we are less exposed to global shocks. A clear, stable policy environment is critical to encouraging companies to invest in productive capacity here in the UK, and it is therefore crucial in securing the jobs and economic resilience that such investment would bring, so I will be grateful if the Minister can explain what the Government are doing to support private investment in the production of sustainable plastics here in the UK.

8.31 pm

The Exchequer Secretary to the Treasury (Gareth Davies):
It is a great pleasure to see you in the Chair, Mr Davies.

Let me congratulate my hon. Friend the Member for Amber Valley (Nigel Mills) on securing this debate on the plastic packaging tax. This world-leading environmental tax is designed to incentivise businesses to use more recycled plastic packaging in their production. As has been said, the manufacturers and importers of plastic packaging that does not contain at least 30% recycled plastic are liable for a new tax.

The plastic packaging tax is one of a series of measures to drive more collection and recycling of plastic waste, helping us to reach our ambitious target to eliminate all avoidable plastic waste by 2042. However, I recognise that some people make false claims about recycled content in packaging and do not pay the taxes they owe, and they not only undermine important environmental objectives, but create an unfair and uneven playing field for businesses that are trying to do the right thing. That was why we consulted extensively to get all aspects of the tax design right, including taxpayer obligations and the evidence required to back up claims of recycled content. It is also why, since the plastic packaging tax was introduced in April last year, HMRC has been actively helping businesses to understand their obligations, and developing a comprehensive enforcement and compliance response to identify and tackle any non-compliance.

As I have mentioned, the tax applies to plastic packaging that is either manufactured in or imported into the United Kingdom, including plastic packaging that is already filled at the time of importation. Following extensive consultation, the tax includes a de minimis threshold of 10 tonnes of packaging per year, which is intended to avoid placing a disproportionate administrative burden on businesses that would outweigh the environmental benefits. This means that many small importations of plastic packaging will be out of scope of the tax.

I want to address some points about evidence requirements. In designing the tax, it was important that we struck the right balance to ensure that claims were credible, while avoiding placing a disproportionate burden on businesses. Essentially, the challenge is that there is no scientific test to determine the recycled plastic content of packaging. For that reason, businesses are legally required to hold a body of evidence that shows the origin and content of recycled material, the details of manufacture or import of the individual plastic packaging components, and the proportion of

recycled plastic in the outputs from the recycling process. As there is no one-size-fits-all approach, the type of evidence required is not prescribed—there is not one certificate. There can be a range of evidence, such as contracts, certificates and purchase orders.

Let me directly address some of the specific comments made by my hon. Friend the Member for Rugby (Mark Pawsey), who spoke about importers, as did the shadow Minister, the hon. Member for Ealing North (James Murray). We recognise that importers are a higher risk and must demonstrate the same standard of record keeping as UK manufacturers. Where businesses do not have or hold sufficient evidence for us to inspect, they must not declare that their packaging contains at least 30% recycled plastic, and they must pay PPT.

In addition, HMRC has a range of enforcement and inspection powers at its disposal, as well as sanctions and penalties, but the Government have also gone further by improving the legislative environment to introduce criminal offences for businesses that evade PPT. In a minute, I will come on to what action HMRC has already taken in that area, because several colleagues have asked for that information.

Mark Pawsey: The Minister has acknowledged that, for reasons of safety, food contact applications cannot, by their very nature, include recycled material. I wonder whether he would accept that the plastic packaging tax should automatically apply to any imports of material used where food contact is involved.

Gareth Davies: To be clear, the presumption is that businesses need to demonstrate that they meet the threshold to have relief from the tax. If they cannot do that, they must pay the tax. That is clear, and I hope that that answers my hon. Friend's question.

Businesses are also required to carry out due diligence on their supply chains and to demonstrate to HMRC what checks have been carried out in their supply chains. HMRC can and will challenge claims from businesses, and is doing so, and anyone in the supply chain can be held liable. When assessing that liability, HMRC will consider due diligence checks undertaken to ensure that the supply chain has taken appropriate steps.

My hon. Friends the Members for Rugby and for Amber Valley both talked about false and fraudulent claims. We are alive to that issue, particularly as it relates, as they pointed out, to the content of recycled plastic. We understand that that is a serious impact for businesses that are just trying to do the right thing, as I said at the beginning.

To embed the tax, HMRC delivered a wide-ranging communications programme that targeted both domestic manufacturers and importers of packaging. It focused on making them aware of the requirements and supporting them to comply with those. Recognising that some businesses may need more time to fully understand their obligations under the new tax, HMRC went even further and allowed a 12-month soft landing period, during which the focus was on education and support for businesses.

Now that that period has ended, businesses must ensure that they have gathered appropriate evidence, filed their returns and paid on time. Although HMRC continues to support businesses, it is now also focusing

its efforts and targeting its resources on the areas of highest risk and non-compliance. The tax has been in place for 18 months, so HMRC now holds more data from tax returns to inform risk profiling and emerging trends. Its data-driven approach will help to identify and target instances of error and non-compliance. I will come on to what action has been taken in a second.

As with general taxation, HMRC's compliance activity for PPT draws on a test and learn approach. That moves through various phases, and approaches can change depending on what HMRC learns along the way. Largely, it has concentrated on targeting unregistered businesses that may have a liability and on developing a better understanding of the plastic packaging tax population, particularly given the tax is so new, to build a risk compliance approach.

I want to address the question of registration. To reiterate, over 4,000 businesses have registered for the tax in 2022-23. We concede that that is lower than the initial estimate of 20,000, but that estimate was made before the final policy decisions on the tax were made. We were very clear that the estimate was always subject to a lot of uncertainty. HMRC continues to engage with businesses and hold them to account. I am pleased to say that, since the tax was launched, 250 additional businesses have now registered with HMRC.

Businesses found to be negligent or cheating the system will incur penalties in addition to the tax due and can face liabilities of up to 100% of the tax due. They can also face legal action to recover the tax; in the most serious cases, as I have said, criminal prosecution may take place. My hon. Friend the Member for Amber Valley asked for statistics on this. I can tell him that so far HMRC has contacted 2,000 businesses proactively and conducted 400 interventions on compliance since the tax went live. So far, £3 million has been recovered as a result of that action. I point out that HMRC will always be open to receiving any information or evidence where businesses or individuals feel that compliance is not in order.

Nigel Mills: I do not know whether the Minister knows this, but was the enforcement action against the importer or against somebody further up the supply chain?

Gareth Davies: I had anticipated the question, but was unable to obtain the information in time. If we have that information, I will be happy to follow up and write to my hon. Friend on the breakdown, because he is focused on importers and it is a reasonable question.

I will finally address the point on mass balance and chemical recycling. I should point out that we have launched a consultation on this matter. We are looking at it carefully and will respond to that soon, so watch this space on that point.

As in other areas of tax fraud, the Government are committed to taking strong action across the tax system to address any activity that is unfair and that undermines businesses that are doing the right thing. The plastic packaging tax revenues in the first year, as has already been said, were £276 million, which is broadly in line with the Office for Budget Responsibility's forecasts. That indicates that the amount of plastic packaging subject to the tax is in line with expectations. However, as hon. Members will have heard, work to ensure that

[Gareth Davies]

all obligated businesses are registered and compliant with the tax continues to this day. If a business or individual has specific concerns or, I reiterate, intelligence about tax non-compliance, I encourage them to report it to HMRC through the normal channels, so that we can ensure a level playing field for everyone. Everybody in this Chamber has expressed a desire to achieve that.

8.42 pm

Nigel Mills: I have half an hour, Mr Davies, so I can wind up at great length. I thank everybody who has taken part in the debate. Hopefully, it has given us a chance to illuminate the issue and to give some profile to the importance of getting this right. I think we all, on all sides, want this tax to deliver its objectives; we all want to see more recycling of plastic packaging. There has to

be a role for chemical recycling, because when it comes to anything that comes into contact with food, we cannot use recycled content through the manual route. That is a large percentage of the plastic packaging going on the market, so more progress will be needed in that direction.

I thank the Minister for the information he has given. I certainly hope that HMRC will be alert to this issue and try to ensure that the tax works as intended and achieves all the objectives that we want it to achieve.

Question put and agreed to.

Resolved,

That this House has considered HMRC enforcement of plastic packaging tax on imports.

8.43 pm

Sitting adjourned.

Written Statements

Tuesday 17 October 2023

BUSINESS AND TRADE

Smarter Regulation Programme

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Business and Trade (Kevin Hollinrake): My noble Friend the Minister of State for the Department for Business and Trade (Earl of Minto) has today made the following statement.

Today the Department for Business and Trade has launched a Call for Evidence into the regulatory landscape. The Call for Evidence can be accessed via the following link: <https://www.gov.uk/government/calls-for-evidence/smarter-regulation-and-the-regulatory-landscape>.

The Government are driving regulatory reform across Whitehall via the Smarter Regulation Programme, which launched on 10 May with the publication *Smarter Regulation to Grow the Economy*. Smarter regulation means only using regulation where necessary, and ensuring its design and use is both proportionate and future-proof.

Since then, we have announced numerous reforms across these areas. For example, on the stock of existing regulation, we have launched consultations on reforming employment law; wine sector reforms; and the product safety and furniture fire consultations. The latter will future proof our approach to product regulation, alongside indefinitely extending CE recognition. Additionally, we launched a series of consultations aimed at improving the outcomes that independent regulation delivers—this includes Strategic Steers for the Competition and Markets Authority; the Strategy and Policy Statement for Energy regulation; and most recently we consulted on extending the existing growth duty to Ofgem, Ofcom and Ofwat.

We know there is concern around the complexity of the regulatory landscape; the agility and proportionality with which regulators make decisions; and governance and accountability. This Call for Evidence is an opportunity to further understand the detail of these issues and test how widespread they may be, providing an evidence base from which to identify improvements that can be made over the short and longer term.

The first step in addressing such concerns will be to collate evidence on precisely how the regulatory landscape is impacting businesses, consumers, and regulators. Our first and principal focus is to understand what works well and what could be improved in how regulators operate to deliver for the sectors they serve. It seeks views on regulatory agility; proportionality; predictability and consistency of approach. Secondly, it asks whether there are any further steps we can take to reform the existing stock of regulation on the UK statute book—both retained EU law and wider regulations.

This will be accompanied by an ambitious programme of workshops with consumers, consumer groups, businesses, regulators and think tanks.

The Smarter Regulation programme covers three pillars:

Reforming the existing stock of regulation—both retained EU law and wider domestic regulation—to cut business burdens and future proof our regulatory frameworks;

Ensuring regulation is a last resort and not a first choice, by putting downward pressure on the flow of new regulation and deploying alternatives wherever possible; and

Ensuring that independent regulators perform as well as they can and deliver the right outcomes for consumers. This includes supporting the drive for innovation and economic growth.

The Call for Evidence forms part of the third of these pillars.

The Call for Evidence will run for 12 weeks and invite businesses, public sector bodies, individuals, and other interested stakeholders to set out their priorities for an improved regulatory landscape.

The information that the Government receive through this exercise will be beneficial in shaping our approach to regulations and our priorities and objectives, ensuring that our final approach is informed by stakeholder needs.

We welcome responses from all stakeholders across all sectors in the economy but note that we are not seeking views on financial services regulators and regulations. These are handled by HM Treasury, where there have been positive and industry-welcomed reforms in this space in recent years.

Statutory Instrument Programme

In parallel to today's Call for Evidence the Government are continuing their programme of Statutory Instruments under the Retained EU Law Act, which seek to optimise retained EU law for the UK and ensure the law is clear and accessible. Yesterday we laid Statutory Instruments (SIs) that will ensure we can continue the effective operation of rail passenger services and ensure our intellectual property framework continues to function. We will keep pursuing our drive to reform retained EU law by bringing further regulations for Parliament to consider.

Next Steps

The Government are committed to lightening the regulatory burden on businesses to help spur economic growth. We will publish a summary of responses and will continue to keep Parliament, the devolved Administrations, UK citizens and businesses updated, as we make progress.

[HCWS1069]

UK Trade Negotiations: Switzerland and Canada

The Minister for International Trade (Nigel Huddleston):

Trade Negotiations Update

Since the House adjourned for conference recess, the Department for Business and Trade has made good progress on two key trade negotiations. This statement provides Parliament with an update on the UK's trade negotiations with Switzerland and Canada.

UK-Switzerland Trade Negotiations

The second round of negotiations on a UK-Switzerland enhanced free trade agreement took place from 18 September to 6 October.

During the round, which was virtual, UK officials held discussions with their Swiss counterparts across all negotiation areas. The talks were technical in nature, focusing on trade policy priorities for both countries and in a number of chapters, supported by draft treaty text. This has enabled further progress in identifying areas of alignment. Discussions continue to be constructive and collaborative, with both sides agreeing next steps to ensure further progress at round 3, which is scheduled for later this year.

These negotiations demonstrate our shared ambition to agree a modern, comprehensive agreement that reflects the current and future UK-Swiss trade relationship.

The UK is working to negotiate an agreement that delivers modern services and investment provisions, while further removing tariff barriers to create mutually beneficial commercially meaningful opportunities for our world-class producers and exporters.

UK-Canada Trade Negotiations

The seventh round of UK-Canada free trade agreement negotiations took place from 11 September to 15 September. This round was conducted in a fully virtual fashion, with negotiations taking place online across all sessions.

Technical discussions were held across 23 policy areas over 53 separate sessions. They included detailed discussions on treaty text.

Both parties built on the momentum from agreeing in principle UK accession to CPTPP in March 2023. The negotiations continue to reflect our shared ambition to secure a progressive deal which strengthens our existing trading relationship, already worth over £24.8 billion in the year to Q3 2022.

Summary

The Government remain clear that any deal we sign, including with Switzerland and Canada, will be in the best interests of the British people and the United Kingdom economy. We will not compromise on our high environmental and labour protections, public health, animal welfare and food standards, and we will maintain our right to regulate in the public interest. We are also clear that during these negotiations, the NHS, and the services it provides is not on the table.

His Majesty's Government will continue to work closely with Switzerland and Canada to ensure negotiations proceed at pace and take place on terms that are right for the UK.

The Government will continue to keep Parliament updated as these negotiations progress.

[HCWS1068]

CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

Statutory Levy on Gambling Operators: Publication of Public Consultation

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport (Stuart Andrew): I wish to inform the House that His Majesty's Government have today published the public consultation entitled "Consultation on the structure, distribution and governance of the statutory levy".

Following the Government's review of the Gambling Act 2005, the gambling White Paper published in April 2023 outlined a comprehensive package of measures to introduce robust new protections against gambling-related harm. One of the key proposals in the White Paper was the introduction of a statutory levy, replacing the system of voluntary contributions.

We have welcomed the contributions that industry has made to research, prevention and treatment since the introduction of the Gambling Act. However, we recognise that funding is not the only requirement for effective research, prevention and treatment arrangements and this alone will not achieve our objective for a system which is equitable, ensures a high degree of long-term funding certainty and guarantees independence. Issues surrounding the independence of the funding has resulted in the NHS ending all arrangements with organisations in receipt of direct funds from operators, creating a barrier to robust integration between NHS and third sector services. Some researchers have also refused this funding given its source and for fear of being compromised or lobbied by the gambling industry.

We committed to addressing these issues by introducing a statutory levy via secondary legislation to ensure independent, long-term and trusted funding for research, prevention and treatment, with appropriate Government oversight. This is in line with the Government's objective of protecting people from gambling-related harm and ensuring that sufficient funding is being effectively directed where it is needed most. The levy will be paid by gambling operators and collected and administered by the Gambling Commission, with spending decisions approved by DCMS and HM Treasury, putting the independence of funding beyond absolute doubt and guaranteeing sufficient funding where it is needed most.

Today, we have launched a public consultation setting out the Government's proposals in these areas as follows:

Structure: we propose that online operators pay the levy at a higher rate than land-based operators. In line with the White Paper, our proposals have taken into account evidence of the differing association of different sectors with harm and/or their differing fixed costs to ensure that rates are fairly and proportionately set, while raising sufficient funding for key projects and services. We expect that the levy will raise c.£90 million to £100 million per year when fully in force.

Distribution: we propose that c.10-20% of levy funding should be directed each year to UK Research and Innovation (UKRI), the umbrella body for UK research councils, as part of a new, multidisciplinary gambling research programme; 15-30% should be used to fund a programme of prevention and education to raise awareness of gambling harms across Great Britain; and 40-60% should be directed to the NHS to improve and expand treatment commissioning for gambling addiction across the full treatment pathway.

Governance: we propose that a statutory levy board and separate advisory group are established to ensure appropriate Government oversight of the levy system, as well as creating a forum for sector experts across public health, academia and charities to inform funding priorities.

We recognise that the statutory levy represents a generational change to funding arrangements for research, prevention and treatment and that there are complexities around the transition to this new system. We want to provide clarity for the sector as quickly and as transparently as possible while providing adequate detail and time for respondents to give considered views.

The purpose of this consultation is to ensure that the Government are able to consider the best available evidence when finalising policy decisions. The views and evidence of respondents will inform the Government's approach to implementing this landmark reform to the funding arrangements for research, prevention and treatment in an effective, evidence-led and proportionate way.

The consultation will be open for eight weeks, closing on 14 December. Subject to the outcome of the consultation, the Government will then publish a formal response to set out our decision and reasoning before implementing the changes via secondary legislation.

The Government's ambition has been, and will continue to be, to ensure that people across our country can access trusted, quality information, support and treatment when it comes to gambling-related harms, and that the Government and the Gambling Commission have access to timely, independent research to inform policy and regulation. The publication of this consultation shows our commitment to this ambition and progress towards developing a sustainable and world-leading system for research, prevention and treatment.

We absolutely want those who enjoy gambling without coming to harm to continue to do so. However, tackling gambling-related harm is a top priority for the Government and raising independent, trusted and sustainable funding for research, prevention and treatment of gambling-related harms is a crucial component of a regulatory framework which aims to prevent harm before it occurs, while ensuring people can access the help they need if and when they need it.

I will deposit a copy of the consultation in the Libraries of both Houses.

[HCWS1070]

FOREIGN, COMMONWEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT OFFICE

International Climate Finance

The Minister of State, Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (Mr Andrew Mitchell): I would like to update the House on our progress towards meeting the UK's commitment to spend £11.6 billion of International Climate Finance (ICF) between financial years 2021/22 and 2025/26.

The UK has long looked to lead on climate action. We were the first major economy to legislate for net zero and we remain committed to this goal. During our COP26 presidency we worked with all parties to deliver the Glasgow climate pact and keep 1.5 degrees within reach. In March this year, we published our 2030 strategic framework which set out how we will drive forward international action on climate and nature, working to keep 1.5 alive by halving global emissions, building resilience to current and future climate impacts and halting and reversing biodiversity loss. We also published our ICF strategy, underpinning our commitment to spending £11.6 billion ICF by March 2026.

Development and tackling climate change and nature loss are intertwined challenges. Since 2011/12, the UK has committed to spending a significant proportion of its aid budget on ICF to help developing countries address both the causes and impacts of climate change. This spending comes from four Government Departments: the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero, the Department for Environment, Food, and Rural Affairs, and the Department for Science, Innovation and Technology. The table below sets out total UK ICF spend by financial year since 2011/12. UK ICF spend by calendar year can be found as reported to the United Nations framework convention on climate change (UNFCCC) under the biennial reports, currently covering 2011-2020.

<i>Financial year</i>	<i>UK ICF spend (£ million)</i>
2011/12	403
2012/13	566
2013/14	772
2014/15	910
2015/16	1,188
<i>ICF '1' (2011/12 to 2015/16)</i>	<i>Total: £3,840 million</i>
2016/17	1,119
2017/18	965

2018/19	1,174
2019/20	1,161
2020/21	1,560
<i>ICF '2' (2015/16 to 2020/21)</i>	<i>Total: £5,980 million</i>

The £11.6 billion ICF commitment covers financial years 2021/22 to 2025/26 and represents a significant part of the UK's contribution to the global target of providing \$100 billion in climate finance annually to developing countries. The table below sets out how we expect to meet our target, showing spend in 2021/22 and 2022/23 and an expected range for UK ICF spending for 2023/24 to 2025/26 with the scale-up reflecting both the increasing importance of tackling climate change and the growth in our economy.

<i>Financial year</i>	<i>UK ICF spend and forecast spend (£ million)</i>
2021/22	1,648
2022/23	1,629
2023/24	1,800-2,100
2024/25	2,500-2,800
2025/26	3,400-3,800
<i>ICF '3' (2021/22 to 2025/26)</i>	<i>Total: 11,600 million</i>

The UK has demonstrated a long-term commitment to the major global climate funds, including the green climate fund, the global environment facility, the climate investment funds, and the adaptation fund. Our pledges to these funds have been significant. The UK gave £1.44 billion to the green climate fund for 2020-23, making the UK the top donor to the fund and on 10 September 2023 the Prime Minister announced a further \$2 billion (£1.62 billion) towards the next green climate fund replenishment—the biggest single funding commitment the UK has made to help developing countries tackle climate change. In recent years, following UK lobbying, a number of other international finance institutions have increased their commitments to financing climate action in developing countries. We will, therefore, include the climate relevant share of future UK contributions to the World Bank's international development association fund, as well as other key development banks when we report ICF spending.

Our ICF achieves tangible, real-world benefits for the world's poorest and most climate vulnerable. Since 2011, ICF has supported over 100 million people to adapt better to the effects of climate change and provided almost 70 million people with improved access to clean energy.

In addition, our programmes have avoided or reduced over 86 million tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions, avoided over 400,000 hectares of deforestation and mobilised £6,884 million in climate finance from the private sector¹. Our funding also supports cutting-edge research and innovation of new technologies.

We will ensure that our climate finance is balanced between funding for mitigation and adaptation. In contrast to many other donors, the UK's international climate finance is all official development assistance, which means it is concessional finance that delivers benefits for developing countries. We have historically provided over 85% of our ICF as grants, enabling developing countries to mitigate against and adapt to the impacts of climate change without incurring further significant debt. This compares to the global average of just 26% grant

finance². We will focus on grants and on efforts to improve access to climate finance, including through the NDC Partnership³ and Taskforce for Access to Climate Finance. At the same time, we recognise the need for increased private investment to deliver the scale of finance needed for the global net zero transition and for adaptation. We will ensure that we maximise the opportunities presented by increasing climate investments through British International Investment (BII) and other private finance mobilisation programmes.

The UK's overall contribution to the global \$100 billion climate finance target goes far beyond our £11.6 billion official development assistance commitment. If the UK were to include the full value of our investments delivered through British international investment, as other donors do through their own development finance institutions, this would have amounted to an additional £747 million in 2021/22 and 2022/23. Furthermore, our innovative multibillion pound guarantee facilities⁴ with the multilateral development banks will contribute \$5.8 billion towards global climate finance targets. The UK also provides export finance that supports climate action in developing countries. Including these contributions, along with the private finance mobilised through our programmes, would increase the total finance that the UK provides for climate change between 2021/22 and 2025/26 to well in excess of £11.6 billion.

We will continue to provide high-quality finance to deliver the transformational results needed to support developing countries tackle the causes and devastating impacts of climate change.

¹ UK International-Climate-Finance Results 2023.pdf
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/651fb0a97309a1000db0a99e/UK_International-Climate-Finance_Results_2023_rev.pdf

² OECD (2022), aggregate trends of climate finance provided and mobilised by developed countries in 2013 to 2020

<https://www.oecd.org/climate-change/finance-usd-100-billion-goal>

³ NDC Partnership

<https://ndcpartnership.org/>

⁴ Room to Run Guarantee

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/Commons/2022-04-25/debates/22042555000008/RoomToRunGuarantee>

and Indonesia Just Energy Transition Partnership Launched at G20,

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/indonesia-just-energy-transition-partnership-launched-at-g20>

and South Africa Just Energy Transition Investment Plan,

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/joint-statement-south-africa-just-energy-transition-investment-plan#:~:text=The%20UK%20is%20providing%20%241.3,and%20the%20South%20Africa%20Government>

and Contingent Liability Notification: India Green Guarantee

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2021-12-09/debates/21120969000015/ContingentLiabilityNotificationIndiaGreenGuarantee>

and

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/the-uk-pushes-for-a-bigger-better-and-fairer-international-financial-system>

[HCWS1071]

LEVELLING UP, HOUSING AND COMMUNITIES

Long-term Plan for Towns

The Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (Michael Gove): Towns are the places most people in the United Kingdom call home and most people go to work. The impact on towns is felt by millions of people every day, in the form of vacant high streets, depleted town centres and antisocial behaviour.

Since the 2008 financial crisis, employment in towns has grown at half the rate of cities outside London, and around a third of that of out-of-town areas. High street vacancy tends to be much higher in towns than cities: in Rotherham, nearly a third of shops are empty, and in Bolton, Grimsby and Stoke, more than one in seven has been empty for three years. Meanwhile, coastal towns typically suffer disproportionately from crime—which is 12% higher on the coast—and public health challenges, as highlighted by the Government's chief medical officer.

People understandably feel like their town is ignored by Westminster, businesses are not provided with incentives to invest, and young people grow up wanting to leave. Without a change in approach, the country will remain lopsided towards the interests and values of people living in cities who make up a small part of our nation, stultifying other parts of the UK.

That is why the UK Government have supported towns in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland through a series of targeted investments including: the £3.2 billion towns fund that has supported 101 English towns to drive economic and productivity growth, with £1 billion of this funding allocated to the future high streets fund, supporting 72 places to create thriving high streets in the future. A further £3.8 billion of the levelling up fund has been allocated during two rounds to support over 200 places across the UK, supporting regeneration, town centre improvements, improving transport connectivity, and cultural projects. The £150 million community ownership fund is supporting community groups to deliver for their local communities, over £400 million of levelling up partnerships investment is providing bespoke place-based investment for the 20 areas most in need of levelling up, and the UK-wide freeports programme is helping to contribute to the prosperity of our towns.

Our new long-term plan for towns will now go further to demonstrate an enduring commitment to our towns. Drawing from our experiences delivering the levelling up fund, towns fund and levelling up partnerships, and listening to the feedback from local authorities and delivery partners, we will put local people at the centre of their town's development with long-term flexible funding to respond to the priorities of local people.

We have identified 55 towns across England, Scotland and Wales to develop our long-term plan for towns, backed by £1.1 billion, to drive ambitious plans to regenerate local towns.

The Government will work with local councils and the devolved Administrations to determine how towns in Scotland and Wales will benefit from funding and powers under the long-term plans. In Northern Ireland, we look forward to working with a restored Executive to determine the approach to providing support.

Under the new approach, local people will be put in charge, and given the tools to change their town's long-term future. They will:

Receive a 10-year £20 million endowment-style fund to be spent on local people's priorities, like regenerating local high streets and town centres or securing public safety.

Set up a town board to bring together community leaders, employers, local authorities, and the local MP, to deliver the long-term plan for their town and put it to local people for consultation.

Use a suite of regeneration powers to unlock more private sector investment by auctioning empty high street shops, reforming licensing rules on shops and restaurants, and supporting more housing in town centres.

There will be a new towns taskforce based in my Department reporting directly to the Prime Minister and I. This will help towns boards to develop their plans and advise them on how best to take advantage of Government policies, unlock private and philanthropic investment and work with communities.

A new "High Streets and Towns Task Force" will also be established, building on the success of the existing version, providing each selected town with bespoke, hands-on support.

Towns have been allocated funding according to the levelling up needs index which takes into account metrics covering skills, pay, productivity and health, as well as the index of multiple deprivation to ensure funding goes directly to the towns which will benefit most, without new competitions or unnecessary hurdles. A full methodology note has been published and we have written to the relevant local authorities.

I will place a copy of the prospectus and methodology note in the Library of the House.

Annex A: List of towns/places

Mansfield
Boston
Worksop
Skegness
Newark-on-Trent
Chesterfield
Clifton (Nottingham)
Spalding
Kirkby-in-Ashfield
Clacton-on-Sea
Great Yarmouth
Eston
Jarrow
Washington
Blyth (Northumberland)

Hartlepool
Spennymoor
Darwen
Chadderton
Heywood
Ashton-under-Lyne
Accrington
Leigh (Wigan)
Farnworth
Nelson (Pendle)
Kirkby
Burnley
Hastings
Bexhill-on-Sea
Ryde
Torquay
Smethwick
Darlaston
Bilston (Wolverhampton)
Dudley (Dudley)
Grimsby
Castleford
Doncaster
Rotherham
Barnsley
Scunthorpe
Keighley
Dewsbury
Scarborough
Merthyr Tydfil
Cwmbran
Wrexham
Barry (Vale of Glamorgan)
Greenock
Irvine
Kilmarnock
Coatbridge
Clydebank
Dumfries
Elgin

Note: there is no statistical definition of a city. Two of the selected places have city status but they have been identified on the basis of deprivation and they have a population size of 20,000 to 100,000 as set out in the published methodology.

[HCWS1072]

Petition

Tuesday 17 October 2023

PRESENTED PETITION

Petition presented to the House but not read on the Floor

Home to school transport in Thrapston and surrounding villages

The petition of residents of the United Kingdom,

Declares that under North Northamptonshire's current "Home to School Transport" policy, parents sending their children to Prince William School in Oundle may

be required to pay for a substantial bus fare, which is currently free; further declares that parents in Thrapston and Islip have historically sent their children to Prince William School, a link which is appreciated and cherished by parents and schools alike; notes that the new policy will fund school buses for secondary school students to their nearest suitable school, rather than "linked" schools like the Prince William School.

The petitioners therefore request that the House of Commons urge the Government to take immediate action to ensure that North Northamptonshire Council makes special arrangements outside their adopted policy to duplicate the current provision for home to school transport for Thrapston and Islip children.

And the petitioners remain, etc.

[P002862]

ORAL ANSWERS

Tuesday 17 October 2023

	<i>Col. No.</i>		<i>Col. No.</i>
HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE	145	HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE—continued	
Access to GPs: Rural Communities.....	151	NHS Dentistry.....	157
Access to Primary Care.....	155	NHS Dentistry: South-west England.....	158
Cancer Treatment Waiting Times.....	159	Paediatric Cancer Strategy for London.....	153
Cardiovascular Disease Prevention.....	152	Parked vehicles and emergencies.....	295
Health and Social Care Recruitment: EU Exit.....	149	RAAC in Hospitals.....	148
Hinckley National Rail Freight Interchange.....	294	Radiotherapy Linear Accelerator Machines.....	153
HIV: Emergency Department Opt-out Testing.....	151	Suicide Prevention.....	146
Integrated Care Systems.....	154	Topical Questions.....	160
New Health Centre: Thornbury.....	157	Training of NHS Staff.....	145

WRITTEN STATEMENTS

Tuesday 17 October 2023

	<i>Col. No.</i>		<i>Col. No.</i>
BUSINESS AND TRADE	15WS	FOREIGN, COMMONWEALTH AND	
Smarter Regulation Programme.....	15WS	DEVELOPMENT OFFICE	19WS
UK Trade Negotiations: Switzerland and Canada.....	16WS	International Climate Finance.....	19WS
CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT	17WS	LEVELLING UP, HOUSING AND	
Statutory Levy on Gambling Operators:		COMMUNITIES	22WS
Publication of Public Consultation.....	17WS	Long-term Plan for Towns.....	22WS

PETITION

Tuesday 17 October 2023

	<i>Col. No.</i>
PRESENTED PETITION	7P
Home to school transport in Thrapston and surrounding villages.....	7P

No proofs can be supplied. Corrections that Members suggest for the Bound Volume should be clearly marked on a copy of the daily Hansard - not telephoned - and *must be received in the Editor's Room, House of Commons*,

**not later than
Tuesday 24 October 2023**

STRICT ADHERENCE TO THIS ARRANGEMENT GREATLY FACILITATES THE
PROMPT PUBLICATION OF BOUND VOLUMES

Members may obtain excerpts of their speeches from the Official Report (within one month from the date of publication), by applying to the Editor of the Official Report, House of Commons.

CONTENTS

Tuesday 17 October 2023

Oral Answers to Questions [Col. 145] [see index inside back page]
Secretary of State for Health and Social Care

Core School Budget Allocations [Col. 167]
Answer to urgent question—(Nick Gibb)

Devolution (Employment) (Scotland) [Col. 175]
Motion for leave to bring in Bill—(David Linden)—on a Division, negatived

Levelling-up and Regeneration Bill [Col. 179]
Lords amendments considered

Petitions [Col. 294]

Childhood Cancer Outcomes [Col. 296]
Debate on motion for Adjournment

Westminster Hall

Water, Sanitation and Hygiene: Sustainable Development [Col. 1WH]
Northampton Gateway Rail Freight Interchange: Development Consent Order Waiver [Col. 21WH]
British Sign Language [Col. 27WH]
Safe Asylum Routes: Afghan Refugees [Col. 49WH]
Plastic Packaging Tax on Imports: HMRC Enforcement [Col. 58WH]
General Debates

Written Statements [Col. 15WS]

Petition [Col. 7P]
