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PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES
(HANSARD)

HOUSE OF LORDS
OFFICIAL REPORT

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Abbreviation	Party/Group
CB	Cross Bench
Con	Conservative
DUP	Democratic Unionist Party
GP	Green Party
Ind Lab	Independent Labour
Ind LD	Independent Liberal Democrat
Ind SD	Independent Social Democrat
Ind UU	Independent Ulster Unionist
Lab	Labour
Lab Co-op	Labour and Co-operative Party
LD	Liberal Democrat
LD Ind	Liberal Democrat Independent
Non-afl	Non-affiliated
PC	Plaid Cymru
UKIP	UK Independence Party
UUP	Ulster Unionist Party

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House of Lords

Wednesday 19 December 2018

3 pm

Prayers—read by the Lord Bishop of Chichester.

High Street Banks Question

3.07 pm

Asked by Lord Lea of Crondall

To ask Her Majesty's Government what powers they have to require retail banks to maintain a presence on the high street.

The Minister of State, Department for International Development (Lord Bates) (Con): My Lords, decisions on branch closures are a commercial matter and are taken by the management team of each bank without intervention from government. However, the Government recognise that branch closures can be disappointing for customers, and believe that the impact on communities must be understood, considered and mitigated wherever possible.

Lord Lea of Crondall (Lab): My Lords, I thank the Minister for that reply. Karen Doyle runs a small bakery on the main street of Sowerby Bridge in West Yorkshire, a town that had six banks a decade ago, but the last one closed this July. She told BBC News:

"Bank closures have just ripped the heart out of the town. What really annoys me is that as taxpayers we bailed the banks out when they were in trouble and now they've left places like Sowerby Bridge behind".

Lloyds Bank springs to mind, does it not? Does the Minister agree with the sentiments expressed so cogently by Karen Doyle? She could have added that it is a half-truth that everyone now happily relies on telephone banking. Given that two-thirds of bank branches have already closed, has the time not come for the high priests of the Treasury, instead of washing their hands of this exemplar of creative destruction, to start planning for a bank for regional regeneration? Otherwise, perhaps let it be set up—

Noble Lords: Too long.

Lord Lea of Crondall: If people interrupt, this will take longer.

Otherwise, perhaps let it be set up as an offering of seasonal good will by the European Commission.

Lord Bates: I thank the noble Lord for his question. As for the situation in Sowerby Bridge, he will be pleased to know that there is now a much tougher access to banking standard, which was set up by UK Finance following a review by Professor Griggs, and requires impact assessments to be undertaken. He will further be able to reassure the resident of Sowerby Bridge that she has access to the Post Office network—some 11,500 outlets—and that as a result of the banking framework agreement now in place, 99% of personal banking services, and 95% of the small business banking services to which she referred, can now be transacted

through the Post Office in Sowerby Bridge. I hope that that will bring some reassurance, and even festive cheer, to the noble Lord and to the bakery concerned.

Lord Shutt of Greetland (LD): My Lords, the nearest town to Greetland is Elland. We did have six banks; we now have none. Just up the Calder Valley, as the noble Lord has said, are Sowerby Bridge and Hebden Bridge; they are in the same position. Real hardship to customers, retail businesses and small businesses is a fact. The mighty banks should not treat their loyal customers with such disdain. If I may comment on what the Minister said—

Noble Lords: Oh!

Lord Shutt of Greetland: It will be a question, do not worry.

There is a mighty Act, the Financial Services and Markets Act 2000, which is over 300 pages long. Although it makes no reference to branches, there is a regulation-making power in Section 426. I put it to the Minister: could an order be laid authorising the Financial Conduct Authority to give due regard to the need for banks to give proper branch services to towns and communities without banks?

Lord Bates: Fair banking principles are upheld currently by the Financial Conduct Authority. I come back to the point that the access to banking standard is now in place, and has been in place since last year. It requires much greater consideration and consultation before branches are closed. Alongside that, the Government have been investing in the Post Office network to the extent of some £2 billion since 2010. Those two factors will, I believe, help address the majority of concerns.

Lord Flight (Con): My Lords, I declare an interest as a director of Metro Bank. Are the Government aware of the extent of the services and branches that the new banks are bringing to this country? Metro Bank has just opened its 62nd branch and will continue to add branches. It has gained 1.5 million customers in less than 10 years. My point is that modernisation is happening, and it is often the new banks that are providing what people want.

Lord Bates: Modernisation is indeed happening and challenger banks are making a big contribution to the way that banking services are delivered. The reality is that digital online banking is now conducted by 71% of the population. Next year, mobile apps will overtake digital banking in service delivery. That is leading to changes in our high streets, communities and villages. They need to be taken into account, but so too does the changing way in which we pay for services.

Lord Davies of Oldham (Lab): My Lords, the banks are closing 12 branches a week and yet those who are taking the decisions at the highest level are undoubtedly enjoying city bonuses which are well over 20% this

[LORD DAVIES OF OLDHAM]
 year. Instead of talking about mitigation, why do the Government not think in terms of some machinery to control the situation and introduce an element of fairness to communities? We believe that banks should be permitted to close only after local consultation and the Financial Conduct Authority has given its assent.

Lord Bates: I understand the point about consultation but that was the whole point of Professor Griggs' review and the new access to banking standard, which is upheld by the Lending Standards Board. We cannot be in the position of asking whether we are going to subsidise five of the six banks to remain open with taxpayers' money. We have decided to respond by coming up with an arrangement for the Post Office to be the place of choice for people to transact their personal, face-to-face banking needs. I think that that is a better way forward.

Lord Hunt of Wirral (Con): Will my noble friend the Minister take time in a busy day to read the interim report of Natalie Ceeney into access to cash? I declare an interest as a non-executive director of LINK. There is a vital need, particularly among vulnerable people, to have access to cash.

Lord Bates: My noble friend is absolutely right. The access to cash review by Natalie Ceeney, who is a former member of the Financial Ombudsman Service, will be a critical contribution to our assessment of those factors going forward. I understand that she is due to produce her full review in the spring of next year and we will very much look forward to taking it into account.

Government Policy: Plain English Question

3.15 pm

Asked by **Lord Sherbourne of Didsbury**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to ensure that all government papers and publications which set out government policy are written in plain English.

Lord Young of Cookham (Con): My Lords, the *Consultation Principles* published in 2012 by the Cabinet Office state that consultation should be clear and precise, using plain English and avoiding acronyms. These principles are actively promoted by the Civil Service Policy Profession but Ministers are ultimately responsible for the clarity of government publications.

Lord Sherbourne of Didsbury (Con): My Lords, I am very pleased that my noble friend is answering this Question. He was first a Minister in 1979—and I am delighted that he is still a Minister today—so he will remember that in the past Governments used to set out government policy in plain English in short and succinct White Papers, whereas now you go into the Printed Paper Office and your heart sinks when you

see a heavy and thick document because you know that, the thicker it is, the more impenetrable it will be. Therefore, I ask my noble friend to urge his ministerial colleagues to revert to the practice of publishing government policy in short White Papers written in clear and simple English.

Lord Young of Cookham: I am grateful to my noble friend. There have been a number of discontinuities in my service as a Minister over the years. I share his alarm when one goes into the Printed Paper Office and picks up a huge tome, particularly if a Minister will have to answer a debate on it. When I was a civil servant, I was guided by Sir Ernest Gowers, whom many will remember. He wrote *The Complete Plain Words* and he had three principles: first, use no more words than are necessary; secondly, use words that are familiar; and, thirdly, avoid vague and abstract words and use words that are precise and concrete. I commend Sir Ernest Gowers to all Ministers and all civil servants when they produce White Papers, and I heartily endorse the exhortation from my noble friend.

Baroness Garden of Frognal (LD): My Lords, I congratulate the noble Lord on the clarity of his response. The Plain English Campaign advises, as he has mentioned, “Keep your sentences short”, “Prefer active verbs” and “Avoid nominalisations”. I am sure we would all aspire to that. What training is given to civil servants and Ministers to ensure that they avoid gobbledegook in government documents?

Lord Young of Cookham: Like the noble Baroness, I too follow the progress of the Plain English Campaign. A winner this year was an NHS trust, the George Eliot Hospital, which was commended for its publications. So far as advice to government Ministers is concerned, the Government Digital Service runs workshops to help Ministers and civil servants to write clearly. It has had workshops with the DWP and Public Health England, and its content team maintains the content of the most trafficked content. It encourages everybody to avoid jargon but my brief tells me that content on websites should “be updated to improve the end-to-end user journey”.

Lord Browne of Ladyton (Lab): My Lords, on any reasonable measure, all three services of the UK's Armed Forces are smaller now than when the Government took responsibility for them. The Navy has fewer vessels than it had in 2003 and the Government have no intention of building more than there were in 2003. However, yesterday, in an otherwise pretty vacuous Statement, the Secretary of State for Defence said to the other place:

“The Royal Navy has increased its mass and points of presence around the world”.—[*Official Report*, Commons, 18/12/18; col. 657.] Talking about clarity, what does that mean?

Lord Young of Cookham: Like the noble Lord, I read Patrick Kidd's article in the *Times* today that took my right honourable friend to task for some of the verbs and phrases he used in the Statement. My right honourable friend may well be a contender next year for the Plain English Campaign's Golden Bull Award, which this year was won by a sports commentator who said:

“He's given the referee no choice but to consider his options”.

Lord Dobbs (Con): I am so glad it is my noble friend answering this Question. As part of the Government's relentless pursuit of comprehensibility, is he able to explain what is meant by the phrase "Brexit means Brexit"? Given that this is a season of good will, which infuses everything we do, is he able to give us some more understanding of what we are meant to understand by: "No deal is better than a bad deal"?

Lord Young of Cookham: I think my noble friend will understand if I do not venture too deeply into matters that are the responsibility of another government department. It would be helpful, however, if the Labour Party could explain its policy on Brexit in plain English.

Lord Singh of Wimbledon (CB): My Lords, will the Minister agree that we also need to look at the down side of the use of plain English? It would seriously harm the fine art of obfuscation and the career prospects of many civil servants. Impenetrable briefs given to Ministers might be replaced by help towards straight answers. That could be the end of government as we know it.

Lord Young of Cookham: The noble Lord may have read the *Manchester Guardian* in 1794, when the same issue arose. I quote:

"The nonsensical jargon of the old Ministries must be replaced by a simple style, clear and yet concise, free from expressions of servility, from obsequious formulae, stand-offishness, pedantry, or any suggestion that there is an authority superior to that of reason, or of the order established by law".

Baroness Smith of Basildon (Lab): My Lords, one of the reasons this House always welcomes the Minister to the Dispatch Box is that he fulfils his obligations, is always clear and concise and, as we have seen today, answers questions with some wit and humour. That is not always the case with answers to your Lordships' House. In the spirit of Christmas I will not name names, but may I suggest that a new year's resolution for the Minister might be to hold training classes for his ministerial colleagues so that we may have the delights of similar answers from all Ministers?

Lord Young of Cookham: In her intervention, I think the noble Baroness has made me even more unpopular than before with my ministerial colleagues.

Health: Pancreatic Cancer Treatment Question

3.23 pm

Asked by **Baroness Redfern**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to ensure that patients with pancreatic cancer begin treatment within 20 days of diagnosis.

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department of Health and Social Care (Lord O'Shaughnessy) (Con): My Lords, NHS England will soon introduce a faster diagnostic standard of 28 days for all cancer patients, including those with pancreatic cancer. Taken together

with the 62-day referral-to-treatment standard, this will mean that all patients should expect to start their treatment within 34 days of diagnosis. This is a maximum, and trusts should continue to treat patients more quickly where there is a strong clinical need.

Baroness Redfern (Con): My Lords, I thank the Minister for his comments, but the need for a paradigm shift on pancreatic cancer is now urgent. It is the deadliest cancer, with a dismal prognosis that has hardly changed in the last 45 years. It remains both the least survivable and the quickest killing cancer. It is hard to diagnose and, once it becomes clinically detectable, there is a rapid progression to an advanced stage. Therefore, for people facing a pancreatic cancer diagnosis, every day matters. For potentially curative and life-extending treatments such as surgery and chemotherapy, there is an optimum window of 20 days from diagnosis, when people with pancreatic cancer will have the option to be treated and the chance to live longer. It is ambitious to aim for 2024 but, for those people waiting, each day has deadly consequences. With a forecast of an extra £20 billion being injected into the NHS, does the Minister agree that it would be pleasing if some of that extra funding could be put towards improving those dismal survival rates?

Lord O'Shaughnessy: I agree with my noble friend and am grateful to her for raising this topic. The truth is that outcomes of pancreatic cancer are very poor, and have not improved, as she said. We are determined to change that through a number of routes. The Prime Minister has committed herself and the Government to improving early diagnosis of cancer, so that more cancers are caught earlier, which will be critical for those often caught at a late stage, such as pancreatic cancer. The faster diagnostic standard that I mentioned will help, as will a series of rapid diagnostic centres that have been rolled out around the country. I take the point that we need to do a lot more, and the NHS long-term plan gives us an opportunity to do that.

Baroness Finlay of Llandaff (CB): Can the Minister inform the House how access to treatment will be rapid, given that many people with pancreatic cancer need highly specialised techniques, such as a celiac plexus block from integrated specialist services, but who are currently at the mercy of random commissioning by clinical commissioning groups, or even for the gaps to be filled by different charities? I declare an interest as a vice-president of Hospice UK and of Marie Curie.

Lord O'Shaughnessy: I am grateful to the noble Baroness for that question. Obviously, rapid diagnosis is important, but she is quite right that it needs to progress to treatment. The main way we are trying to address that issue is to increase the cancer workforce at every level—nurses, radiologists, endoscopists, oncological doctors, and others. Unless there are the staff to carry out those procedures, we will not get the outcomes that we want.

Baroness Jolly (LD): My Lords, as speed is of the essence, will the Minister tell the House what work has been done to ensure that the public and GPs do not

[BARONESS JOLLY]

ignore often innocuous symptoms? Is he confident that there are sufficient centres of excellence across England and that they are adequately staffed to start treatment as a matter of urgency?

Lord O'Shaughnessy: The noble Baroness makes a very important point. I am sure that she is aware of the 14 Be Clear on Cancer campaigns that have been run over the last eight years, which are absolutely about raising the salience of these issues and making sure that people know the signs they should be looking for and can come to GPs earlier. We are seeing fewer people presenting with cancer diagnosis through emergency departments, which have the worst outcomes, and more coming through GPs. Of course, as I said, we are investing in these rapid diagnostic centres as well.

Lord Turnberg (Lab): My Lords, the problem with pancreatic cancer is that, by the time a patient has symptoms and a diagnosis has been made, it is almost always too late. It hides itself away for far too long. The only way to make a real impact is by having some sort of method of determining whether someone will get pancreatic cancer by having a screening programme. That depends very much on new research into the ways in which we can detect cancer cells from DNA and the peripheral blood. Research into that area is vital if we are to make any impact on pancreatic cancer. Does the noble Lord agree?

Lord O'Shaughnessy: I absolutely agree on that point. I hoped we would pass the "Lord Young test" with a jargon-free and, at least, succinct White Paper—the *Life Sciences Sector Deal 2*, which we published recently. It outlines some very important commitments to research in this area, including the creation of new early diagnosis cohorts, using a cohort of healthy people to look for early signs. That is one of the investments we are making, as well as investment through the National Institute for Health Research. We are looking for those exciting innovations, like liquid biopsies, that can help us get the signs earlier.

Lord Ribeiro (Con): My Lords, as has been pointed out, it is not about the time to treatment but the time to diagnosis. Clearly, early diagnosis is the key. In Europe, the outcome for pancreatic cancer is often better than in the UK because patients have access directly to specialist care, whereas we rely on our GPs to be the gatekeepers, and that is where the problem lies. What measures will be taken to ensure that patients can have access to specialist care much earlier?

Lord O'Shaughnessy: My noble friend speaks with great wisdom on this topic, and he is absolutely right. I would point to two improvements that have happened in recent years. First, the NICE standard threshold for when GPs should make referrals has been lowered, so they ought to refer more often. Secondly, we are seeing a big increase in referrals to cancer specialists: there have been over 115% more referrals since 2010. We are starting to see much greater referrals from GPs to specialists.

Lord Patel (CB): My Lords, the Birmingham service has shown that a one-stop clinic for diagnosis and treatment for pancreatic cancer has improved survival rates. Does the Minister agree that our long-term ambition over the next five years should be to develop one-stop clinics and immediate treatment for all cancers, if we are to improve our cancer outcomes?

Lord O'Shaughnessy: The noble Lord makes a very powerful case. Indeed, I believe that is the precise model for the rapid diagnostic centres, which are multidisciplinary and not disease specific. They are looking for often vague and hard-to-find signs and developing expertise in that. In October, the Prime Minister announced that is precisely what will be rolled out nationwide.

China: Uighur Muslims

Question

3.30 pm

Asked by **Lord Alton of Liverpool**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to raise (1) with the government of China, and (2) in international fora, the treatment and conditions of Uighur people held in "re-education" camps in China.

The Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office (Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon) (Con): My Lords, we have serious concerns about the human rights situation in Xinjiang, including the use of political re-education camps and widespread surveillance and restrictions, which are targeted particularly at Uighur Muslims. Indeed, our diplomats recently visited Xinjiang. We highlighted our serious concerns at the September UN Human Rights Council, during China's universal periodic review in November and in my subsequent public statement. My right honourable friends the Foreign Secretary and the Minister of State for Asia and the Pacific also raised the issue with their Chinese counterparts.

Lord Alton of Liverpool (CB): My Lords, having met Uighurs in western China, I thank the Minister for that very robust reply. Reports suggest that up to 1 million Uighurs have been incarcerated without trial in a network of sinister re-education camps: these are bristling with barbed wire and watchtowers, with torture and brainwashing that demands renouncing God and embracing Communism. People are forced to change family names, give DNA samples and eat and drink forbidden things. Is this not a return to the methods of the Cultural Revolution, when thought crime regularly led to imprisonment and worse? What are the Government doing to encourage Muslim and other heads of state to speak out, recognising that such appalling treatment of a Muslim minority will fuel resentment and radicalisation right across the globe? What are they doing to persuade Beijing of the benefits of Article 18 and pluralism, and show that this appalling treatment of the Uighur people is the last way to create integration, loyalty and harmony?

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: My Lords, I am grateful to the noble Lord for raising this issue. When we talk of religious persecution and the rights of different

minority communities around the world, the plight of the Uighur Muslim is often forgotten. I have certainly been aware of this. The noble Lord will know that we raised this issue in a deliberate, focused way during the universal periodic review with the specific reference to the plight of the Uighur Muslims. To answer his question directly, that has resulted in strong support at an international level, not just among Muslim leaders, but in other states, ensuring that we raise the bar on raising this issue consistently with the Chinese authorities. Indeed, as I said earlier, our diplomats have recently returned from the region. The reports they provided are quite challenging and even quite horrific in certain respects, with people being asked to remove any sign that they are of a particular faith.

Lord Anderson of Swansea (Lab): My Lords, the United Nations estimates that there are over 1 million people—mostly Uighur Muslims, including Kazakhs and others—in these resettlement camps. We are a member of the UN Human Rights Council; China has been a member for six years and this expires in October of next year. It is good that we have raised this issue, but what support have we received from others on the Human Rights Council, and what response has there been from China?

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: My Lords, it would be fair to say that at this stage the response from China on the concerns raised has been quite limited. However, this is an issue that has come to the fore and has now been raised at an international level, where perhaps it had not previously got the focus it deserves. Let me assure the noble Lord and your Lordships' House that this remains a key priority on our human rights agenda. Specifically, we have been talking to partners at the Security Council, we raised this directly and bilaterally with the Chinese authorities and my right honourable friend the Foreign Secretary raised this in his direct talks with the Foreign Minister of China.

Baroness Northover (LD): I thank the noble Lord for his very strong response, but does he recognise that some of the actions we have taken on this matter have been taken in conjunction with the EU External Action Service? Of course, we also worked together with France and Germany on the case of Jamal Khashoggi in Saudi Arabia. How does he think we will be able to maximise our impact on human rights with a superpower such as China if we leave the EU?

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: My Lords, our stance on human rights predates our membership of the European Union. The noble Baroness is right to say that we have worked very closely with our European partners. In bilateral discussions with EU partners and beyond, the importance of human rights and the impact of raising those issues when we stand together are clear. Unity of action on these issues is clear, and it is my view that after we leave the European Union, we will continue to work very closely with our European partners on human rights issues and the benefits we have seen will continue.

Lord Collins of Highbury (Lab): I appreciate that the Government have been raising this issue with the Chinese authorities, but have they raised it with the US in order to get joint action to persuade China that human rights are a matter of international concern and not something that can simply be left to individual countries to deal with on their own?

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: My Lords, the noble Lord raises an important point, but let me assure him that through our membership of the Security Council and the Human Rights Council, we raise these issues with like-minded partners but also with countries from the Islamic world—to which the noble Lord, Lord Alton, referred—to ensure that a consistent message is delivered. China is an important partner of the United Kingdom on a range of different issues, but that should not preclude our raising human rights issues clearly and unequivocally.

Lord Elton (Con): My noble friend's replies have been encouraging, but I understand that the situation is even worse at present. It is now reported that the Chinese authorities are removing the children from these camps, which are full of 1 million of their nationals, and taking them away to be re-educated separately. That is totally heartless and should be a central part of his inquiry.

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: My Lords, my noble friend raises a disturbing turn of events, which has been much reported. Any parent of any child can relate to the issue he has raised. The issue of the Uighur Muslims in particular, but also that of all the different religious minority communities in China, is a concern. Let me assure him and your Lordships' House that in my role as the Prime Minister's special envoy on freedom of religion or belief, I will raise it consistently, both bilaterally and in all international fora.

Lord Hylton (CB): My Lords, the Minister will doubtless know that there are factories alongside these concentration camps that are paying very low wages. Will the Government therefore ensure that their products do not enter supply chains into this country?

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: My Lords, I have been made aware of this and we are certainly reviewing the reports we have received. As I said, earlier this month senior diplomats from our mission in Beijing visited the region, and we are looking at their observations and recommendations very closely.

Business of the House

Timing of Debates

3.37 pm

Moved by **Baroness Evans of Bowes Park**

That the debates on the motions in the names of Lord Moynihán and Baroness Neville-Rolfe set down for today shall each be limited to 2½ hours.

The Lord Privy Seal (Baroness Evans of Bowes Park) (Con): My Lords, I beg to move the Motion standing in my name on the Order Paper, and I would like to take this opportunity to wish all noble Lords and staff of the House a very merry Christmas.

Motion agreed.

Age of Criminal Responsibility Bill [HL] *Order of Commitment Discharged*

3.38 pm

Moved by Lord Dholakia

That the order of commitment be discharged.

Lord Dholakia (LD): My Lords, I understand that no amendments have been set down to this Bill and that no noble Lord has indicated a wish to move a manuscript amendment or to speak in Committee. Unless, therefore, any noble Lord objects, I beg to move that the order of commitment be discharged.

Motion agreed.

Divorce (Financial Provision) Bill [HL] *Third Reading*

3.39 pm

Bill passed and sent to the Commons.

Homes (Fitness for Human Habitation) Bill

Third Reading

3.40 pm

Bill passed.

Bank Recovery and Resolution and Miscellaneous Provisions (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2018

Motion to Approve

3.40 pm

Moved by Lord Bates

That the draft Regulations laid before the House on 23 October be approved. *Considered in Grand Committee on 12 December*

The Minister of State, Department for International Development (Lord Bates) (Con): My Lords, with the leave of the House, I would like to move the three Motions standing in my name on the Order Paper en bloc—

Lord Foulkes of Cumnock (Lab Co-op): Object!

The Lord Speaker (Lord Fowler): To which are you objecting?

Lord Foulkes of Cumnock: I am objecting to them being taken en bloc.

The Lord Speaker: In that case we will take them separately.

Lord Foulkes of Cumnock: My Lords, I was unable to attend the Grand Committee because of business in the House. Will the Minister confirm whether this is

one of the many hundreds of statutory instruments needed because of a possible no-deal exit from the European Union, which no one wants and which would be disastrous for this country, and on which many civil servants are spending a great deal of time when they should be doing many other more useful things?

Lord Bates: My Lords, I confirm that this is indeed one of a whole series of statutory instruments—secondary legislation—which has been going through Grand Committee. The noble Lord may not have been in Grand Committee, but other Members of this House were. We had an excellent debate which raised a number of issues that have been taken into account in the consideration of these Motions.

Motion agreed.

Capital Requirements (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2018

Motion to Approve

3.42 pm

Moved by Lord Bates

That the draft Regulations laid before the House on 15 November be approved. *Considered in Grand Committee on 12 December*

Lord Foulkes of Cumnock (Lab Co-op): My Lords, I was unable to attend the Grand Committee because of business in the House. Will the Minister confirm whether this is another of the many hundreds of statutory instruments that this House has to consider to prepare for a no-deal exit from the European Union, which no one in their right mind wants and on which a large number of civil servants are spending time which they could use more profitably?

The Minister of State, Department for International Development (Lord Bates) (Con): The noble Lord will find out there were 17.4 million people in their right minds who voted for this. The Government are following through that proposal.

Motion agreed.

Payment Accounts (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2018

Motion to Approve

3.43 pm

Moved by Lord Bates

That the draft Regulations laid before the House on 6 November be approved.

Relevant document: 6th Report from the Secondary Legislation Scrutiny Committee (Sub-Committee A), considered in Grand Committee on 12 December

Lord Foulkes of Cumnock (Lab Co-op): My Lords, I was unable to attend the Grand Committee. Will the Minister confirm whether this is yet another of the many hundreds of statutory instruments which we are having to consider in this House in the event of a no-deal exit from the European Union, which 17.4 million people did not vote for—because there was never any suggestion of there being a no-deal exit when that referendum took place? I hope the Minister will correct his statement on the previous regulations. This is something which is taking up a lot of our time in Grand Committee, and a lot of civil servants' time, which could be used in more profitable activities.

Lord Trefgarne (Con): My Lords, I wonder if the noble Lord would like to refer to the reports of the Secondary Legislation Scrutiny Committee, which has considered all these measures. The answers to his questions are in those reports.

Lord Harris of Haringey (Lab): My Lords, further to the point made by my noble friend Lord Foulkes, this has obviously taken up barely a minute or two of your Lordships' House's time, but could the Minister tell us how many other such instruments he expects to bring in a similar vein to this House and through the procedures that the noble Lord, Lord Trefgarne, mentioned? How much time does he therefore expect the House to have to devote to these matters?

The Minister of State, Department for International Development (Lord Bates) (Con): We are in the process of preparing, which any responsible Government should do, for the no-deal situation, which is not what we want. We want the deal to go through, but we have to prepare for every eventuality. I commend the work of my noble friend's committee in providing very detailed scrutiny of these regulations, as I also commend those Members who did actually attend Grand Committee on 12 December and provided that scrutiny in person.

Lord Foulkes of Cumnock: Could the Minister also commend the work done by the other committee, chaired by my noble friend Lord Cunningham?

Lord Bates: I would be very happy to commend it.

Baroness McIntosh of Pickering (Con): My Lords, there is a statutory instrument available in the Printed Paper Office this week entitled the Companies, Limited Liability Partnerships and Partnerships (Amendment etc.) (EU Exit) Regulations. Has this already been considered? If not, what is the proposed timetable for considering this instrument?

Lord Bates: There is an agreed procedure in Section 8(8) of the EU withdrawal Act, which sets out exactly what can be done. We are following exactly that course of action, with proper scrutiny and a huge amount of work being done by your Lordships' House and our terrific civil servants in preparing for this eventuality, and doing so professionally, openly and transparently. That is why we commend the regulations to the House.

Baroness Smith of Basildon (Lab): My Lords, the Minister says that this is essential good responsible planning from a Government in case there is no deal. Would it not then have been more helpful to Parliament as a whole had the Prime Minister not pulled the expected votes last week, so that Parliament could have voted on whether it considered no deal an acceptable option at all?

Lord Bates: The responsible thing to do would have been for Her Majesty's Opposition to support the deal on the table. Then we would not need these no-deal statutory instruments.

Lord Berkeley (Lab): My Lords, the European Commission has today published a paper entitled *Preparing for the Withdrawal of the United Kingdom from the European Union on 30 March 2019*, which gives various scenarios for financial services, transport, air and everything that we discussed yesterday. It says that it will allow a certain time for arrangements to be put in place, provided that the UK Government match it with similar concessions the other way with UK residents on the continent and everything else. How will the Minister and the Government deal with the responses to that paper and have them debated in your Lordships' House?

Lord Bates: The usual channels will arrange for these discussions to take place and have debates on them. We are debating the Motion standing in my name on the Order Paper. The regulations have been reviewed by the committees, as has been referred to. They have been reviewed and debated in Grand Committee and passed without objection, which is why they find themselves on the Order Paper.

The Lord Speaker decided on a show of voices that the Motion was agreed.

Blood Safety and Quality (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019

Motion to Approve

3.48 pm

Moved by Lord O'Shaughnessy

That the draft Regulations laid before the House on 19 November be approved. *Considered in Grand Committee on 12 December*

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department of Health and Social Care (Lord O'Shaughnessy) (Con): With the leave of the House—perhaps more in hope than expectation—I would like to move the three Motions standing in my name on the Order Paper en bloc.

Lord Foulkes of Cumnock (Lab Co-op): Object.

The Lord Speaker (Lord Fowler): Then we will take the first Motion on the blood safety regulations.

Lord Foulkes of Cumnock: My Lords, this is yet another one. I will take up the suggestion of the noble Lord, Lord Trefgarne, and look forward to attendance at Grand Committee in future, where I will do as I did on the aviation statutory instrument yesterday and seek to have it negatived so that we can have a proper debate on the Floor of the House. The Government are sneaking through Grand Committee very important matters which affect this country and there is no proper debate on many of them, which is unfortunate. As my noble friend on the Front Bench said, if the House of Commons had had an opportunity to vote, we could have eliminated the possibility of no deal and freed up civil servants to get on with productive work, which is what they should be doing and what they would like to do.

Lord O'Shaughnessy: Perhaps the noble Lord should consider attending some of these debates. We had a very good debate, attended by Front-Benchers of the Liberal Democrats and the Labour Party as well as Cross-Benchers, about these incredibly important regulations which are designed to provide continuity to people who rely on such things as blood and organs and the ability to exchange information for surrogacy purposes—which we want to encourage. While I respect the noble Lord's right to do what he is doing, it is not a good use of time. It would have been better spent if he had engaged in our debate last week.

Lord Whitty (Lab): Would the frustration of both Ministers and the House not have been met had the Government responded to the point raised on the Statement last week by the noble Lord, Lord Wallace of Saltaire, asking the Government to set out clearly for the House what legislation is required between now and 28 March and in what order it will come in terms of both of primary legislation and SIs? We would then know what the sequence of events was and Ministers would not be faced with concern that the Government are trying to slip things through. I suggest that the Minister talks to his Chief Whip and that the usual channels produce such a schedule in time for us returning in January.

Lord O'Shaughnessy: There is a schedule, which is set out in the Act, and we have good debates, as we did on these regulations. It is about making sure that we do everything that a responsible Government should do. If the noble Lord was in this position, would he be doing anything different? Of course he would not.

Lord Wallace of Saltaire (LD): Many of us now doubt that it is possible to get through the mass of legislation, including subordinate legislation, required for an orderly Brexit between when we return in January and the end of March. We fear that the Government will attempt to push it through by one emergency procedure or another. This will not be an emergency; it will be the result of the constant postponement of decisions by Her Majesty's Government. The only way out seems to be for the Government to ask for a postponement or extension of the Article 50 procedure.

Lord Adonis (Lab): The Minister referred a moment ago to a “responsible Government”. The idea that a responsible Government would be preparing for a no-deal Brexit is a contradiction in terms. No responsible Government would be preparing for this country to leave the European Union without a proper treaty arrangement next March. Let us be very clear: the Government are seeking to intimidate Parliament into voting for the Prime Minister's deal by holding us hostage to the idea that there could be a no-deal exit next March. This is a phenomenal waste of the time of Parliament. It is also deeply disreputable in terms of the Government's dealings with all those external partners, including the Minister's partners in the NHS, whom he is winding up into thinking that there could be a no-deal exit for which they are preparing but which there is no chance whatever of this Parliament or this Government agreeing. The Minister should withdraw these regulations, say clearly that we are not doing a no-deal exit and prepare an orderly arrangement for us to hold a people's vote next March so that we do not leave the European Union at all.

Lord O'Shaughnessy: It was Parliament that agreed that the exit day should be 29 March: it was voted on. Yes, we may have to work harder than normal in order to be prepared for all eventualities; I am sure that that is something noble Lords would not shirk. There is no sense at all that Parliament is being leaned on or taken for granted. The noble Lord has not been in the debates that I have been in—very good, substantive debates about important issues. That is what matters, not this silly game-playing.

Motion agreed.

Human Fertilisation and Embryology (Parental Orders) Regulations 2018

Motion to Approve

3.54 pm

Moved by Lord O'Shaughnessy

That the draft Regulations laid before the House on 15 November be approved. *Considered in Grand Committee on 12 December*

Motion agreed.

Human Fertilisation and Embryology Act 2008 (Remedial) Order 2018

Motion to Approve

3.55 pm

Moved by Lord O'Shaughnessy

That the draft Regulations laid before the House on 19 July be approved. *Relevant document: 14th Report from the Joint Committee on Human Rights. Considered in Grand Committee on 12 December*

Motion agreed.

Humane Trapping Standards Regulations 2019

Motion to Approve

3.55 pm

Moved by Baroness Vere of Norbiton

That the draft Regulations laid before the House on 14 November be approved. *Considered in Grand Committee on 12 December*

Motion agreed.

Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 (Amendment) Order 2018

Motion to Approve

3.55 pm

Moved by Baroness Manzoor

That the draft Order laid before the House on 5 December be approved. *Considered in Grand Committee on 12 December*

Motion agreed.

Yemen Statement

3.56 pm

The Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office (Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon) (Con): My Lords, with the leave of the House I shall now repeat a Statement made in another place by my right honourable friend the Foreign Secretary. The Statement is as follows:

“Mr Speaker, with permission I will make a Statement on the quest for a political settlement to the war in Yemen. Last week, the Houthi rebels and the Government of Yemen held their first direct peace talks since 2016. The negotiations in Stockholm reached agreement on a ceasefire in the port city of Hodeidah and a mutual redeployment of forces, monitored by the United Nations.

As we look forward to Christmas, the people of Yemen are enduring one of the gravest humanitarian crises in the world. Hunger and disease are ravaging large areas of the country: 420,000 children have been treated for malnutrition, and as many as 85,000 have starved to death. Today, 24 million Yemenis, more than 85% of the population, need help. Behind these stark, impersonal numbers lie real people: individual men, women and children with hopes and aspirations no different from our own. Their ordeal is not the result of natural disaster or misfortune: this is a man-made calamity, imposed by a war that has torn the country apart and reduced its people to appalling poverty—hence the imperative need to resolve this conflict as rapidly as possible.

From the beginning, Britain has made every effort to promote a political solution. Last month, I travelled to Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, which lead the coalition fighting to restore Yemen’s legitimate

Government. I later visited Iran, which supports the Houthi rebels. In every capital I urged my counterparts to use all their influence to help bring the parties to the negotiating table. After my visit to the region, agreement was reached for 50 wounded Houthis to be evacuated from Yemen to Oman—a confidence-building measure intended to pave the way for peace talks. On 19 November I instructed our mission at the United Nations to circulate a draft resolution to the Security Council, reinforcing the need for a political settlement and demanding the unhindered flow of food and medicine throughout Yemen.

On 6 December the peace talks began in Stockholm, mediated by Martin Griffiths, the UN special envoy. Last Wednesday I went to Stockholm myself, and the following day I met leaders of both delegations. I was the first British Minister to meet representatives of the Houthis. I urged the parties to seize the opportunity to reach agreements that would ease the suffering of the Yemeni people and move closer towards the goal of ending the war. Last Thursday the talks concluded with an agreement for the parties to meet again in January and to build trust by releasing thousands of prisoners. Honourable Members will note the importance of the agreement on a ceasefire and redeployment in Hodeidah, because this port is the lifeline for Yemen, the channel for at least 70% of the country’s food imports.

The ceasefire in Hodeidah port and city came into effect at midnight yesterday and the UN special envoy has reported that it seems to be working. If the ceasefire continues to hold and the UN succeeds in increasing the volume of traffic through the port, this should reduce the level of suffering. I have urged all parties to stick to the terms agreed last week in Stockholm so that we can find a lasting political solution to this devastating conflict.

After the talks, I spoke about the next steps to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, António Guterres, and the Foreign Ministers of Saudi Arabia and the UAE. Earlier, I discussed the situation with Secretary Pompeo of the United States. Based on these consultations—and the success of the peace talks—I have instructed our mission in New York to resume working on a draft resolution with Security Council partners, with a view to adopting it later this week. We will ask the Security Council to vote on the draft within the next 48 hours.

The UK text aims to build on the momentum generated in Stockholm by endorsing the agreements reached between the parties, authorising the United Nations to monitor their implementation, and setting out urgent steps to alleviate the humanitarian crisis. Our aim is to mobilise the collective weight of the United Nations behind the progress that has been made.

I am grateful to Martin Griffiths for his dogged efforts, which are nothing short of heroic. I acknowledge the seriousness of the delegations—on both sides—I met in Stockholm last week. I offer my thanks to the British diplomats, both in the region and in the Foreign Office, who have worked assiduously behind the scenes to bring the parties together. Britain has been able to play this role because of our network of friendships, including our partnerships with Saudi Arabia and the

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United Arab Emirates, and because we are a country that will always step up to its responsibilities in the world.

The House can draw encouragement from recent events, but I do not wish to give false hope. The positive steps that we have seen could easily be reversed. The ceasefire in Hodeidah is fragile. Many complex and difficult problems have yet to be addressed, let alone resolved. The people of Yemen still carry an immense burden of suffering. In the last few days, light has appeared at the end of the tunnel, but we should be in no doubt that Yemen is still in a tunnel. For as long as necessary, this country will continue to use all the diplomatic and humanitarian tools at our command to help settle this terrible conflict. Our values demand no less and I commend this Statement to the House”.

My Lords, that concludes the Statement.

4.02 pm

Lord Collins of Highbury (Lab): My Lords, I thank the Minister for repeating the Statement. Like my right honourable friend in the other place, I pay tribute to the Foreign Secretary for the time and effort he has put into addressing the terrible situation in Yemen. I also join in the tributes to Martin Griffiths and Mark Lowcock, who have, as the Minister said, worked tirelessly for both the peace talks and the humanitarian relief that is so necessary.

I greatly welcome the confirmation that a resolution is to be tabled this week at the Security Council. From what the Foreign Secretary said in the other place, it seems that on this occasion it will have the support of the United States, which of course is extremely welcome. As we have heard, initially the ceasefire agreement will apply only to Hodeidah. We all understand the reasons for this: the most urgent priority is to get the humanitarian support in. But can the Minister tell us a little more about the next steps? How do we broker a wider ceasefire? How are we brokering a wider political settlement for the country as a whole?

Obviously, the immediate priority is to foster the hope of peace and to get that urgent humanitarian support in, but we must not forget the issue of accountability, particularly for some of the terrible crimes that have been committed. Therefore, I very much welcome the fact that, as the Foreign Secretary said in the other place, the resolution will contain a reference to the obligation to act in accordance with humanitarian law, there will be timely investigations, and those responsible will be held to account.

No one could have been left unmoved by the harrowing investigation last week by the Associated Press into the use of child soldiers by the Houthi rebels. It is alleged that they have forced 18,000 children aged as young as 10 into service in the conflict. I hope that the Minister will share my concern that, if those authorities do not hold people to account, we should ensure that the United Nations conducts a fully independent investigation so that those who commit these crimes are fully held to account.

Baroness Northover (LD): My Lords, I too thank the Minister for repeating the Statement. Of course, the United Kingdom has a responsibility here. It is the

penholder at the Security Council, responsible for drafting and tabling resolutions and statements. There has been pressure on the United Kingdom to take action in relation to Yemen, and I am extremely glad that this is now happening.

As the Minister laid out, this is an absolutely desperate situation. Like the noble Lord, Lord Collins, I too pay tribute to Martin Griffiths and Mark Lowcock for their extraordinary efforts. It is encouraging to hear that both the Houthis and the Saudis have now reached a point where they want a solution. That obviously helps enormously. What progress is being made towards enshrining this agreement in a Security Council resolution? The noble Lord referred to that, but is he optimistic that it will be agreed? How then will the agreement be built upon, so that it can be extended to the rest of the country in the way that the noble Lord, Lord Collins, mentioned?

Both parties are meant to withdraw from Hodeidah within 21 days. What signs are there that they are preparing to withdraw? I realise that the key players who were in Stockholm do not necessarily have control over those on the ground, which further complicates matters. Will the United Kingdom supply members to the UN monitoring and verification teams? The Houthis have agreed to hand over maps of landmines in Hodeidah. Will the United Kingdom support any landmine clearance programme, as we have done in other parts of the world?

Does the Minister agree that the implementation of the detainee agreement is a vital confidence-building measure, affecting potentially thousands of families? Will the Government call upon all sides to stop the abuse, torture and disappearing of prisoners? Will the Minister update the House on any progress made on the issue of child soldiers, to which the noble Lord, Lord Collins, referred? Will he also explain what efforts will be made to ensure that women are actively included in the peace talks? I am sure he will agree that that is vital.

On Sunday, UN Secretary-General António Guterres warned that if Yemen's humanitarian situation did not improve, at least 14 million people would need food aid in 2019, which would be 6 million more than this year. With that number needing food aid and the 24 million whom the noble Lord referred to as needing humanitarian assistance generally, what prospects are there of good access to these people, most of whom are civilians? I look forward to the Minister's response.

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: My Lords, I thank the noble Lord and the noble Baroness for their remarks and support. I align myself with them in commending once again the efforts of British diplomats, but also the Brits involved as representatives at a UN level. Mark Lowcock was mentioned, as was Mr Griffiths. Having met both individuals to discuss this issue, I have seen their efforts directly and they are pretty much exemplary. I think we all join together in commending the crucial role they have played. We have worked closely with them both, particularly Mr Griffiths, in tabling the resolution and ensuring that we reflected the outcome of the talks in Stockholm, so that there was real momentum behind the resolution.

On the specific questions raised, there will be some on which I can give specific details because the Stockholm talks have just concluded. As I said in the Statement,

the situation is fragile. There is a degree of optimism because it is the first time for a long period that both sides have sat down. They have had discussions and there have been some detailed outcomes. For the benefit of the House and in answer to some of the questions, I shall put what the parties have agreed into four distinct categories. They include that there will be a governorate-wide ceasefire in Hodeidah. The noble Lord, Lord Collins, asked whether this relates to the port of Hodeidah only. As mentioned in previous Questions and debates, the ports of Salif and Ras Isa will be included in that. The noble Baroness, Lady Northover, referred to the prisoner exchange and the importance of adhering to it. My right honourable friend has conducted shuttle diplomacy in the region and one of the outcomes I alluded to in the Statement is that we hope to see families beginning—I stress “beginning”—to rebuild their lives. We are expecting a prisoner exchange agreement covering between 2,000 and 4,000 people during that time.

In answer to the noble Lord, Lord Collins, there was a statement of understanding on the war-torn city of Taiz, including the establishment of a de-escalation committee. There is an agreement to have further talks in January 2019. The noble Lord and the noble Baroness pointed to the importance of accountability. I assure the House that that is a key focus of Her Majesty's Government as penholders and as interlocutors in the role we are playing between both parties to ensure that, as peace is sustained and strengthened, the perpetrators of crimes on both sides are held to account.

Turning to children in armed conflict, in my first year as a Minister for the UN, I have worked very closely with the United Nations, particularly with Virginia Gamba, who leads on this as Under-Secretary-General. We have supported her work and office. Earlier this week, I met Carey Mulligan and others associated with War Child. This is a priority and a focus. It is a travesty that in conflicts—not just in Yemen but in other parts of the world—we see very young children put on the front line. We will certainly focus on that in the resolutions we reach on this issue.

We continue to work on the UN resolution. It is a live issue with our representatives. Our ambassador and permanent representative in New York is working with other partners to ensure that we can finalise it. That is why I have given the timeline of 48 hours in this respect.

The noble Baroness also mentioned the role of women in conflict resolution. It is a travesty that past resolutions of conflicts around the world have excluded women. There is no doubt in my mind about the statistics. We often ask for an evidence base and the evidence is there. When women are involved in conflict resolution, the peace holds for 15 years longer, on average, because women are pivotal and central to ensuring that conflicts can be resolved and peace can be sustained.

Land mine clearance is an area that the United Kingdom has worked on. At this time, it is too early to judge the extent of the issue, but we will look at it in the continuing discussions in which we will be involved.

4.13 pm

Baroness Blackstone (Ind Lab): My Lords, the Minister has focused on the progress made following the talks in Stockholm. There has been a lot of progress since this House last discussed the conflict in Yemen in a debate introduced by the noble Lord, Lord Luce. Will the Minister answer slightly more clearly the question asked by my noble friend Lord Collins of Highbury about when there will be a national ceasefire? I am sure the Minister will agree that heavy fighting continues to take place outside Hodeidah with serious effects on the population. While a political solution is vital in any conflict of this sort, it seems to me that it will be rather hard to get that political solution while there is continuing fighting elsewhere in the country.

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The noble Baroness raises a very important point. However, what has been agreed at this time is a focus on Hodeidah port for obvious strategic reasons: it is the main port through which humanitarian and medical supplies come and it was important that we reached agreement. This is an incremental process. As I alluded to in response to the question from the noble Lord, Lord Collins, there has been a statement of understanding to look in the next stage of the peace talks at the war-torn city of Taiz, and we will look at incremental steps towards building the objective that I know all noble Lords share: a ceasefire across the whole country. However, it is important that we approach this in a systematic, structured fashion. I add a word of caution that this is a very fragile peace with, for the moment, a focus just on Hodeidah. Of course I share the ultimate objective to which the noble Baroness aspires. However, at this time, we need to focus on what has been achieved thus far, and I shall of course keep the House updated on progress in this respect.

Lord Hannay of Chiswick (CB): My Lords, I offer my congratulations to the Minister, his department and all those involved in getting this far, while continuing to regret that there was such a long period in which the UN Security Council was pretty passive. Will he ensure that from now on, now that the UN has come back into the centre of the efforts being made, it will remain there; that Martin Griffiths will continue to have the full support of the Security Council; and that, if necessary, more action will be taken by it if one or the other side to this dispute breaks the arrangements so far made?

Secondly, he referred to monitoring in the port of Hodeidah. Is that monitoring the supply of humanitarian resources, or is it also monitoring the ceasefire in and around Hodeidah? If so, what contribution will the United Nations make to that monitoring and what contribution will we make to help the United Nations play its role in that matter?

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: My Lords, first, I appreciate the noble Lord's expert insight, particularly into the UN. There are many critics of the United Nations, but the role that it and, particularly, Martin Griffiths, has played in this respect has demonstrated that role's importance in conflict resolution. I take up

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the challenge when people say that the UN is ineffective. It has its challenges, but it also brings incredible benefits when countries come together to resolve challenges and conflicts such as that in Yemen.

In answer to the noble Lord's question, and in support of Martin Griffiths, I point to recent evidence. When we were looking to table the resolution, we spoke closely to Mr Griffiths. The alignment of the resolution with the outcome of the Stockholm talks demonstrates British support for his position. We continue to work with him and support his efforts in this respect.

Monitoring has focused on the supply of humanitarian aid, but it will also look at ensuring that the peace that has currently been reached—I caution that there were recent reports of outbreaks of minor violence around Hodeidah—continues to be monitored by the United Nations. Specific numbers and how any future deployment may work in the region will, I am sure, be a subject for future discussion.

Lord Campbell of Pittenweem (LD): My Lords, these developments are obviously to be welcomed and those responsible are certainly entitled to congratulations, but looking through the Statement, I see no reference to Iran. Iran is playing a significant role in these affairs in Yemen. What exchange has there been involving Her Majesty's Government—either between the Foreign Secretary and his Iranian equivalent or at the United Nations, between Karen Pierce, our high representative, and her equivalent?

Secondly, resolutions of this kind have previously fallen foul of the objection of both Russia and China. What efforts are being made to ensure that in this instance they will be on side?

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: My Lords, in answer to the second question I can assure the noble Lord that we are working tirelessly on this, in particular Karen Pierce, our permanent representative to the UN. I pay tribute to her efforts; anyone who knows her will know that she is a formidable ambassador and an experienced diplomat. As I speak, she continues to work to ensure the kind of support that is required for such a resolution, and we are working with partners in this respect.

On the first question on Iran, my right honourable friend the Foreign Secretary has engaged directly with Foreign Minister Zarif, and we continue to work with Iran on important issues. As I also said in the Statement, after the Foreign Secretary had visited the UAE and Saudi Arabia, he paid a visit to Iran.

Lord Lea of Crondall (Lab): Will the Minister cast any further light on a point arising from the question asked by the noble Lord, Lord Hannay? As the Minister said, in Stockholm it was clear that there were questions about the command structure, communications and the delivery mechanism between what was agreed at Stockholm and on whose authority, and what happens on the ground. To take this a step further from what the noble Lord, Lord Hannay, said, in other examples like this—Bosnia springs to mind, but there are many others—I assume that there needs to be monitoring by UN personnel, but not wearing blue berets. The Minister

mentioned the delicacy of the situation, and the noble Lord, Lord Campbell, mentioned China. To what extent is there an issue about making sure that the UN has some ability to be in the chain of command in the context of implementation, or is there a blockage in the area?

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: If I understand the noble Lord correctly, I have already alluded to the fact that China is an important partner, not just on this issue but as a P5 member of the Security Council, and as I said, we are working tirelessly through our team in New York to ensure full support for the resolution. That is why I said that this will be tabled and voted on within the next 48 hours. As I said in the Statement, we have circulated the resolution, and China and other members of the Security Council have been cited. We look towards what I believe will be successful support by all members of the Security Council of a first step in resolving a conflict that we all recognise has gone on for far too long.

Baroness Hayman (CB): My Lords, like other noble Lords, I welcome the Statement and the commitments within it. The depth of the humanitarian crisis in Yemen is clear from the Statement and everything we hear. Two-thirds of the population have no food security at all, and nearly a quarter of a million Yemenis are on the brink of starvation. I declare my interest as a trustee of the Disasters Emergency Committee, to which the British public gave £30 million for its 2016 Yemen appeal. Will the Minister confirm that despite all the difficulties, UK agencies are still working on the ground in Yemen, mainly with Yemeni staff, to deliver aid, even in those desperately difficult circumstances? Will he also confirm that the effort needs to be increased many times if we are to meet the depth and the scale of the humanitarian disaster there, and that that can happen only if and when political and military progress means that there is access on the ground?

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: I recognise the points the noble Baroness raises. If we reflect on the history of this conflict, it is incredible when we see people who still persevere, notwithstanding the lack of a political settlement, a peace agreement and access. While we are right to pay tribute to the likes of Mark Lowcock and Martin Griffiths, when we see the courage and bravery in these conflict zones it is also appropriate to acknowledge and commend the work of NGOs, not just from the United Kingdom but internationally. By doing the right thing and supporting humanitarian efforts these volunteers often put themselves on the front line, at great risk to their own lives.

I agree with the point made by the noble Baroness about the generosity of the British people in crises. Yemen has been no different. On 3 April, as she will be aware, we announced an additional £170 million for the current financial year in response to the humanitarian crisis in Yemen. As I was preparing for this Statement I saw that my noble friend Lady Warsi had written an article that, I believe, appeared in the *Independent* today, reminding us all that this is just the current support we can offer. In view of the famine, and cholera spreading among a young population, I agree

with the noble Baroness that, as this peace holds, we should, and will, be looking to increase our efforts to ensure that the humanitarian needs of the country are fully met, so that people can start rebuilding a future.

The Earl of Sandwich (CB): As it is nearly Christmas, may I extend my own thanks to the Minister for all the concern that he personally has shown for human rights, as evidenced today, including in his earlier response to the Question asked by the noble Lord, Lord Alton? It is noted all around the House. Following the question asked by the noble Baroness, Lady Hayman, on humanitarian aid, my only question is: to what extent has the port of Hodeidah actually reopened? There has never been much of it open, but has the Minister any idea what difference the latest ceasefire has made to the flow of humanitarian aid?

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: First let me thank the noble Earl for his kind remarks, but I am just doing my job. I am proud, humbled and honoured to be acting as Minister for Human Rights, among my responsibilities in Her Majesty's Government—and this job is made all the easier by the expertise, insights and support that I receive from your Lordships' House. I pay particular tribute to the respective Front-Bench spokesmen—the noble Baroness, Lady Northover, and the noble Lord, Lord Collins. It would be fair to say that there are times when we oppose each other, but it is reflective of the unity with which we act on this important principle internationally that this House, and the other place—notwithstanding the difficulties that we have—come together on important issues that unite us. There is no bigger issue than supporting and standing up for human rights and supporting humanitarian causes around the world, and I am grateful to all noble Lords for their constant support in that respect.

The noble Earl raised an important point about Hodeidah, and I can give him the latest statistics that I have, which precede the peace efforts. In November 2018 total commercial and humanitarian imports into Yemen met 68% of the country's food needs but only 29% of its fuel needs. That second statistic is important, because fuel enables aid to reach the more remote parts of the country, so it is imperative that, as we have reached this agreement, the ports of Hodeidah and Salif remain operational. Yemen relies on imports to meet 90% of its basic needs such as food and fuel, coming through those ports. Returning to an earlier question about the incremental way in which peace can be sustained, retained and strengthened, it is important to see that all parties that have committed to maintaining peace do so around Hodeidah to ensure the delivery of humanitarian aid. This is a vital key channel to ensuring that humanitarian aid—food, fuel and medicines—reaches the population of Yemen.

Baroness D'Souza (CB): My Lords, given that we know that there is food available in Hodeidah and surrounding towns, are the UK Government working out a plan whereby they can buy grain locally to reduce the price? As I understand it, grain is being hoarded by merchants, which is causing a large part of the famine.

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: My Lords, the noble Baroness raises an important concern, and I will do best to write to her on that specific question, after making an assessment of the current situation on the ground. We need to look into whether individuals or groups of individuals seek to hoard supplies with a view to profiting from the humanitarian needs of their population. I hope that as talks progress, those seeking to profiteer from the conflict will be not just looked into but held to account for their actions.

Lord Beecham (Lab): My Lords, tragic though the situation in Yemen obviously is, there is also a very tragic situation in Syria, where 500,000 people have been killed and 12 million displaced, half of them outside the country. What are Her Majesty's Government doing to attempt to relieve the tremendous suffering that has occurred in that country?

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: My Lords, we all acknowledge the situation and the noble Lord is quite correct: the Syrian conflict and the tragedy we have seen unfolding there is not lost on any of us. The measures deployed by the regime mean that tragically we have seen Bashar al-Assad turn on his own population, not only in preventing humanitarian aid but in the use of chemical weapons, which we have universally, rightly and collectively condemned. We continue to work for a resolution to ensure that all communities of Syria will be rightly represented. We continue to support the talks in Geneva; unfortunately they have been stalled because the regime is not currently inclined to engage. However, there are important players in Syria as in all these conflicts—we call upon key players such as Russia, which can influence and help to reach a formal resolution to conflict. Similarly the Yemeni conflict has gone on for far too long and more can be done to bring different sides to the table.

I have seen through the efforts that have been made in Yemen that the importance of the United Nations cannot be underestimated. The UN Security Council, in the most challenging circumstances, brings the key world powers together. I believe very strongly that when it comes to Syria, resolution can be reached only through a political settlement, where all sides are rightly represented. The key body to provide that resolution is the United Nations.

Lord Adonis (Lab): My Lords, we hugely respect the Minister for the efforts that he makes, but does he believe that what he does makes a blind bit of difference to anything that is going on in Yemen?

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: Absolutely.

Viscount Waverley (CB): My Lords, noting all the desperate tales in questions and answers today, does the Minister agree that this war is totally counterproductive to everyone in Yemen and that it behoves everyone to get together and make peace, so that we can look for a better world for all our friends in Yemen?

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: I agree with the noble Viscount. I said "Absolutely" in response to the previous question. I am a bit dismayed; I know the noble Lord very well—if my efforts, the efforts of our Government

[LORD AHMAD OF WIMBLEDON]
and the efforts of this House can make a difference to the life of one person, then do you know what? It is worth it.

Sport, Recreation and the Arts

Motion to Take Note

4.32 pm

Moved by Lord Moynihan

That this House takes note of how sport, recreation, and the arts contribute to wellbeing of society.

Lord Moynihan (Con): My Lords, I am grateful to the many Members from all sides of this House who have chosen to speak in this debate. We received many valuable briefings in advance; I place on record my thanks to Russell Taylor, who collated the excellent Lords Library Briefing, highlighting the significant social benefits of participation in sport, the strong evidence demonstrating positive associations between participation in arts and health, social capital and education, and the benefits that sport and the arts bring to the well-being of society. He quotes Arts Council England, which stated that,

“art and culture enhance every part of our lives”,

as well as delivering social, economic and educational benefits,

“from the future prospects of our children, to the vibrancy of our cities, to the contribution made to economic growth”.

Ryan McCullough produced an insightful paper focusing on local sports facilities and the serious levels of inactivity in children and young people, on which the Sport and Recreation Alliance is rightly campaigning, mirroring Charlotte Cuenot’s work with ukactive as it aims to get,

“more people, more active, more often”.

That must be a priority for the Department of Health as well as for DCMS. The fight against obesity will be achieved by focusing not solely on what we eat but, equally, on changing people’s perceptions regarding lifestyle, the importance of a healthy diet and access to sports facilities at affordable prices.

When, as Minister for Sport, I was visited by the then Irish Minister for Sport in the late 1980s I was asked what one measure I would introduce to help sport, recreation and the arts. My answer was simple: introduce a national lottery. Margaret Thatcher thought otherwise. It took John Major to respond to this request, and sport and the arts should be forever grateful to him. In her briefing to us, Catherine Nicholls from Camelot highlighted just how important the National Lottery has been to sport and the arts, and how its investment of over £20 billion has added to the well-being in society.

Many noble Lords might be among the millions who have seen the YouTube video by Simon Sinek, which, while generalising broadly, nevertheless hits a nerve when he reflects that in our generation we have failed to prepare young people during their childhood and education for the realities of the workplace. How often, he asks, have we complained that the millennials

are tough to manage, unfocused, lazy and entitled, and constantly being told they are special and receiving medals from us for coming last? He goes on to say that many turn to Instagram and Facebook, which places filters on life around them: no need to tough it out, just count the likes on Facebook. He points out that for many young people the greatest trauma is being unfriended by a popular classmate. When finally reaching their destination in the world of work, too many are unprepared for getting nothing for coming last, and at that point entire visions can be shattered.

In our schools, one critical component that we can turn to for the young and for the improvement of the well-being of society is widespread access to sport, recreation and the arts. Competitive sport is a vital educational tool, capable of addressing many of these challenges. There, the lessons learned are of teamwork—learning the ability to handle losing both individually and as a team—and taking the time to develop skills through hours of training. There is no instant gratification in the world of competitive sport. It is through participating as a member of a team that we build self-confidence and discipline, and the environment in which we do so must be fun and inclusive. We are better educated from the experience of playing within the rules of sport and building trust through co-operation, and realising the joy of working hard on something which takes a lot longer than a month or a year to learn. We learn to recognise that making time for people and the little things are the building blocks of leadership. Sport can help this generation build confidence. Playing by the rules reinforces values, allowing us to reach a better work/life balance.

Our exposure to the arts has the same ability to broaden our minds and develop a whole range of skill sets. It is very important to look to the quality of arts education and to recognise that there is so much more that we should be doing to promote, increase and improve the standards of teaching. As Picasso said:

“Every child is an artist. The problem is how to remain an artist while we grow up”.

However, the well-being of society is also about having a deep and clear understanding of what is right and wrong, and it must be based on the strongest ethical standards, because that is what all of us expect of those who compete or enjoy recreation. We ensure that the 100-metre runner has his or her fingernails microscopically behind the line as a demonstration of fairness and clean competition.

That is why, in my view, one of the most important sporting events of 2019 took place when my right honourable friend the Secretary of State Jeremy Wright hosted the International Partnership Against Corruption in Sport—IPACS—meetings in London earlier this month. More than 100 Ministers, international sports organisations and experts came to London to work on a global commitment to tackle corruption in sport. I declare an interest here as vice-chair of the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Sport, Modern Slavery and Human Rights, under the able leadership of the noble Baroness, Lady Young of Hornsey.

In that capacity, I spoke last week at the Sporting Chance Forum, ably led by the Centre for Sport and Human Rights. Today I urge the Government to develop

tools to prevent corruption around procurement at sports events. It should never be the case that workers on venues which have to be finished to meet the deadline of a FIFA World Cup have their passports withdrawn on arrival in the country, effectively being drawn into modern slavery. Corruption in all its guises is corrosive, but nowhere more so than in the world of sport.

Good governance, transparency and the avoidance of conflicts of interest are vital. We expect integrity, honest endeavour and fair competition from our athletes. They in turn should expect nothing less from sports administrators and the nations that host international events, along with the wealthy individuals who benefit from sharing the gold dust that clean competitors create by their skills.

There is an important role for government here through anti-corruption legislation and law enforcement. We will not put an end to match fixing, illegal gaming, bad governance, insider information, conflicts of interests and the use of clubs as shell companies unless Governments act in unity and place legislation on the statute book to tackle these pernicious characteristics which swarm around sporting events. We need laws to help root out the perpetrators of sexual abuse in sport and to support the survivors. We need to protect the rights of athletes and fans, and of journalists working in totalitarian countries whose Governments increasingly seek to host major spectator sports events to gain international credibility where they have no alternative to win recognition. We need to fight for the human right to non-discrimination and equality in sport, recognising Georgia Hall's stunning victory in the Women's British Open in golf as much as Francesco Molinari's success on the international and national stages.

I have had a number of opportunities in your Lordships' House to debate the greatest challenge to elite sport not only here but internationally: namely, doping. This first came to my attention when I had the privilege of coxing the British eight in the 1980 Olympic final, with one of the finest crews this country has produced in front of me. We were narrowly beaten by an East German eight. In latter years, members of the DDR Olympic team sought compensation from the post-unification German Government for the damage to their health from the drugs they had taken. Even that was not enough for the International Olympic Committee to strip them of their medals. The IOC at the time did not have the courage of its convictions to act in line with its charter, but it had a major influence on me and led me, when Minister for Sport, to seek agreement for the first Council of Europe sports ministerial initiative to tackle drugs in sport.

An athlete knowingly taking performance-enhancing drugs to cheat a clean athlete who has trained all his or her life, with the support of his or her family, out of selection, a career, a living and considerable wealth is committing fraud. The criminal sanctions should be no different from those for fraud. So far we have turned a blind eye to this, whereas Australia, Austria, Denmark, France, Germany, Greece, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden and Italy, to name just a few countries, have all enacted sports-specific legislation that criminalises

the trafficking of performance-enhancing substances, with some going considerably further to protect clean athletes.

This is a matter for the law to protect and promote well-being in this society. My right honourable friend the Secretary of State is a lawyer. Given his interest in sports law, I urge him to follow the example of many countries and consider introducing a UK sports law. Over the past 40 years, sport has developed from recreational activity largely enjoyed by amateurs in the 1970s and 1980s to highly commercialised and lucrative worldwide competitions. The change has been caused by the explosion of media rights and sponsorship, particularly in the 1990s. When in 2005 we won the right to host the Olympic Games in London, I noted that sport contributed some €29 billion towards the European Union economy and provided jobs for approximately 4.5 million employees. The value of European football alone is today £21 billion.

The need to justify this spending is recognised in the Parliaments of European nation states and is becoming increasingly important here, not least because there is barely a department of state not involved in sport and recreation—from taking disadvantaged kids off the escalator to crime and away from their feelings of alienation in the classroom, at home or in school by conversing in the only language that many of them understand, which is sport; to the health benefits; to the soft power; and to the far-reaching educational benefits.

There is now pressure on government to match the political changes under way. The well-publicised failings of sporting organisations in the first 18 years of this century, such as the IOC scandals in Salt Lake City, corruption in FIFA and the IAAF, scandals in Formula 1 and the World Anti-Doping Agency's ineffectiveness in discovering endemic state-controlled doping programmes in Russia—we have the *Sunday Times* to thank for that—and subsequent inability to address the scandal, should surely ring alarm bells in the corridors of the DCMS. These well-publicised failings of sporting organisations damage the integrity and fairness of sport which we expect from the players, and the onus should be on Governments to intervene and co-operate with sport rather than sit back.

It is time for the governing bodies of sport to adopt best international practice, not least in dealing with the prevention of harm from injuries, including concussions in contact sports. It is time for the Government to legislate further to promote the safety of cyclists. It is time to oblige sports agents to disclose their financial interests when entering into an agency contract with an athlete—and, more fundamentally, it is time to oblige the Government to produce two annual reports, one on sport and one on the arts, to be debated in both Houses, setting out national policies for both.

It is time to promote sport and physical activity to tackle obesity and enhance healthy lifestyles. It is time to legislate for clear measures to increase participation, not just for the able-bodied but, most importantly, for disabled athletes, where not only active leisure pursuits but access to facilities should be part of our legal structure. It is time to recognise the importance of cross-sector partnerships between independent and state schools, as well as local communities, and the

[LORD MOYNIHAN]

dual use of school sports facilities to justify charitable status in the independent sector. All of these measures would add to the well-being of society.

The image of sport has been tarnished by various scandals in recent history, and its credibility and integrity need to be restored. A new framework for sport is long overdue. We need a sports law—and it would be the most popular Bill of its Session. I beg to move.

4.46 pm

Baroness Bottomley of Nettlestone (Con): My Lords, I most warmly congratulate my noble friend on a magnificent speech on a subject that I am sure unites the House: the importance of sport for young people—able-bodied and disabled—and the part it plays in people’s lives in their sense of well-being, their health and their education. There is critical concern over disreputable behaviour, dishonesty, the lack of integrity, and drugs at an international level which cannot be ignored.

Thirty years ago, my noble friend and I were fellow Ministers at the Department of the Environment—my noble friend as Minister for Sport; I was a very junior Minister responsible for the green environment, heritage and local government, I believe. This was a troubled time for sport then—the time of the Hillsborough disaster, and getting all-seater stadia. I remember from my time in court that Mondays were always full of villains—the football hooligans who had been picked up over the weekend. A huge amount has changed, but even then my noble friend talked about the importance of dual-use facilities, and getting all maintained schools involved in sport.

I went to the Atlanta Games when British gold medals consisted of one only—Matthew Pinsent and Steve Redgrave won the single gold medal. I was delighted that it was for rowing, but it was a disappointing time. This was, of course, before John Major’s intervention, as has been said. He has said that:

“My original vision for the Lottery was to fund a renaissance in sport, the arts and our heritage. I saw the opportunity to fund projects the Treasury would never be able to afford”.

Frankly, a lot of my time later as a Culture Minister was spent stopping the Treasury getting its sticky fingers on that money and using it for its own purposes.

To think that at the last Olympic Games in 2016, we won more gold medals than China—a greater number than ever before. In the year I went to Atlanta, our comparators were Algeria, Ethiopia and North Korea, with our low level. Now we look forward to the 2022 Commonwealth Games in Birmingham, where I hope sport will have the same opportunity to lift the spirits and provide a lasting social, economic and sporting benefit to the local community. I know that the West Midlands mayor, Andy Street, has declared his aim,

“to restore pride in the West Midlands”,

and Birmingham will surely rise to that challenge.

Let me turn to the arts, which is what I really want to focus on. There has been an extraordinary investment, with £5.6 billion going to arts organisations through 118,000 grants and £7.9 billion to heritage projects through 43,000 grants. Sir Ernest Hall, a great lover of the arts over the years, said:

“Through the Lottery we have an opportunity to do for our towns and cities what the enlightened patronage of the Papacy and the Medicis did for the cities of Italy. We can realise Blake’s dream of making England ‘an envied storehouse of intellectual riches’”,

and so say I. Our many magnificent institutions were tired; to reinvest in the British Museum, the Tate, the Albert Hall and institutions up and down the country has been absolutely phenomenal. I mention in passing that when the British Museum, which opened in 1759, was funded by a lottery, William Cobbett, a resident of Farnham, said:

“Why should tradesmen and farmers be called upon to pay for the support of a place which was intended only for the amusement of the curious and the rich, and not for the benefit or for the instruction of the poor? If the aristocracy wanted the Museum as a lounging place, let them pay for it”.—[*Official Report, Commons, 25/3/1833; col. 1003.*]

I am sorry that my noble friend Lord Cormack is not in his usual place to reflect upon these words.

At a regional level, the transformational effect of the National Lottery was realised in Hull City of Culture 2017. I hope the noble Lord, Lord Parekh, will say more about this. The City of Culture was entirely transformational: there was the “Made in Hull” light spectacle, Spencer Tunick’s “Sea of Hull”, the Freedom Festival with Kofi Annan, the Ferens Gallery and the Turner Prize award, with Lubaina Himid being the first black woman to win it. I applaud the work of the chairman, Rosie Millard, the brilliant chief executive, Martin Green, and the 2,400 volunteers. Council leader Steve Brady was determined we would win that accolade. We were all set to work: I was appointed Sheriff of Hull and I lobbied ruthlessly. The noble Lord, Lord Hall, was absolutely magnificent; we had the BBC programmes “Woman’s Hour” and “Today”, as well as Radio 1’s Big Weekend, in Hull. James Graham—the playwright who went to the University of Hull—Tom Courtenay and others all played a part. There was a great launch with the glitterati of the art world—Nick Serota, Peter Bazalgette, Tony Hall. In short, it had a really serious send-off.

The effect has been evaluated and it is so heart-lifting: there was an increase in investment, with 800 new jobs and £300 million contributed to the economy; 95% of residents participated at least once over the year; nine out of 10 cultural organisations were able to do more; 87% of people felt optimistic about the future; 75% of residents felt proud of living in Hull. I dislike people who are even remotely disparaging about Hull, but I know that in 2003 it was labelled the most “something” town in Britain—I do not feel able to say the word in this House. What a transformation: in 2016, Hull was identified as one of the top 10 cities to visit by the *Rough Guide*. We look forward to Coventry having the same opportunities in 2021. Only yesterday, I was with Margaret Casely-Hayford, the chancellor of Coventry University, talking about how transformational this opportunity can be.

John Major said:

“Man cannot live by GDP alone ... A country can only be strong, healthy and contented if it burnishes its heritage, encourages its citizens to pursue excellence in sport and cultivates widespread appreciation of the arts”.

I support my noble friend.

4.54 pm

Lord Howarth of Newport (Lab): My Lords, I thank the noble Lord, Lord Moynihan, for enabling us to have this welcome debate. He spoke with deep knowledge and passion.

The All-Party Parliamentary Group on Arts, Health and Wellbeing, which I co-chair, published a report in 2017 entitled *Creative Health*. It was the product of a two-year inquiry involving more than 300 people working in health and social care and in arts and cultural organisations across the United Kingdom and abroad, with participation from some 40 parliamentarians. The noble Baroness, Lady Bull, in her capacity at King's College London, ensured that her institution was a wonderful, fully committed partner to the APPG in this endeavour, and I very much look forward to her speech later in the debate.

The report contained three key messages: the arts can help us to stay well, recover faster and enjoy longer lives better lived; the arts can help health and social care meet major challenges—ageing, long-term conditions, loneliness, mental health; and the arts can help to save money for health and social care. The report contains an abundance of evidence in support of those three contentions. It examines the contribution of the arts to health and well-being across the life course, and in all parts of this country. There are impressive case studies from Newcastle, Hull—of which the noble Baroness, Lady Bottomley, just spoke—Calderdale and many other places.

Artlift is a charity delivering arts on prescription in Gloucestershire and Wiltshire. Health professionals refer patients, suffering perhaps from chronic pain, stroke, anxiety or depression, to an eight-week course of two-hour sessions led by a professional artist, working possibly in poetry, ceramics, drawing or other art forms. A cost-benefit analysis over three years showed that, after six months of working with an artist, participants asked for 37% fewer GP appointments and needed 27% fewer hospital admissions. One participant in Artlift, who had suffered a stroke, said:

"I had split up from my partner, found myself without anywhere to live and couldn't see my children. I couldn't work as I wasn't physically able to do the job and wasn't in a position mentally or financially to start a building business again after going bankrupt. Since going to Artlift I have had several exhibitions of my work around Gloucester. I find that painting in the style that I do, in a very expressionistic way, seems to help me emotionally. I no longer take any medication and, although I am not without problems, I find that as long as I can paint I can cope. It doesn't mean that depression has gone but I no longer have to keep going back to my GP for more anti-depressants. I just lock myself away and paint until I feel slightly better. I now mentor some people who have been through Artlift themselves and they come and use my studio a couple of times a week to get together, paint, draw and chat and I can see the benefit to them over the time they have been doing it".

Creative Families is a project helping mothers with postnatal depression, co-produced by the Southwark parental mental health team and the South London Gallery. The engagement of the creative imagination of those women, through a 10-week art and craft course, has led the mothers to experience a 77% reduction in anxiety and depression and an 86% reduction in stress. The emotional, social and cognitive development of their children has also been measurably improved.

Age UK, in a major study of more than 15,000 people, found that creative and cultural activity was the biggest single contributor to their well-being. The report contains a substantial section on dementia, showing how the arts and culture can support people with dementia and their carers.

A carer whose husband had been diagnosed with terminal cancer wrote to the director of Grampian Hospitals Art Trust, saying:

"To be given a terminal prognosis is devastating for both the patient and family. To take away your future, the opportunity to grow old and grey with your spouse and to watch your children grow and thrive. You lose your independence and your sense of self, your purpose and role in life. Yet in the midst of this suffering lies the Artroom. An oasis of positivity and fulfilment providing a different purpose. One of creativity and self-expression. It is a place where the self is rediscovered and allowed to flourish. A place where you feel valued and worth investing in. It's medicine for the soul and every bit as vital as drugs and chemotherapy. A life-fulfilling experience that has changed both our lives for the better".

There is growing recognition of the benefits that the arts and culture can bring to health and well-being. However, funding for such projects is marked by discontinuity, and provision is very uneven across the country.

The APPG is not calling for new legislation, organisational upheaval or even for more public expenditure. We seek a change of culture, which will be achieved by leadership across the complex systems of health and social care and the arts and culture. We are offering a challenge to habitual ways of thinking and an invitation to collaboration across conventional boundaries, leading to an informed and open-minded willingness to recognise the benefits of the arts. Progress is being made; increasingly, senior people within the NHS are recognising this opportunity, and I was pleased recently to be invited to speak to a conference of NHS Providers on this subject.

We are watching with great interest the radical experiments in Greater Manchester, as they involve the arts and culture in the development of their integrated health and social care strategy. We welcome the recent speech at the King's Fund given by Matt Hancock, the new Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, and the emphasis he is giving to the national prevention strategy. However, as yet I have seen no evidence that the most senior people in NHS England are seriously addressing this agenda.

The APPG made 10 specific recommendations for change, and we are developing strategies to support the acceptance and implementation of each of them. Only one of our recommendations is made to the Government, namely that there should be a cross-governmental strategy to enlist the arts and culture for the benefit of health and well-being. We were encouraged by a positive response by the then Culture Minister, John Glen, in autumn 2017, but I wonder what the position is now. The Culture Select Committee in another place recently interviewed five junior ministers. I did not hear any very convincing responses from them about the development of this strategy, and I would be most grateful if the noble Viscount the Minister would write to me, and to the APPG, to explain in detail what the Government's view is and

[LORD HOWARTH OF NEWPORT]

how they intend to continue to respond to that recommendation—the second recommendation—in *Creative Health*.

5.01pm

Lord Wallace of Saltaire (LD): My Lords, I congratulate the noble Lord, Lord Moynihan, on pursuing this subject, which he has done so well in recent years. I hope he will continue to do so. I have enjoyed working with him on the pursuit of partnerships between independent schools and state schools, pursuing the question that many state schools lack the facilities for good drama, sports and musical activities, and we therefore need to work very hard to find ways in which they can use them.

I am extremely lucky: I live in a village founded by a philanthropist who gave the village two cricket pitches, a football pitch, a crown bowls club, two sets of allotments and a tennis club. That gives us a huge bit of social glue that helps bring the community together. It is impossible for me to walk down the street in Saltaire without meeting someone we know; the number of people who work on the same allotments we work on means we just know that many people.

In the cricket club, I see the extent to which social integration is moving ahead in Yorkshire, after—to its shame—the desperate efforts of the Yorkshire County Cricket Club 30 or 40 years ago to resist having Asian players. Any decent cricket club in Yorkshire now needs to have some bright young Asian players, and both our clubs show that very well.

Well-being in society provided by sports, music, drama and other forms of artistic activity are good for the individual. I declare an interest, having been a trustee for nearly 15 years now—probably too long in charitable terms—of a musical education charity, for which the Institute of Education has done some research. There is clear and strong evidence that collective singing in harmony in primary and secondary schools improves concentration, discipline, confidence, a whole range of things that add pluses to those schools. The same is true of collective sport, of dancing—there is also a wonderful dancing club in Saltaire—drama and other forms of activities, including gardening.

I really want to talk about what this does for the local community and those on the edge of it, particularly the elderly, whose children often live some distance away. It brings them out of their houses and into the community. That is a huge plus.

There is also the social integration element of meeting people who you otherwise would not meet. I often reflect on the fact that one of the best networks in the Palace of Westminster is the Parliament Choir, in which I sing. I have a wonderful memory of being in the private office of a Conservative Minister—whom I will not name—who discovered with horror that I was a close friend of one of his strongly right-wing colleagues. I had to explain to him that, whatever he thought of this particular right-wing Conservative, he has an excellent voice, and he and I have enjoyed singing together for many years. From singing in the Parliament Choir, I of course got to know Commons clerks, Lords librarians, doorkeepers and other professionals. It is a way of making sure that we do not just sit and work in our own little compartments.

That is also true for local communities. We have seen many of the networks that held together local communities get weaker over the years. The churches and chapels in Yorkshire around which so many of the local activities happened—including Gilbert and Sullivan light opera and the other things that I remember they used to promote—have, sadly, weakened. Social mobility, with people moving around and in and out, means that you do not easily know all of your neighbours as well as you did. The likelihood that you went to school with them is now relatively low. There is a great deal of loneliness and loss of social cohesion. Collective activity helps to build communities and hold them together.

Of course, what I see in a relatively middle-class village, as Saltaire now is, is infinitely easier than three to four miles down the road once one gets into the working-class estates in Bradford, where people lack self-confidence and facilities are not there. Local Liberal Democrat councillors in north Bradford have been running a summer school for the last three summers for children between primary and secondary school because there are almost no public facilities or open spaces for them to play on when schools are closed. That is part of the problem we face in many of these communities. However, brass bands in Yorkshire are a community in which working-class children feel very comfortable and at home. They are something we need to put money into in schools to make sure they are maintained.

I have now discovered park runs. When my grandchildren come up to Saltaire for the weekend they go off on a Sunday morning and run around the park with a couple of hundred other people who they have not met before and then have buns with them at the end. That is a tremendous way of making sure you mix with other people, as of course are allotments and the new collective gardening movement. They are all extremely good for mental health, getting out in the air and engagement with others.

The important thing is that these subjects should start in schools and should not be peripheral. It is sad that we now find ourselves having to fund them as peripheral subjects. One primary school in Bradford, in Queensbury, has its own brass band. For the four weekends before Christmas, it was out on the streets of Queensbury playing to raise money for its musical activities. That might be the way it has to go at the moment, but we need to fund these things.

Schools in east Asia have now discovered that maths and English are not enough and that cultural efforts—music and drama—are important parts of education. We need to regain that sense as well.

5.09 pm

The Earl of Listowel (CB): My Lords, it is a privilege to follow the noble Lord, Lord Wallace, in his comments on the importance of cultivating social cohesion. He put me in mind of Clement Attlee, who was a youth worker in the East End of London. Although he was privileged and had been to public school, he gained an affection for and understanding of children living in poverty, which shaped his political efforts and the nation.

I thank the noble Lord, Lord Moynihan, for securing this important debate. Listening to him, I was reminded of an experience stroking a Lea Valley eight 20 years ago. They were young working-class boys; it was difficult job for me to stroke. I think of the progress since that time in making rowing far more accessible to all walks of life. It is a tremendous sport, which brings great health benefits and sense of team spirit.

I declare my interest in the register as a trustee of the Brent Centre for Young People, a mental health service for young people and adolescents in north London. We use sport through our Sport and Thought programme, developed by Dr Maxim de Sauma and Daniel Smyth, to improve the conduct of young people who lack control of their impulses and who can disrupt the education of their peers—the noble Lord, Lord Moynihan, referred to these issues.

Just this week, a *Daily Telegraph* front page highlighted the adverse impact on teacher retention of low-level disruption by pupils. Every day, we read of concerns about youth gangs and young people carrying knives. Sport is well suited to capturing young people tending towards anti-social behaviour and making that behaviour pro-social. Anna Freud highlighted that impulse control can be difficult in adolescents. She pointed to higher levels of aggression and identified how they move from devotion to their parents to devotion to their peer group. Working with a peer group, establishing norms of good behaviour to which newcomers wish to subscribe and appointing captains and leaders who can model good behaviour are all tools that sport can offer to the management of adolescent young people.

I recently observed the Brent Centre for Young People's Sport and Thought programme at a secondary school in north London. The 14 boys were all of black and minority ethnic origin. Most of these young men had been facing exclusion from school. Some no longer came to school but still attended the Sport and Thought training. The football pitch was tarmacked with a high-fence surround; they wore their black uniforms and the right trainers. The clinician and the sports coach—so a therapist and a sports coach—spoke to them, laying out the rules of behaviour and what would happen if they were broken. They would be able to play football only if they behaved. They began with a jog—a few circuits of the pitch. Even that was stopped if they did not keep together. Then there were drills and finally a football match. All the time, the boys knew that they would not get their game of football if they failed to behave. The approach was strict but not punitive. The principal requirement was for them to discuss why they were angry with their coach or team mates. The purpose was to enable them to think of another way of behaving and to manage their resentments—so apparently simple, but so effective.

One of their teachers, a young woman, came to speak to me as I observed their game. She told me of the extraordinary change in the pupils' behaviour. Young people who had disrupted classes and received regular detentions were now avoiding reprimand for weeks on end. It was clearly a great relief to her that this sports therapy had so improved her male pupils' behaviour. Some of the young men had become excellent

footballers and others models of good behaviour; some, both. A head of year said of one beneficiary whom she taught, "It's a miracle what you have done with Aaron. Everyone has seen a massive change". His head teacher said, "It's been incredible, his behaviour and whole improvement at school".

The Brent centre provided 79 sessions to 60 young people over the past year—62 at Brent schools and 17 at the Brent Youth Offending Service. I am very grateful for this opportunity to celebrate its work.

I note in the welcome and helpful Library briefing that volunteering to support sport has dropped significantly in the last reported period. Can the Minister confirm that this is the case? What factors have led to this? What steps are being taken to remedy this drop?

I want to highlight the importance for boys and young men of positive male role models. I must have visited about 10 young offender institutions in the past 20 years. Young men in custody have often had no positive role model to emulate. Sport is one way to cultivate such models and to provide them for the young. I hope that any sports strategy developed by the Minister will include an awareness of how sport can provide positive male role models and a means to cultivate and use them.

Finally, I want to speak of another hero in another discipline: I draw noble Lords' attention to the death of district judge Nicholas Crichton on Sunday night. He introduced family drug and alcohol courts to this country. There are now nine FDACs helping mothers to overcome their substance misuse and prevent their children being taken into local authority care. I will go no further now; I am grateful for this opportunity and I look forward to the Minister's response.

5.15 pm

Lord Haselhurst (Con): My Lords, I congratulate my noble friend Lord Moynihan very warmly on his speech. I cannot possibly match his experience, his authority or the span of his remarks; I shall concentrate just a few words on sport exclusively, but that does not mean that I ignore or undervalue the role of the arts in improving the well-being of society.

There is general recognition that on the whole, give or take one or two possible exceptions, biologically, physiologically and psychologically, participation in sport is, in the words of *1066 and All That*, "a Good Thing", benefiting not only the individual but, echoing the words of the noble Lord, Lord Wallace, the wider community also. So logically, we ought to want to get more of it. The question is how this can be achieved. My insights are based simply on what I have experienced in my life and what I have observed.

Of course, in theory young people should be persuaded at school that it is important to have some element of sport in their lives and the opportunity to engage. However, we know that too often this is not the case, for reasons that are very well rehearsed. I add to those reasons what I call the school bus issue: parents often have an added concern about when their offspring return home. If they stay on at school to participate in team sports and so on they can be very much later and there is a fear that they are at risk in making their own way home.

[LORD HASELHURST]

When I moved to Greater Manchester in the 1970s I became acquainted with Monton Sports Club in the borough of Eccles. I joined as a social member but became very aware of the activity in the three sports the club embraced: lacrosse, cricket and tennis. Through the endeavours of the people in that club—they raised money, they borrowed money, they organised events—it was able to extend. It bought two squash courts and the club turned a corner; it was peopled by the local community and went from generation to generation. Fathers and mothers were playing tennis, their offspring were playing cricket or lacrosse and they all played squash. The club never looked back and is today one of the great community sporting centres in that part of the world.

In Saffron Walden, where I became the Member of Parliament, my young sons had a preference for football and I went out with other parents to support them in the under-eights, the under-nines, the under-10s et cetera. I saw again the determination of volunteers to support their offspring and then to look at how they could get better facilities: previously, they changed in the mud and there was no opportunity to have a shower immediately afterwards. That is not good enough if we are to retain the engagement of young people in sport today. The club to which they were attached, the youth football club, also went on to develop a social side and it survives today.

Noble Lords may know that one of my passions is cricket—without, I may say, any ability to play the game competitively. Nevertheless, Saffron Walden cricket club has an outstanding record in engaging boys and girls. Its registration day every April attracts a very large number of people.

Team games such as cricket are important for creating interdependence, as the noble Earl, Lord Listowel, said. There have been examples of very difficult youngsters being engaged for the first time when someone has been prepared to take them on and has given them the opportunity of playing cricket, whether on the beach, in the street or wherever. Two-handed sports such as tennis or badminton are also important for the person who is shy and nervous about taking part in sport, because you can find someone of your own level and get very great pleasure out of playing at that level with someone else.

We all know that at the back of all this is the need for money. There have to be decent facilities, as I have said. Kit has to be provided. Resources do not need to come solely from the public purse. I add to the praise for John Major for initiating the National Lottery. I have seen the good it has done in my former constituency. Local firms can be engaged. They too have an understanding of what makes a good community. There have been many examples of generous donations to help particular clubs along, especially if it is the very young they are helping. There are sundry charities which can be tapped if there is determined leadership in the social sporting clubs.

We should concentrate on strengthening this network of clubs because they deliver sporting benefits and help bring the community together. I would describe them as the building blocks of an integrated society. That is what I believe sport can contribute to the well-being of the community and the country.

5.21 pm

The Lord Bishop of Chichester: My Lords, I too am grateful to the noble Lord, Lord Moynihan, for introducing the debate and for his magnificent speech, which covered so many areas which indicate how transformative sport can be—in ways that I think the arts can mirror.

This Christmas very large numbers will attend carol services in churches across the country. Church of England statistics for 2017 indicate that nearly 8 million people attended a Christmas service of some kind, drawn by a combination of music, architectural environment and the drama of liturgy—a topical example of the arts and social well-being in the bringing together of practising Christians and others who find that this celebration of Christmas breaches barriers and creates community and a deep sense of belonging and well-being. Of course, this experience is not only for those who are privileged but happens in our churches that serve the outer estates and areas of deprivation in our nation.

Our cathedrals, Anglican and Roman Catholic alike, invariably maintain professional or semi-professional choirs. In order to do so, many of them offer choristers a free education from eight to 13. It would be a mistake to think that all successful choristers started life with social advantages. I owe my education and vocation to gaining a choral scholarship at a time when my mother was a struggling single parent. Many former choristers who are professional musicians and leaders in sport, drama and other important parts of national life today could tell a similar story.

The experience of music and training in that area is not the only way in which abilities can be unlocked. I recently met a senior academic who had struggled at school at a time when dyslexia was not recognised. It seemed that her intellect was not going to be developed—until she discovered a fascination with and love of art. That led her to study Chinese because of the different way in which the language is presented, through characters. As a result, her gifts were unlocked and she became an internationally recognised scholar.

The significance of the arts is evident in a number of ways, for all of them, as with early musical training, have something immersive that releases these gifts. The experience of endlessly rehearsing and performing, while constantly developing skills, is a vital factor in the functioning of the arts and sports. When we in this country sponsor major events of national celebration, such as the Queen's jubilee or a royal wedding, we rightly believe that we have at our disposal a kaleidoscope of performance skills that are world class. Those skills make great events because they are practised week in, week out. In this respect, music and the arts are so similar to sport and our remarkable achievements in the Olympics. International achievement is based on largely hidden but routine commitment. Let us not forget that this commitment so often depends on funding and on massive levels of encouragement, which are increasingly important in securing the social mobility that will enable gifted children to develop their gifts.

My second and final point is about the recuperative quality of the arts, which the noble Lord, Lord Howarth, also touched on powerfully. The remarkable arts charity Outside In was established in 2006 at Pallant House

Gallery in Chichester. It supports artists facing significant barriers to the arts world due to health, disability, social circumstance or isolation. It has worked with over 5,000 artists—half that number are now on its website—and sponsors live exhibitions. Artist support days, one of its primary activities, are held throughout the United Kingdom in locations of low arts engagement and social deprivation. Its open art exhibition, started in 2006, is now an international event from which award winners have gone on to develop a career in art. One artist whose work was exhibited by Outside In said of that opportunity, “If my life hadn’t changed at the point it did, I would have been found dead”. The astonishing achievements of Outside In demonstrate the social value of investment in the use of gifts that enrich us materially, emotionally and spiritually. They are for life, not just for Christmas.

Our future political uncertainty is already causing significant reputational and economic damage to our arts and their place internationally. Our creative industries, sport and tourism also suffer. Can the Minister give any commitment or indication from government that will help make a difference to that damage?

5.27 pm

Baroness Byford (Con): My Lords, I am grateful to my noble friend Lord Moynihan for securing this debate. Like him, I thank everybody who has sent briefings—there have been a lot of them. I want to follow up on his worrying comments about the amount of corruption that there is in sport today.

Sport has been an important part of my life, as I suspect it has for others taking part. It began with netball at school, followed by hockey, tennis and, in later years, golf. We were encouraged to take part and do our best but, as others have said, always to remember that we were part of a team. That is so important. I am glad that Sport England is investing some £40 million in large-scale facilities and that its community asset fund provides grants of up to £150,000 to organisations and communities that want to take over the ownership of spaces in their local areas.

This weekend, we have had a feast of the year’s sporting successes. All are to be congratulated, especially the Tour de France winner Geraint Thomas on his cycling achievements and the English women’s netball team on their success in winning at the Commonwealth Games in April. Perhaps even more moving were the successes achieved at the Invictus Games, where individuals who had overcome life-changing disasters showed that can-do attitude and, in turn, have gone on to inspire others.

In preparing for this debate, my mind went back to the 2012 Paralympics here in London. It will be a turning point in the recognition of the contribution made by all competitors. The opening set, with athletes suspended high in the air, was followed by fiercely competitive events that will be long remembered. I believe that that summer hotels, transport companies and many others realised that they must improve access for people with disabilities. I think it went further than that. I think employers then began to realise that people who were disabled but had commitment should succeed in the workplace, which is to be greatly encouraged.

I now turn back to the start of sport for many. I am lucky to be president of Young Leicestershire, which, through its clubs, gives young people the opportunity to take part in recreational skills including football, boxing, snooker, badminton, abseiling, fishing and canoeing, to name but a few. The river canoeing test, run over some 100 miles, celebrates its 60th anniversary next year. These clubs have been proud to see Leicestershire youngsters go on to many successful careers. Indeed, we are very proud to claim Gary Lineker and Mark Selby, who started with our clubs for young people.

I turn my thoughts to the benefits of music. As someone who learned the piano as a child, going through the agony of learning scales and arpeggios, my early enthusiasm was nearly killed off. I wondered whether it was all worth while, but music and movement can benefit us all, whether young or young at heart. Music and its rhythms speak to us in a personal way. Whether it is traditional or modern, pop or Christmas carols, one cannot help be uplifted. UK Music’s 2018 report states that the industry contributed a record £4.5 billion to the economy. It is reported that music is helping people with Alzheimer’s gain mobility and get greater enjoyment out of life.

My noble friend spoke of recreation and its value to well-being. Each year, millions of people take breaks or longer stays in the countryside. They visit the seaside, the uplands, national parks, National Trust properties or the National Forest and those visits are long remembered. Whether good brisk walks or slower rambling, playing games or taking on a more challenging venture such as rock climbing, outdoor recreation has much to offer. For many, being a volunteer with a wildlife group, where work is undertaken to improve habitats, blends hard work with enjoyment. We live in a beautiful country which has so much to offer.

I now have some questions for the Minister. First, the BBC covers many sporting events but I am concerned that more seem to be taken over by other broadcasting companies. Do the Government have a view on that change? Secondly, will radio coverage continue to exist in future years? For people travelling long distances in cars, the radio becomes an important part of that journey, and there are still many people who would rather listen to the radio than watch television.

Today is a very important day. Those of us who care very much about sport and recreation will have enjoyed this debate enormously. I again thank my noble friend for having introduced it.

5.33 pm

Lord Parekh (Lab): My Lords, I, too, begin by thanking the noble Lord, Lord Moynihan, for securing this debate on the contribution that the arts, recreation and sport make to the well-being of society. It raises two questions. First, what is the well-being of society? What are the constituents of well-being? Secondly, do the arts and sport contribute to it and, if so, how? I shall talk about these two questions in that order.

When we talk about the well-being of society, I think we are in danger of thinking of society as a kind of abstraction, hovering over us. At the end of the day, society consists of individuals and their relations with each other. The well-being of society really amounts

[LORD PAREKH]

to the well-being of individuals and their relations with each other. So the question to ask ourselves is: what kind of human beings would we like to encourage and what kind of relations between them would we like to cultivate? Many noble Lords have already spoken eloquently on the kind of society and the kind of individuals they would like to see.

On physical well-being, we want our fellow human beings and fellow members of our society to be able to live long and, more importantly, healthy lives. We want psychological well-being: we do not want them to feel lonely. Robert Putnam talked about bowling alone, where you are forced by the society in which you live to do major activities on your own without support from others. How do we secure a sense of community? There is a social component of well-being: a sense of reassurance that others care for me and that if I am in difficulty or subjected to any injustice, my fellow members will be prepared to stand up for me. There is also the moral component of well-being: a recognition that one is not an orphan, that there are others who care for one, that one is a valued member of society, with a sense of worth and self-esteem.

As we are now beginning to see, there is also the political component of well-being. Well-being is possible only in a society that is stable and secure, and that is meeting the challenges it comes across and conducting itself in a manner that one recognises and of which one is proud. Here, I should not be surprised if tomorrow, for example, poll results show that Brexit has resulted in a large number of illnesses in our society. With a political event such as Brexit, a lot of people feel utterly depressed at the way things are happening, wondering what is happening to our great country and as a result feeling lonely and worried about their future. That is not conducive to the well-being of society. Those are some components—there are many more. I am not giving a philosophy lecture but simply talking about the components of well-being.

I turn to my second question: how do sport and the arts contribute to well-being as I have defined it so far? Take sport. As several noble Lords have pointed out, it builds a sense of community and teaches us to be a team player, to be honest and to follow rules. In fact, often one first learns what it is to follow a rule when engaging in sport. It teaches us self-discipline. More importantly, it teaches us how to subordinate our ego to a larger cause, the team, how to be a team player and, beyond that, how to be loyal to sport—not just to this sport or that sport but to sport in general.

It is conducive to physical well-being. We all know that. Today's newspapers talk about how 20 minutes of exercise can do far more than a pill to control your blood pressure. More importantly, it creates invisible benefits by providing a common space, a common subject of conversation. A lot of people will say, "Are you a Manchester United fan or a fan of another team?". In the course of that, you build up a sense of a community of meaning, a community of aspirations, a community of contact. That vital role of sport should not be ignored.

As I can say from my experience, as one gets older, sport becomes very important. Once you have finished your life's work, what do you do? You get up in the

morning. If you have no interest in sport or the arts, you ask yourself: "How will I spend my day?". I can say from experience that for people who take up golf or another activity, sport becomes a lifesaver.

Let us turn to the arts and how they contribute to well-being. Here again I want to talk not only about the physical or material advantages that the arts bring; I want to talk about the invisible spiritual and moral contribution of the arts. The arts expand our consciousness. They help us to understand the other, who otherwise remains opaque. They bring us together by interpreting one community to the other and building a sense of cohesion. Arts are also the guardian of society's values. A man of literature or art helps us make sense of our experiences, so that one begins to make sense of one's own world and finds meaning in one's life. Take away the arts and a lot of us would not know what to do with ourselves: how to make sense of the chaos of human experience that constantly bombards us.

I therefore conclude that for these and other reasons, the arts and recreation—which I have not said much about, but not much needs to be said—contribute to our well-being. However, they contribute only if they are conducted in the right spirit. Here I alert your Lordships to one tendency that I have noticed in all countries, which is nationalism. When sport is no longer seen as sport but as war without weapons, and when the question is simply how to beat the other guy and how to make one's country great, whether it is in the Olympics, soccer or whatever, sport fails to perform its function.

Noble Lords will know that the noble Lord, Lord Tebbit, once said that to test an Indian immigrant's loyalty you should ask what team he supports in cricket: the Indian team or the English team. By saying that, he was politicising cricket. He was looking at one's politics—which team one supports—as a badge of one's patriotic identity, and that is a dangerous way to go. Likewise, art and culture can be seen in an extremely nationalistic way: art must promote patriotism and an individual's loyalty to the state. That is not the way in which sport and art should be conducted.

I want to ask the Government lots of questions, but one simple question is: given the fact that the arts and sport are so important, what are the Government's plans to encourage them in our schools? In many schools the budget has decreased and there is a sense of loss. I also want to commend Camelot, whose reception I went to the other day, which has given £39 billion to various activities, including £3 billion for arts and £3 billion for sport. I will end by saying how much I enjoyed the contribution of the noble Baroness, Lady Bottomley. If I had more time, I would have loved to reinforce her view of how culture and the arts can contribute to the well-being of a society and its members.

5.41 pm

The Earl of Arran (Con): My Lords, there are many sides to this debate, and each of its components deserves a separate debate of its own, but to have all these together is a rare feast. I add my huge and warm thanks to my noble friend for introducing this particularly

relevant topic, for this is a subject very far removed from the monotony and stress of Brexit, in which there is scant recreation.

First, on the physical side I will give just a few statistics, which nowadays appear to be a necessary part of every subject, and of which I am sometimes somewhat sceptical. Sport alone apparently adds over £20 billion to the economy and supports 400,000 full-time jobs. Over 36% of all adults play sport at least once a week—a remarkable figure. Society benefits significantly from this, as there are over 6,000 voluntary sports organisations, many providing invaluable assistance to deprived communities. It is further recognised that the economic benefit of sport to health and well-being is in excess of £12 billion per annum. The growing popularity of outdoor activity also means that now three in four adults in England regularly engage in outdoor recreational activity.

The arts—and culture—are also increasingly important, both to the economy and to society generally. Nicholas Serota recently praised the leading role played by the arts and culture in rejuvenating towns and cities across England. The economic value of the arts is in excess of £12 billion per annum, and the latest assessments are that this sector is growing five times faster than the UK economy as a whole.

To fully understand the origins of these activities it is possible to go way back into the history books. There is clear evidence from their artwork that the ancient Egyptians focused their lives on enjoying themselves and that, apart from excessive wine and some very doubtful partying, sports and games were highly popular. Roman history also tells a similar story, and of their skills in acting and storytelling.

On the more spiritual side of the debate, the beauty of art in whatever form lifts the spirit, transcends the soul, gives quiet joy and happiness and uplifts what for many can be a drab and dreary life.

Music can take us, as if on the wings of a dove, to faraway places where it holds us aloft. Literature can stir the imagination and relieve the continuous gloom of everyday media; it allows our eyes to linger on the works of great novelists and poets. Sport excites us, shows off the skills of great players and unites us in bonds of friendship and passion for our own individual chosen heroes and heroines.

Just imagine the emptiness of a world without sport, recreation or the arts. As the frailties of society become ever more apparent and disturbing, all three of these can have an immense beneficial impact on our health and mental well-being, enabling us to glory in the richness of the universe. Today my noble friend has struck a most noble chord.

5.46 pm

Baroness Scott of Needham Market (LD): I join in the congratulations to the noble Lord, and confess to him that I was a bit worried that this might be one of those debates in which we all just agree with each other. But there has been such an interesting variety of perspectives that although we may all agree, the debate has had variety and depth. I shall focus exclusively on the role of volunteers in delivering the whole spectrum of recreational activities, from internationally renowned organisations such as the Globe Theatre to small community

groups such as the football club in my home town of Needham Market. Whether people are donating millions for a new gallery, putting loose change in a bucket or volunteering their time for something they believe in and enjoy, these are the people who make all this happen. I should declare my interest as a member of the NCVO advisory council, and as a trustee of Community Action Suffolk.

One of the consequences of the reliance on philanthropy and public grant is that many of the organisations we are discussing today are in the business of having to demonstrate exactly how they impact on the well-being of society. That is a difficult area to navigate. The scepticism of the noble Earl, Lord Arran, reminded me of the theory that birthdays are clearly beneficial because people who have more of them live longer. However, despite the scepticism there is now a huge amount of evidence about the link between volunteering, recreation and well-being. That has come across strongly in a whole range of the briefings we have had, so we have moved beyond the formula cited by the noble Lord, Lord Haselhurst—“It’s a good thing”.

I found some interesting research from the What Works Wellbeing centre, which was set up to provide high-quality analysis for government, civil society and business. It shows how involvement with volunteering promotes different feelings depending on the sector in which the volunteer is working and the age of the participant. For young people, involvement with volunteering is about promoting stronger social connections, while for older people it is more important in giving a sense of purpose and identity, particularly once the work situation has ended.

In a study of older adults, reduced mortality was seen in those who volunteered regularly. Crucially though, this really applied only to those who were motivated by external reasons. In other words, there is something in the act of serving others that has the power. When people were being forced into doing something the effects were less positive. If that is borne out, it has some interesting implications for public policy. It is interesting to reflect that the benefits of the recreational activities we have discussed are both created and amplified by the benefits of volunteering.

A project run by Inspiring Futures over three years, centred around 10 heritage attractions in Greater Manchester including the Imperial War Museum, had volunteers from three groups—18 to 25 year-olds, over-50s and veterans. Of the 231 participants, 75% reported improved well-being, 60% reported long-term improvements, and 30% gained employment. These are powerful statistics.

One of the things we know about young people is that they are often reluctant to seek help from medical sources when they are chronically stressed, anxious or depressed. Their sources of support tend to come from their peers or from trusted adults such as youth workers or sports coaches, many of whom are volunteers; that point was made powerfully by the noble Earl, Lord Listowel. The charity City Year UK told me about one of their full-time social action volunteers, Sarah Smith, who set up a girls-only sport club in the school where she was working. Her club empowers girls to explore sporting activities such as kickboxing.

[BARONESS SCOTT OF NEEDHAM MARKET]

One of the key things to emerge from these studies is that such approaches can only happen when proper partnerships are working between community sports, community organisations, health and local authorities and the voluntary sector. That is one of those things that is easy to say but quite difficult to do, particularly because local authorities on the whole are pulling back from the sort of brokerage activity that they traditionally used to be involved in. That is why local infrastructure bodies such as Community Action Suffolk are so important: they provide the brokerage, the glue, that begins to pull these things together. They need investment: funding for volunteer offices and other infrastructure bodies is in decline and, as with most charities, there is a problem that while quite a lot of grant money is available, often there is no core funding to run the thing or, particularly, to meet the various regulatory requirements such as safeguarding, which we all support. This is an important area that we need to address.

On diversity, the noble Lord, Lord Wallace, is absolutely right; we see strong recreational and volunteering benefits in wealthy, middle-class communities. The trick is to know how to extend those benefits. I was particularly impressed by some work that the National Trust has been doing at Raynham Hall in Havering. It has been bringing members of the local community into arts and community gardening projects, along with schools and so on; where we get these partnerships, we can begin to break down barriers.

This is something for the whole sector—at statutory, local and national level, in organisations, businesses and communities; everyone needs to work together. The well-being benefits that we hear of are not about individuals alone, but about the well-being of society as a whole.

5.52 pm

Lord Mawson (CB): My Lords, I congratulate the noble Lord, Lord Moynihhan, on securing this important debate. Both he and I were involved for many years in different aspects of the 2012 London Olympics, he in the sport, me in ensuring that east London had a longer-term legacy from the Games.

I was involved in the London Games for 19 years. The noble Lord, Lord Rogers of Riverside, and I, along with Paul Brickell, Richard Sumray and the architect Mike Davies, wrote the first document setting out the legacy vision for east London and creating the rationale for what turned out to be a successful bid. Paul Brickell and I then wrote the structure for the Minister of State, Hazel Blears, which led to the establishment of the Olympic Park Legacy Company, where I chaired the regeneration committee for 10 years.

I mention these facts, which are often not grasped by the press and the wider world, because the reason we got involved in the Games as locals from day one, and encouraged this country to challenge the Paris bid, was precisely because we could see the catalytic opportunity the Games would present to east London with respect to regeneration and community building: using sport to stimulate an enterprise economy that would not only generate jobs and skills but create mixed integrated communities. It was a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to connect sport, recreation, housing and

the arts with business development and entrepreneurial activity. The planets we could see had the possibility of aligning, thus creating the thrust you need to generate changes on a large scale. This 248-hectare development could catalyse change in some of the most challenging communities in this country, if only we could move beyond traditional government silos and join the dots.

One of the keys to our success of course was that those of us working on the ground knew that in the middle of this emerging opportunity lived one of the largest artistic and creative communities outside New York. The die was set, the conditions existed to lift the well-being of thousands of people in some of our poorest neighbourhoods. The challenge was to get the long-term cross-party support that would be necessary and to bend the clunky, siloed machinery of government to serve our purpose. I left the Legacy Corporation board last March with a legacy firmly rooted in east London. The plans we have been developing over the last 19 years for sports, the arts and culture at the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park continue to slot into place.

Our plan, first articulated in 2006, to bring University College London, UAL, the London College of Fashion, Sadler's Wells, the BBC, the V&A and the Smithsonian to the park is going well, although it is a hard grind as always getting the buildings actually built—there is nothing new there. Practical relationships are deepening between these institutions and local communities; that is the key and it is why a core group of us got involved in this project in the first place. Fish Island was designated last Friday as a creative enterprise zone by the Mayor of London, thus helping to generate a lively small-business cluster linked to universities, cultural institutions and the tech and creative businesses at Here East, the former Press Centre.

I will focus the remainder of my speech on the arts and on one of these east London artists in particular, because I think the clue to the “how” in the title of this debate is to be found in his work in east London stretching back over 30 years.

Frank Creber is like the Lowry of east London. I declare an interest as a friend and colleague. It was he who was commissioned by the noble Lord, Lord Coe, and LOCOG to make paintings that captured the regeneration and legacy of the Games. It was Frank who I worked with in 2014, when at ExCel London, down on the Royal Docks, he unassumingly brought together the “Walking on Water” exhibition in partnership with Grand Designs Live. A one-mile long art exhibition captured the interplay between east London's vibrant communities and the regeneration which is now defining them, with large art works mostly in oil, capturing the public spaces in east London where education, housing, recreation, theatre, business and enterprise and the arts play together in a global dance.

Over 110,000 people visited Frank's 200-piece exhibition, which brilliantly captured the changing life and times of east London. Large oil paintings captured both the scale and physicality of the regeneration taking place in the Lower Lea Valley. But more importantly, Frank captured the lives of local people who live in these communities, dissected by the many islands of land that litter the six and a half miles of waterways that define the Lower Lea Valley.

Places are created and defined by how well or not the physical changes they undergo connect and engage with the people whose lives they disrupt. Look at some of the megacities the Chinese are creating, displacing en masse millions of people along with their history and identity. Let us ask ourselves how engaged their people are in the regeneration of their societies. Where are their artists?

Frank Creber's pictures, which you can see on the web, rather brilliantly capture the engagement in east London and the creative interchange between people and place. He knows that health and well-being are not to be found in government silos but in the interplay between them. His pictures capture the thought that you can only embrace change if you are a participant in it, not just an onlooker. He captures the human spirit's natural tendency to be curious. His work does not think in boxes; it is organic. Frank works with local young people on their projects; his pictures capture this interplay. Many of the young people Frank works with in east London come from chaotic backgrounds. His artwork positively embraces this complexity and sees it as a positive opportunity to be harnessed, much as I suspect John Lennon did in his life: the adversity made the man.

The arts are a window into our souls and into our communities. Frank Creber is an excellent example of what this debate is all about.

5.59 pm

Baroness Bull (CB): My Lords, prior to my current role at King's College London, referred to earlier by the noble Lord, Lord Howarth, I had the privilege of working in the arts for 30 years. They were 30 years in which I experienced at first hand, in schools, hospitals and local communities, the ways in which art inspires and empowers individuals to imagine a world beyond their own—to dream, then to aspire and then to achieve. Encounters with prisoners on parole, young people at risk and patients in hospitals convinced me of the multiple benefits that flow from engagement with art—to people, to communities and on to society.

Over the years, I gathered many powerful anecdotes about individuals inspired and lives transformed through art, but, as I never tire of saying, the plural of "anecdote" is not "evidence". So when I had the chance to take up a role within a university, where I might connect what I had done for so many years with robust evidence about its value, the opportunity was too good to turn down. Therefore, I too am grateful to the noble Lord, Lord Moynihan, for what I see as an early Christmas gift—the opportunity to talk on one of the subjects about which I am most passionate.

Over recent years, two authoritative reviews have provided the most comprehensive overview to date of the value of arts and culture to society. The 2015 Warwick commission and the 2016 Arts and Humanities Research Council's Cultural Value project both expound the array of benefits that art generates—economic, educational, and for health and well-being, as well as social.

As time is limited, I will note only in passing the underpinning economic contribution of the cultural sector and the jobs it provides. I will talk about how arts participation supports improved educational outcomes

through enhancing cognitive abilities, confidence, and problem-solving and communication skills. Nor will I expand on art's contribution to health and well-being—a subject so ably covered already in this debate by the noble Lord, Lord Howarth. Instead, I will concentrate on those issues that might be grouped under the heading "social": community cohesion, civic engagement and crime reduction.

Across the world and across history, there are many examples of art building bridges and fostering dialogue across fractured communities. In 1947, the Edinburgh International Festival was founded by Rudolf Bing, an Austrian who had fled the rise of Nazi Germany and come to the UK to run Glyndebourne opera house. Bing conceived the Edinburgh Festival as a way to unite divided nations through art. Four decades later, on the site of the Berlin Wall, Leonard Bernstein conducted musicians from both east and west in a performance of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, its final movement memorably reimagined as an ode not to joy but to freedom. More recently, the West-Eastern Divan Orchestra was formed to include both Arab and Israeli musicians, working together as equal artists across political and ideological divides.

So what are the properties of art that it can play such a powerful role in reconciliation and community cohesion? I believe that art offers a safe environment in which to explore differing views—a way to see the world through other people's eyes. These are not just fine sentiments; a growing body of evidence shows that participation in art helps diverse groups to form friendships and understand each other across cultural divides. It helps us become more tolerant, more empathetic and more altruistic, better able to coexist in a diverse world. I cannot think of a moment in my lifetime when this has been more important.

There is also a proven correlation between arts engagement and civic behaviours. Students from low-income families who engage in arts at school are twice as likely to volunteer and 20% more likely to vote. A range of studies show that arts participation helps young people build the confidence for political engagement, which is fundamental to the processes of democracy.

I do not pretend that the arts are a panacea for all of society's ills, and I am well aware that similar claims to these about the benefits of sport have already been made in this debate by other noble Lords, but I believe that there is something unique about art, and that distinction derives from the personal experience of it. As the AHRC's 2016 report made clear, some of the most important contributions made by art to society are embedded in the individual experience—in art's ability to make us more self-reflective and better able to understand ourselves and therefore to understand others.

Perhaps nowhere is that more powerfully demonstrated than in the still-too-rare examples of art in prisons. The 2013 *Re-Imagining Futures* report explored arts interventions in the processes of desistance. It found that arts engagement helped prisoners redefine themselves. It increased their ability to work with others, which correlated with increased self-control, and through art they were able to imagine and then to explore alternative ways of living their lives.

[BARONESS BULL]

In reviewing the evidence, it is hard not to be struck by how often research shows arts participation to be of disproportionate benefit to the well-being of people from disadvantaged backgrounds and to those living in disadvantaged circumstances. Yet we know from the Warwick commission that children born into low-income families are the least likely to engage with the arts and culture, either through education or at home. We also know that in state schools hours of arts teaching and the number of arts teachers are falling, while fee-paying schools continue to sell themselves to parents on the basis of their outstanding arts provision and facilities.

Does the Minister agree that we need urgently to find ways to address this conundrum—that those people who would derive most benefit from engagement with the arts are often the least likely to be given the means through which to access it? In the end, the well-being of society, whether through art, sport or recreation, depends on the well-being of individuals—individuals across all parts of society, and particularly those most in need.

6.05 pm

Baroness Sater (Con): I am very grateful to, and thank, my noble friend Lord Moynihan for introducing this very important debate on sport, recreation and the arts and their value to society.

As a teenager, I played a lot of tennis, and even had the honour of once representing Wales as a junior. Although I did not go on to pursue a professional career, I know that participating in sport, at whatever level, can bring great benefits to communities and individuals. Sport can often touch and inspire young people who struggle in other areas of their lives.

We are all familiar with the image of the typical teenager these days—glued to a smartphone or stuck in their bedroom playing computer games hour after hour. There is no shortage of evidence that young people do not take enough exercise, as mentioned today. According to Sport England, 80% of girls and 70% of boys do not meet the Chief Medical Officer's national recommended level of activity. The challenge is particularly great for disadvantaged young people, who do not always have access to good facilities or the opportunity to participate in sport.

Until recently, I chaired the national sports charity StreetGames—an interest that I need to declare—and I am now privileged to be its patron. There are 1,000 organisations in the StreetGames network, each providing activities on most days of the week. They are all the lifeblood of their neighbourhoods, providing about half a million young people with activities each year. Exercise is not the only benefit. The StreetGames Fit and Fed campaign delivers many hours of physical activity nationwide to disadvantaged young people each day of the school holidays and it provides a meal, facilitating an opportunity to combat the inactivity, isolation and loneliness that affect many children during their holidays. These projects were evaluated by Northumbria University, which highlighted that they provided more than just sports and food; they also offered the opportunity to learn new skills from the course leaders, from each other and from partner organisations.

I would also like to touch on the use of sport to reduce the risk of young people getting into trouble and to support those who need a positive pathway to stop reoffending. Children and young people get into trouble for all sorts of reasons. The value of sport in tackling youth crime and anti-social behaviour is well known. It is not just that the physical activity takes them off the street; mentors and supportive volunteers provide a friendly ear and the discipline and guidance that these young people do not get anywhere else. Self-confidence grows from breaking away from the crowd.

As a youth magistrate and a board member of the Youth Justice Board, I saw how sport can transform young lives. As a magistrate, I often wished that there were more options to send children to relevant and safe community sports clubs and programmes that would really help them and help to deal with the issues they faced with their offending. Finding that club, organisation or activity to which they could relate made a huge difference, and there are some great initiatives and organisations providing excellent opportunities.

One example is Wirral Positive Futures, which engages young people who have offended or are at risk of offending or at risk of substance misuse. One teenage boy referred to this organisation had been excluded from school in year 10 with no academic qualifications. This negatively affected his confidence, self-esteem and behaviour. The Wirral anti-social behaviour team helped him get involved in sporting activities and in volunteering for several sports development programmes, including the National Citizen Service. He went on to gain a City & Guilds level 1 qualification. But more than the paper qualification, he described how he now felt he had a focus on what he really wanted to do with his life and on who he wanted to be, with a better path ahead. Without sport providing these opportunities, the future for this young man looked very different indeed.

Such opportunities should be available across the country, through the creation of a locally led national referral pathway to be used by youth offending teams and other agencies to help reduce crime and reoffending by directing young offenders into sport and physical activity. I ask my noble friend the Minister to explore the potential to integrate sport into the core crime reduction and protection policies across government. The aim would be to develop an early pathway to connect the youth justice sector with community sport to reduce crime and anti-social behaviour. A huge leap in the right direction would be to get key agencies and organisations such as the Home Office, the MoJ, the Youth Justice Board, the Association of Police and Crime Commissioners, DCMS and Sport England around a table. The potential benefits are clear to see, for the young people and for wider society: fitter, healthier and more focused teenagers, as well as safer communities with fewer victims of crime.

Finally, we need to recognise the importance of thousands of dedicated volunteers up and down the country who help deliver community sport in whatever local facilities can be found. Volunteers give their time freely and selflessly. They make a huge difference to others, and we owe them a huge debt of gratitude. Sport can and does play a massive role in society,

improving physical and mental well-being, bringing communities together, increasing social interaction, creating positive change and, in some cases, turning lives around. This all makes our society healthier, safer and happier.

6.11 pm

Lord Addington (LD): My Lords, when you find yourself speaking at the end of a debate, it is a real occasion. Everybody has said all there is to be said, but I have not said it personally. So I now find myself running down the list of who I agreed with, although it is a rather boring way of speaking.

I have to start with the noble Lord, Lord Moynihan. When he starts talking about sport, I find myself agreeing with about 95% of what he says. That is better than most colleagues on my own Benches—quite a lot better, to be perfectly honest.

Much of the tone of this debate is recognising that all this is, as the noble Lord, Lord Haselhurst, said, “a Good Thing”—something that adds to life and makes it slightly better. It is positive and active; it makes you interact with people. The most unexpected bit of briefing I got was from the Royal College of Psychiatrists, which said that visiting a museum or gallery makes you something like 48%—I do not know how it came up with 48%—less likely to be depressed, if you are over 50. I should pop into one on the way home. Something there goes in.

All forms of sporting activity and the arts, certainly at an amateur level, have far more in common than any of the groups involved likes to admit. You have to get together as a group, organise and get people there on time; you need a secretary and a treasurer; you have to deal with a little bit of internal politics; you build links, and often it is an employment exchange; there is social interaction—it is all there. All these things come together for a common purpose, so I think it is very good that we bring them together.

The one thing these all have backing them, the one almost universally praised bit of legislation on this, is the National Lottery. It is coming up for a quarter of a century old. Whatever else happened in Sir John Major’s life, that was “a Good Thing” that I do not think anybody will argue with. One or two people still say that the Government should have funded these as core activities, but they never did. They never gave that solid base for all these activities. Without the National Lottery, we would not have had the Olympics or the incredibly positive experience of the Paralympics, which have changed entire attitudes towards disability. The numerous speeches I made on the subject in here were swept away by that opening ceremony. The lottery gave us the base to prepare properly for it.

I had a briefing from Camelot, which is very concerned about the Postcode Lottery and had been very concerned about the Health Lottery. It does not want anybody to bite into their thing, and it is smaller now. If anything is going to damage the National Lottery and that central pool of funding, we have to look at it very carefully. If we destroy this great pool of funding, it will come not with one blow but with many. I ask the Government to monitor the situation. How about even suggesting that anybody who wants to run these

synthetic lotteries, as they are rather rudely called, and gets to a certain level takes on some of these responsibilities? That might be a nice idea. “If you are going to raise billions of pounds, you take on some of this work”. I think we might have a change and a different relationship with what is going on. This building block for our society, which has been very necessary, could be damaged, so I hope the Government monitor this and make sure that they keep an eye on it in future. If it goes, we are back to square one, where sport has to scabble around for support and cannot build long-term projects or get good funding for a development programme.

We relied on the lucky and the brilliant to get medals in the past—a policy that will always give you some success, but never consistent success. The same will be true of the arts. When the right reverend Prelate spoke about it being a lifetime of commitment, he reminded me of Jack Nicklaus. I think it was he who, when asked why he got lucky, said:

“The more I practise, the luckier I get”.

You have to work at these things to find excellence.

I ask the Government to look at how they make sure these wonderful amateur structures are supported and helped. Local government has given help in the past and is under pressure at the moment. Local government is one of the key elements here that has not been mentioned much—although local structures have, and I thank my noble friend Lady Scott for mentioning volunteering, which runs through everything we are talking about here. How can local government be seen, supported and helped? The National Lottery can do lots of things, but it cannot do all of it. It can help, but it cannot do everything. If you put up a pavilion on local authority land that is not maintained, you will not get the best out of it. You may well not be able to use it at all.

We have a situation where there is much that is good. We are enabling ourselves to do very good things. We have a structure, based on volunteering, that is not doing it all but is helping. How do we get more people involved? It comes down to education. The pressure provided by the baccalaureate and the pressure on academic attainment seem to be squeezing out the introductory process at an early age. We all have wonderful stories about finding people and bringing them in from the outside. The noble Earl, Lord Listowel, spoke about sports projects. I am involved in the Atlas Foundation, which takes rugby union’s All Schools project out and gets people involved in education. This is wonderful, but it is repairing damage. We should not have to do that as much. We should use the education system to get people their first taste and make sure it goes through. As we look to the future, I hope we concentrate more on making sure that these things in the education system are valued and actively supported.

Once again, I agree with the noble Lord, Lord Moynihan. We should make sure that those schools that have an abundance, often in the private sector, support the state sector. Ultimately, you are helping yourselves. If you are on a football team, you need someone to play against. You need to expand your base. Recreational sport needs this. Sport itself is reacting. Older groups in society are often learning lessons from the younger

[LORD ADDINGTON]

ones—if you cannot run around for 80 or 90 minutes and take all the knocks and bumps that you used to when in your prime, there are ways of carrying on doing something in later life. I plead guilty to golden oldies rugby, which I describe as a methadone project for those who were heavily addicted in their youth. The same is true of walking football, et cetera—making sure that people carry on.

We learned these lessons from having introductory games and versions of these sports when younger. I think rugby union developed mini-rugby when it became apparent that, in an under-nines game at 15-a-side, all that the winger was tested for was how he endured hypothermia. We have to make sure this goes through. Unless we support and give introductions, and have places in local clubs which are doing most of the work for us, which can take this on, we will not get it through.

The same is true of the arts. I am told that, in many a dance studio which is badly maintained, the question of hypothermia becomes relevant again. But they all need the same thing. They need to be introduced early and supported.

I hope that the Minister will be able to give an assurance that the Government are taking this seriously, will make sure that the structures that we have within the public sector are strong and will be protected, and that we support and help those who are doing most of the work for us, basically because they enjoy it.

6.21 pm

Lord Griffiths of Burry Port (Lab): My Lords, this is indeed an early gift for Christmas—a debate whose title, when I first looked at it, reminded me of a rather shapeless pyjama suit that I sometimes wear that allows me, within its unfolding scope, to go this way or that. I leave the rest to your Lordships' imagination.

Like the noble Lord, Lord Addington, I certainly do not want to repeat what has already been said. It has been an impressive debate, with a wide variety of points of view and perspectives, and a lot of expertise. I am very grateful to have listened to the speeches.

If I do not want to repeat what has been said, I certainly do not want to repeat what I myself have said. It was Harold Wilson who could quote himself brilliantly for many years after he had spoken on anything. However, I am aware that in the few short months I have been standing in this position, I myself have spoken in debates—this is by no means an exhaustive list—on the future of museums, the importance of the arts, post-Brexit realities for the creative industries and the 250th anniversary of the Royal Academy of Arts. That is under the arts bit of the Motion.

On sport, we have debated the balance between giving money to elitist and medal-winning sports, and getting children and others out on to sports fields by injecting funds at the lowest possible level. And we had a recent debate on image and performance-enhancing drugs, and looked at sport from the point of view of the threat posed to it by these habits.

Under well-being, last Friday the most reverend Primate the Archbishop of Canterbury introduced a debate on reconciliation as an aspect of British foreign

policy and, not long before that, we had a debate to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the Armistice, when we had occasion to speak about peace. There have been many debates in your Lordships' House in recent times about mental health, particularly as it applies to children and young people, and loneliness and self-image have figured largely in how those debates have proceeded.

With all that in mind, and not wanting to go over that ground again, though profiting from what others have said, I have tried to find a different way from this point forward: how to triangulate those areas of experience and endeavour. I came up with a saying by the French philosopher Michel Foucault, who described more than once something he called a "limit-experience". For him, a limit-experience was what behoves a human being to test themselves to the limit to discover who they are. Settling for a bourgeois, unchallenged kind of repetitive and routine life is the very pits in terms of defining what it means to be properly and fully human. So we test ourselves to the limit. I believe that these areas of endeavour that we have been talking about give extraordinary opportunities for people to test and push themselves to the limit.

I shall use the art technique known as pointillism and just give little bullet points. On art, for example, I was standing in the Hermitage Museum in St Petersburg in front of the recently restored Rembrandt painting of "The Return of the Prodigal". I had seen excellent reproductions, but nothing prepared me for the reality. I stood in front of this picture, which was larger than I had thought, for a start, and it simply demanded of me that I situate myself in the dynamic that the artist had put before us on a flat canvas. Was I with the father welcoming the child home? Was I the child longing to be welcomed home? Was I with the older brother in a bit of a stupor and not being very friendly? There was all the darkness as well as the light, and Rembrandt was a master of the light.

Then we have Picasso and his extraordinary "Guernica" in Madrid. What a commentary on the rise of totalitarianism in the 1930s that was. What searing images of cruelty and suffering, and the twisting of all it means to be human is present in that canvas. I have to say that I will be spending Christmas in Paris, and I will certainly visit the restored Picasso museum—which I dislike enormously; its predecessor was much more ordinary and more wonderful. Picasso's "Guernica" is what constantly comes to mind when I want to think about the rise in our day of totalitarianism.

Then there is the Tate Modern, where I stood in front of those extraordinary canvases by Mark Rothko. I did not understand how to approach them. They are not my kind of thing, although I am wearing a Mark Rothko tie in honour of the debate. A dear friend of mine, Katherine Baxter, who knows about these things, assured me how to be in front of the "dark luminosity"—there is a phrase—that comes from that canvas, both half threatening but beguilingly drawing you into something that is far deeper than you have ever known before.

I lived for 10 years in Haiti and worked in co-operatives with the primitive artists there whose art in the 1950s and 1960s was very much in vogue. People had suffered

so badly, yet through art they were able to envisage realities and cope with externalising interior dynamics that they found almost intolerable. If you can get alongside such people and enter their minds and their spiritual being, something happens to you as well. Art can push people to the limits. It is that aspect of art that I want to lay before your Lordships today. A work of art, said Picasso, must make a person react. It must agitate him and shake him up.

Turning to sport, I played rugby for my university at a time when Wales beat everybody. I played rugby against Barry John—people of a certain age will know that that ought to get me into heaven more quickly than others. Rugby is a terrifically physical game; you put your life on the line every time you rub the wintergreen into your legs before taking to the field, and run faster than the other guy not because you are more skilful but because you are terrified of being tackled by him. The noble Lord, Lord Parekh, says that sport teaches people to follow the rules; not in rugby, especially in the scrum. The things that happen in the front row of the scrum are in defiance of the rules—it is indeed a law book unto itself, never written down. But people are certainly living at the edge of their abilities there.

I got my colours for both rugby and cricket at university. In Wales, we have soft wickets; fast bowlers do not do terribly well. They swing the ball, but they cannot do much off the pitch. However, on tour in Hampshire, where they have hard wickets, the ball comes at you like a rocket—an Exocet. You pretend to be brave as you put your foot forward into the line of the ball and play the perfect stroke, only to realise that it was a nanosecond or two too late. Cricket is an intimidating game, too.

My noble friend Lord Parekh talked about nationalism, which he is rather worried about. My wife—bless her heart—is worried about it too: she is English, and so when England play Wales, it is not possible for us to coexist in the same house. Ancient wars are being refought when those games take place. I find shouting for the Welsh team when I watch a Wales-England game on television is a good substitute for going out and knocking the first Englishman I see on the nose.

I cannot go to the Millennium Stadium, or whatever it is called now—I have never been—because I cannot bear the commercialisation and commodification of sport. It was such a fantastic game to be part of—an activity and a way of life. But I cannot bear the flames that go up, or the triumphalist announcements made when someone scores.

Art and sport can push us to the limit; what about well-being? What pushes me towards well-being, or the feeling that my well-being is asserted or affirmed by experiences that push me out of my comfort zone? It is poetry. I gave my library of 5,000 or 6,000 books to a seminary in Fiji, but I took all my poetry into retirement. I live with the earth-shaking thoughts of George Herbert, John Donne and R S Thomas. The love of solitude is also something that threatens me; I am naturally gregarious. It is sometimes a little threatening to be on your own, and yet I think I absolutely need to

do that sometimes in order to discover the deep streams running through me and the deep thoughts struggling to find expression.

All of this tells me we must not just approach questions of sport, the arts and well-being quantitatively. We must not simply commodify them. We must somehow always understand the importance and essence of these activities and endeavours. How can anybody be against any of them? Surely the case that needs to be made is that their availability should be maximised, and we should do whatever it takes to bring people the possibility of enjoying these activities. That is true more than ever in these Brexit-dominated times. Rather than percentages, statistics or millions of pounds, we should focus on understanding and supporting these essential activities and empathising and associating with them.

This is my conclusion, you will be glad to know. I wrote a poem, which is my Christmas present to your Lordships. I grew up the son of a single mother, living in utter poverty in one room in a brickyard in Burry Port, South Wales. I was gloriously happy as a child. Here is my gift, which will remind you of “The Hippopotamus Song”:

“Sport, sport, glorious sport,
Nothing quite like it in my Burry Port.
There’s art for the seeing,
And tons of well-being,
A town to have glee in
Is my Burry Port”.

Happy Christmas.

6.34 pm

Viscount Younger of Leckie (Con): Well, my Lords, it will be difficult to follow that. I would like to start by thanking my noble friend Lord Moynihan for securing today’s debate on this hugely important and rather wide-ranging subject, and for his excellent speech. We have heard so much about the benefits of sport and the arts that I almost feel I should give my remarks with a Dispatch Box that rises up and down to ease the back, or jogging on the spot, or speaking in iambic pentameter. But I will spare noble Lords that; in fact, given his poetry, the noble Lord, Lord Griffiths, is certainly better qualified for this form of exercise.

The interest in today’s debate has illustrated the incredible power that sport and the arts have in inspiring people to get out into their communities and connect with others, and the enjoyment and benefits this can bring. I will speak about the arts, but let me focus first on the benefits of sport and physical activity, which we all know can be good for us in many ways, both mentally and physically. As the noble Lord, Lord Parekh, said, it can strengthen communities, but I will add that it can strengthen the economy, too.

Looking at the physiological facts—here I have my own verbal exercise—moderate-intensity activity stimulates the body’s cardiorespiratory, musculoskeletal and metabolic systems and, achieved over time, causes them to adapt and become more efficient. As my noble friend Lord Haselhurst said, that is clearly a good thing. Muscle-strengthening activities help maintain functional ability, stimulate bone formation and help reduce bone loss. They also help with glucose metabolism and reducing blood pressure. Indeed, there are reports in the press today about research by the London

[VISCOUNT YOUNGER OF LECKIE]

School of Economics and Political Science which suggests that exercise is as good as medicine for lowering blood pressure, as the noble Lord, Lord Parekh, pointed out.

When you exercise, your body releases chemicals called endorphins, which reduce your perception of pain and trigger a positive feeling. All this adds up to a reduction in risk of approximately 30% for all-cause mortality when comparing the most with the least physically active, according to the UK's Chief Medical Officers, who produce guidance about recommended physical activity levels. Being active has been shown to treat, manage and prevent a range of physical and mental health conditions, including heart disease, cancers, diabetes, stress, depression and anxiety.

Talking of diabetes, we know that there is a pressing need to look at the rise of type 2 diabetes. Only this week, the *Times* reported that two dozen people a day are having feet and toes amputated because of diabetes. Foot amputations are up by a quarter since 2010. Another pressing matter for society and this Government is poor mental health. Again, we know that the risk of depression is approximately 20% to 30% lower for adults who participate in daily physical exercise.

It is not just health; physical activity can be a tool for social good, too. For example, as my noble friend Lady Sater said in her remarks, in prisons it can have benefits for the physical, mental and social well-being of prisoners and it can reduce recidivism. As she said, it can also provide a meaningful alternative to those at risk of committing crime, and I can assure her that we are working with the relevant departments and agencies on these very topics.

All of this is at the heart of what we are trying to achieve through the Government's sport and physical activity strategy, *Sporting Future*. In the strategy, we set out five key outcomes that we are striving towards: physical well-being; mental well-being; individual development; social and community development; and economic development. We want to use sport and physical activity to create a healthier, happier and more productive nation. Helping people to be more active in whatever way suits them is a crucial part of this. For some people that may be sport; for others it means fitting physical activity into their busy daily life. I am reminded that when my late father, George Younger, was interviewed about how he got exercise during his long and busy political career, he said, "Oh yes, very important, I tend to run up the stairs". He would learn much from this debate; things have moved on.

We particularly want to reach people who have not traditionally got involved, or who think that being active is not for them. Sport England has committed to spending at least a quarter of its budget on tackling inactivity. For example, it is investing up to £100 million in 12 local delivery pilots across the country to solve inactivity challenges in specific locations and scale up what works in other areas. Such areas include Doncaster, South Tees, Hackney and Greater Manchester.

Investment is also going into mental health projects such as Mind's Get Set to Go project, supported by Sport England and the National Lottery. Since 2015, this project has helped more than 3,500 people with mental health problems take part in specially designed physical activity projects. The evaluation has shown the

important role that physical activity can play in building resilience and supporting mental health recovery. As was recently revealed by the new Active Lives Children and Young People survey, it is encouraging to see that some 3 million children lead active lives, doing an average of 60 minutes or more of physical activity a day.

But let me be clear: there is another side to this story. Some 2.3 million children and young people—that is almost a third—are doing less than 30 minutes of physical activity a day. This is unacceptable. We must do more, and the Government must do more, to encourage young people to live healthy, active lives. To answer a question raised by my noble friend Lady Sater, this is something we will tackle through the new cross-departmental school sport and activity action plan, with DCMS, the Department for Education and the Department of Health and Social Care working together. We will make it a priority to ensure that all young people have sufficient opportunities to engage in sport and physical activity.

Government is working ever closer. For example, just last week five Ministers appeared in front of the DCMS Select Committee at the same time to discuss the social impacts of culture and sport—the first time this has happened.

My noble friend Lord Moynihan raised an interesting point about introducing legislation—I think he called it, as a start, sports law. The Government have no such plans currently, but he made some interesting points and I will certainly take them back to the department.

Good-quality facilities and spaces are important factors to keep people engaged over the long term. Sport England is investing up to £40 million in large-scale sports facilities projects up to 2021, and a further £15 million per year in smaller-scale projects through its Community Asset Fund. We recognise that playing fields are a vital part of sporting infrastructure up and down the country and are one of the most important resources for sport in England. Every school must, by law, have access to enough playing field space to meet its sports and curriculum needs. *Sporting Future* made clear our support for bringing together sports and physical activity facilities with other community services. It also highlighted the benefits of multisport facilities in improving usage and sustainability.

The noble Lord, Lord Addington, and others mentioned volunteering. I want to see strong local partnerships come together with the amazing workforce of community volunteers that we know sport relies on, to understand the needs of different areas and to reinvigorate their local facilities and green spaces.

We can be proud of our sporting heritage in this country. We are spoiled for choice when it comes to sporting heroes, and I am sure noble Lords enjoyed this year's "Sports Personality of the Year", which I happened to watch last weekend. I offer my congratulations to the worthy winners of the various awards.

I thank my noble friend Lady Byford for her comments about broadcasting, including TV and radio; I have noted what she said. The Government have said that they do not intend to reopen discussion on listed events. It is for sports bodies to strike the right balance between reaching a wide audience and generating revenue. We have a proven track record in hosting

major events that inspire people—look at the impact London 2012 had on volunteering and on perceptions of disability.

The noble Earl, Lord Listowel, spoke about volunteering, particularly in sports. As he pointed out, the latest Active Lives survey showed a decline in sports volunteering. We need to look into the reasons for this, and we will certainly do so. We understand that volunteering for major sporting events remains robust, so that gives some reassurance.

In the legacy of London 2012 we also see sports and the arts come together. The forthcoming East Bank site at Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park will host BBC Music, a new V&A museum and a new venue for Sadler's Wells. I am delighted that the noble Lord, Lord Mawson, spoke in this debate. I applaud his role in the success of these projects, involving a combination of sports, the arts and artists, as he mentioned in his speech.

Major sporting and cultural events offer unparalleled opportunities for everyone to get involved and can lift the spirits of everyone around. For example, the volunteer programme for Hull's City of Culture year in 2017 had engagement from every street in the city. My noble friend Lady Bottomley waxed lyrical about the benefits of the National Lottery, in conjunction with mentioning Hull. I applaud her for that. I also pay tribute to Sir John Major's great vision: it was, is and continues to be a great success story.

ONS data for London 2012 showed that on a day-to-day basis, people were happier. I presume that means there was a "happy index" somewhere—but I have to admit I have not seen it.

I listened to the excellent speech from the noble Baroness, Lady Bull. Of course, during her long career she has combined sport and art, although I think it fair to say that her remarks were focused more on the arts. This provides a nice bridge to move the debate on. Noble Lords will recognise that engagement in the arts, culture and creative practice are also very good for us—whether that is singing in a choir, visiting a museum, using a library, or volunteering at a heritage event. The noble Lord, Lord Wallace, spoke about the Parliament choir, of which I declare my own membership and support. It is a great choir and although I am a lapsed tenor, I hope to come back at some point.

These pursuits may be our life's passion, a hobby, or a place to socialise and reflect; we do these things because we intuitively know that they bring enjoyment, meaning and purpose to our lives. The right reverend Prelate the Bishop of Chichester was right to highlight the importance to communities of choirs, the benefits of choral scholarships, focusing on all backgrounds, and the uplifting of the soul through great music, including carols. In this context, my noble friend the Earl of Arran used the phrase "wings of a dove", which was really quite poetic. As the right reverend Prelate said, the skills engendered fuel the production of many of our great events, including royal weddings.

As the noble Lord, Lord Howarth, said, it was fantastic to see the Health Secretary Matt Hancock speak recently on the power of arts and health. Noble Lords should be aware that there is now growing evidence that taking part in the arts and culture has a significant impact on our health throughout our lives,

preventing illness, improving mental health and aiding recovery from ill health. As the noble Lord, Lord Griffiths, said, art can shake you up—hopefully, he did not mean in such a way that the doctor has to be called. It is so encouraging to see enthusiasm for work on arts and health across government.

I have already spoken of the connection between good mental well-being and physical health.

Lord Howarth of Newport: I did ask whether the Minister would kindly write to me and the all-party parliamentary group describing the Government's plans for developing their cross-departmental strategy to enlist arts and culture in the improvement of the nation's health and well-being. When he has had advice, will he be able to do that?

Viscount Younger of Leckie: I was about to come to that, but now that the noble Lord has raised the question, I am delighted to say that I will of course write to him. It is a good point.

One example of the connection between good mental well-being and physical health is the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, which is funded by Arts Council England and runs Strokestra, a programme which brings together musicians and stroke patients to harness the power of musical techniques to support rehabilitation. An evaluation of this project reported that 86% of participants felt relief from symptoms. I liked the expression that the noble Lord, Lord Howarth, used—"medicine for the soul". That stuck in the mind, amongst other things, during this debate.

Our libraries, as recreational spaces and community meeting places, are developing ways to support health conditions associated with ageing, with trained Dementia Friends and shared reading courses for people with dementia and their carers. Various speeches today raised these issues. Museums are at the forefront of developing programmes and schemes to support those living with dementia, often using their collections.

Many people also volunteer for heritage organisations or events. Seventy per cent of those who volunteered at recent heritage open days reported feeling more relaxed afterwards, with 64% also feeling more active and healthier. Sixty per cent of the people involved in the Manchester Museum and Imperial War Museum North's Inspiring Futures programme reported a sustained increase in well-being. This was raised by the noble Baroness, Lady Scott. We want to see as many young people as possible engaging in culture. In October, the Culture Secretary announced £5 million for the Youth Performance Partnership Scheme—a demonstration of the Government's commitment to children's participating in the arts, which we know can be so transformative.

So how are we supporting this work? The DCMS is committed to promoting the role that arts and culture can play in a healthy, happy society. We will continue to work with our colleagues across government to ensure that this impact is felt. The noble Baroness, Lady Bull, asked whether we would agree, as a Government, that we must find ways to address the conundrum that those who benefit from art most need the help to access it. It is a fair point. We do agree. The Government want as many people as possible to access arts and culture. Arts Council England continues to support arts and culture organisations to expand and also diversify

[VISCOUNT YOUNGER OF LECKIE]
audiences—a point well made. For example, Creative People and Places provides £47 million as an investment in arts provision and building audiences in places where people have fewer opportunities; I am reminded of Liverpool, where opera is transmitted into the city centre via cinemas.

The Government continue to fund approaches that integrate the arts and culture into communities, such as the £20 million Cultural Development Fund. This fund helps towns and cities put arts and culture at the heart of their growth plans. DCMS is also working with the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government on the special funding announced in the Budget for Heritage on the High Street as part of the major new Future High Streets Fund.

The right reverend Prelate the Bishop of Chichester asked a wide-ranging question on the EU, and whether we could give a commitment, and an indication, on how the Government will repair our reputational and economic damage from the current political uncertainty. That is a big question. I will answer it by saying that the Government recognise the importance of cultural collaboration, and the UK wants to build on our long history of working with the EU to continue to produce and promote excellent culture. That is why, in the July White Paper, the Government proposed a wide-reaching agreement on culture and education with the EU that is broader and more collaborative than anything the EU has agreed before.

The political declaration and agreement with the EU on the terms of our future relationships delivers on this proposal. The proposed agreement on culture and education covers a number of key areas of mutual benefit. I would like to mention the work undertaken by the All Party Parliamentary Group for Arts, Health and Wellbeing, co-chaired, as he said himself, by the noble Lord, Lord Howarth, to whom I pay tribute for bringing together expert voices from across both sectors, not only to recognise the great work going on across the country but to continue to shape the direction of arts and health going forward. I was interested to hear his remarks about the benefit of painting linked to mental health. I reflect on Winston Churchill's experience; he was known to suffer from what he called the "black dog", and painting was clearly a cathartic hobby for him.

The noble Lord, Lord Moynihan, spoke about doping in sport, and the many points that he made are very important indeed. He knows that I will say this, but doping in sport is completely and utterly unacceptable. We completely support the work of UK Anti-Doping.

The noble Lord, Lord Addington, asked whether we should ensure that local government is helped. Local authorities are a major funder of culture through libraries, museums and arts as well as sports, and many recognise the importance—because of the many benefits—of maintaining this funding. The Government encourage them very much to do this. The noble Lord also spoke about the National Lottery. I have spoken previously about the role of Sir John Major, and assure the noble Lord—and the Chamber—that the Government will continue to monitor lottery revenues.

We enjoy good well-being in the UK. According to the Office for National Statistics, people's satisfaction rate with their lives stands at 7.7 out of 10, which has held reasonably steady since measurement began in

2010. But there is much more to do to help inspire people of all ages and backgrounds to get involved. I am passionate that sport and arts should be for everyone, and that they are at the heart of a happy and healthy nation.

6.54 pm

Lord Moynihan: My Lords, once again sport and the arts have united the House. I thank my noble friend the Minister for stepping in at short notice for my noble friend Lord Ashton of Hyde, whose daughter is unwell at the moment but on the road to recovery. I know the whole House will offer them both our best wishes. I thank noble Lords for their contributions and in particular say how moved I was by the contribution of the noble Lord, Lord Griffiths, which was a classic of its kind—and I say that as a Monmouth-educated boy.

It would be invidious to pick out other speeches, but perhaps I may pay tribute to the noble Lord, Lord Mawson. We worked very closely together. I may have done a whole range of activities during the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games, but none reached the persistence, the commitment and the devotion of time over a very long period—both before and after the Games—that the noble Lord has given to the legacy of the London Olympic Games. It is a privilege to pay tribute to him for all his hard work.

One issue resonated through the debate: the Paralympic Games. I was pleased, because the Olympic Village grew in size; the whole nation became an Olympic village, and when the Paralympics was on, the nation recognised for the first time in my lifetime that we could concentrate on the abilities of the Paralympians and not their disabilities. That resonated throughout society. I think two of the great misnomers are "able-bodied" and "disabled"—but the reality was that, at last, across society there was great recognition and respect for people for their abilities rather than their disabilities, which has lasted to this day.

I thank noble Lords for contributing to this debate, and conclude by reflecting on the powerful and evocative speech on music given by the noble Baroness, Lady Bull. It made me reflect on how many times I have listened to Verdi's "Nabucco" and hoped there would be a call for an encore to the "Chorus of the Hebrew Slaves". This was a debate where an encore would indeed be a valuable use of parliamentary time—and with those words I wish all noble Lords who participated a very happy Christmas, and my heartfelt thanks for participating in an extremely useful and insightful two and a half hours.

Motion agreed.

Future Immigration *Statement*

6.57 pm

The Minister of State, Home Office (Baroness Williams of Trafford) (Con): My Lords, with the leave of the House, I will repeat a Statement made in another place by my right honourable friend the Home Secretary:

"With permission, Mr Speaker, I would like to make a Statement about the UK's future border and immigration system after we leave the EU. We all heard the public's concerns about immigration in the run-up to the EU referendum. These were concerns

held by many voters, on both sides of the debate. The result of that referendum was clear, and the UK will be leaving the European Union on 29 March 2019. This means we can end freedom of movement, so that for the first time for more than 40 years, we will be able to say who can, and who cannot, come to this country. This is an historic moment.

But let us be clear. The United Kingdom has a proud history of being an open and welcoming nation, and this will not change. As the son of immigrant parents, I know full well the contribution that they, like many other migrants, made to the community that I grew up in. We recognise and value immigration and the contribution that it has made to our society, culture, economy and communities, and this cannot be overstressed. It has helped to deliver vital public services. It has brought new perspectives, expertise and knowledge, stimulating growth and making us the more tolerant, outward-looking nation we are today.

Britain is going to stay open for business. We will continue to welcome talented migrants from every corner of the globe. And we have been very clear to the 3 million EU nationals already here: we value hugely the contribution that you have made to this country. Deal or no deal, we want you to stay, and we will protect your rights.

The future system is about making sure immigration works in the best interests of the UK. We are absolutely not closing our doors. We are simply making sure that we have control over who comes through, ensuring, as we committed to do in our manifesto, that we are able to bring annual net migration down to more sustainable levels.

Today we published a White Paper setting out the Government's proposals for doing this through a single skills-based immigration system that will seize the unique opportunities enabled by the end of free movement. Copies are available for honourable and right honourable Members in the Vote Office. I would like to highlight the key proposals and principles in it to the House.

First, free movement will come to an end. Tomorrow we will introduce the immigration and social security co-ordination (EU withdrawal) Bill to implement this. It will make EEA and Swiss nationals, and their family members, subject to UK immigration control. It will protect the status of Irish nationals. This means that everyone other than British and Irish citizens will need to get UK permission before they can come here.

Secondly, it will be a single immigration system for all nationalities. The existing automatic preference for EU citizens will end. This approach will give everyone the same chance, regardless of where they are from, levelling the playing field to welcome the most talented people from anywhere in the world.

Thirdly, it will be a skills-based system, giving priority to those with the skills that we need. We are taking this approach to ensure that we can attract the brightest and best people to the UK—those who will help our economy flourish. This follows advice commissioned from the independent Migration Advisory Committee on the impact of European migration on the UK economy and society. We believe this is fair and it will help drive up wages and productivity across our economy.

Following these three principles, we are acting to make the future immigration system work for those coming to our country, businesses, our public services and the UK as a whole. Our approach will maintain protections for British workers while cutting bureaucracy. Fundamental to this will be a new route for skilled workers to ensure that employers can access the talent that they need to compete on the world stage. There will be no cap on numbers and no requirement for the highest-skilled workers to undertake a resident labour market test, and there will be a minimum salary threshold.

We are also creating a time-limited temporary short-term workers route to ensure that businesses have the staff they need to fill jobs as they adapt to the new immigration system. We will ask the MAC to keep this scheme under review, so that it ensures a smooth transition. This route will be open to seasonal and low-skilled workers, along with high-skilled workers who need to come to the UK for longer than the current business visitor visa rules allow. Those who arrive under this scheme will have no rights to access public funds, settle or bring dependants. The White Paper sets out our initial proposals to allow these short-term workers to come to the UK for 12 months at a time, followed by a year-long cooling-off period to prevent long-term working. We will be engaging extensively with businesses and stakeholders on the length of the stay and cooling-off period to make sure we get this right.

These proposals will give protection to British workers, but we have recognised that immigration alone cannot be the solution. So we will continue as a Government, working in partnership with business, to invest to improve the productivity and skills of the UK workforce.

Our world-class universities will also benefit from the proposed new system. There will be no limits on the number of international students, who we will continue to encourage to come and study here. We will make it easier for the graduates to stay and to work. This will widen the talent pool for businesses and boost economic growth.

Our plans are about opening Britain up for business rather than creating new red tape, so the future immigration system will be quick and easy to use. We will introduce a streamlined application process for those visiting, or coming to work or to study, and this will use the latest digital technology. This will improve the experience visitors and travellers have crossing the border. We will also make it possible for more people to use e-gates. At the same time, we will improve security at the border by introducing an electronic travel authorisation scheme and phasing out the use of insecure national identity cards.

We are proposing a single skills-based immigration system that will be fit for the future—one that is flexible to accommodate the trade deals that we agree with the EU and other countries. It will operate from 2021, but will be phased in to give individuals, businesses and the Government the time needed to adapt. This means that individuals do not need to make immediate changes and businesses do not need to rush through plans based on guesswork about the future system.

The immigration White Paper outlines proposals for the biggest change to our immigration system in a generation. However, it is important to note that it is

[BARONESS WILLIAMS OF TRAFFORD]

not the final word. Rather, it is the starting point for a national conversation on our future immigration system. I am pleased to announce that the Government will be launching a year-long programme of engagement across the UK to ensure that a wide range of views are heard.

I am confident that all the measures I have outlined today will ensure that the UK continues to flourish outside of the EU; that the future immigration system is geared towards controlling who can come here and for what purpose, reducing net migration while ensuring the brightest and the best can work and study here; and that it will boost our economy and benefit the British people. We are building a fair and sustainable immigration system that answers the concerns people have rightly had about free movement—an immigration system that is designed in Britain, made in Britain and that serves our national interest. I commend this Statement to the House”.

7.06 pm

Lord Kennedy of Southwark (Lab Co-op): My Lords, I thank the noble Baroness for repeating the Statement made in the other place by her right honourable friend the Home Secretary. It is disappointing to say the least that it has taken the Government so long to produce this White Paper. It is almost a year late. That is entirely because of the shambles we observe every day from the Government.

If we leave the single market, freedom of movement, which we have enjoyed as members of the European Union, ends. The Statement says that this is a historic moment. I think it is very sad that British citizens will lose the right to live, work and study in the European Union. British citizens have taken up the right to live elsewhere in the European Union more than any other nationality. The loss of this right is nothing to celebrate. It diminishes us as a nation. We want to be a global and outward-looking nation. Where we find ourselves today is tragic, rather than historic.

There will be an urgent need to set up a new system. It is important that we do not base the new immigration system on some of the myths we have seen in the past. The noble Baroness has said before that the Government are still committed to reducing migration to the tens of thousands—a target that has never been and never will be met. Today, though, on the radio the Home Secretary repeatedly refused to commit himself to the tens of thousands target, so can the noble Baroness tell the House what Her Majesty’s Government’s policy is in this respect? Has the Home Secretary abandoned the commitment to a formal target of tens of thousands? If the target has been abandoned, what does that mean in practice? The danger is that the target is abandoned but the Home Office continues to function in the same way, with all the unfairness and inefficiencies that arbitrary targets lead to.

I support a single immigration system that is fair to all. Can the noble Baroness comment on the uncertainty over the Government’s intentions and the delays that producing this White Paper has created for EU citizens, their families and employers?

Can she tell us when we will know what the minimum salary threshold will be? There is much concern that it will be £30,000. That would rule out many healthcare

professionals, technicians, and people employed in the social care sector. That would be very damaging to our economy and to both the private and public sectors. I think particularly of our wonderful NHS and the role played by immigrants every single day in delivering the healthcare that we need.

The Statement said that there would be no limit on the number of students who can come and study here. We have heard that many times. The problem is that it is not believed by prospective students and their families. Other countries are taking advantage of that. What can the Minister say to convince those students that they are welcome here?

Can the Minister say more about the arrangements set out by the Home Secretary for time-limited, temporary, short-term workers, who would have no right to access public funds, settle or bring dependants and who would come for 12 months at a time followed by year-long cooling-off period? That might suit some sectors, but it is an alarming prospect for many employers because it would not allow them to establish continuity of employment, which is vital for delivering services. Does the Minister believe that the Home Office has the capacity to change its established ways of working and its unofficial targets, which it was clearly working towards and which contributed to the Windrush scandal?

I am clear that the Government cannot have it both ways: on the one hand, talking about an outward-looking, global Britain meeting the needs of society and employers and, on the other, using the rhetoric of cracking down on migration. This White Paper gives us lots of questions and uncertainties. A lot more work is needed on the part of the Government to give the reassurance and confidence that the country desperately needs.

Lord Paddick (LD): My Lords, I, too, thank the Minister for repeating the Statement. It says that, “for the first time for more than 40 years, we will be able to say who can, and who cannot, come to this country”.

Can the Minister confirm that, currently, EU citizens and their families who want to stay for more than three months must have sufficient resources if they are not working so that they are not a burden on the state, and that EU citizens and members of their family can be expelled from the UK on the grounds of public policy, public security or public health? Can she also confirm that the UK can refuse, terminate or withdraw any free movement rights in the event of an abuse of those rights, or fraud? In other words, does she accept that we have considerable say over who can and who cannot come to or remain in this country as a member of the European Union?

The Statement says that the new policy will bring annual net migration down to more sustainable levels, “as we committed to do in our manifesto”.

The Conservative Party manifesto promised to cut net migration to below 100,000, but the Statement also says:

“There will be no cap on numbers”,

for skilled immigration. Do the Government think immigration will go up or down as a result of a “no cap on numbers” immigration policy?

How can the future immigration system make sure, as the Statement says, that immigration works in the best interests of the UK when the policy is determined by the Home Office? Surely the number of doctors

and nurses needed, and of those needed to work in social care, should be determined by the Department of Health and Social Care, for example, and not by the Home Office?

If immigration is to be restricted by salary level only, what about the thousands of immigrants who work in the construction, hospitality and social care sectors, and in the NHS, on low salaries? Highly skilled does not necessarily mean highly paid. Do the Government expect EU countries to prevent British workers earning less than the equivalent level of salary working in the European Union?

What is the estimated cost to the public sector and industry of having to engage with the visa system compared with the current visa-less system of employing EU nationals?

The Statement says that the policy will operate from 2021 but will be phased in to give individuals, businesses and the Government the time needed to adapt. Does that mean that the policy will operate from 2021 or only parts of it? If so, which parts?

How many years will it take for the Home Office to recruit and train the additional staff to implement the new systems required? By how much will the Home Office have to expand to grant permissions to EEA and Swiss nationals and their family members before they can come to the UK? How many people did this amount to in the last year for which the Government have figures? How many EEA and Swiss nationals do the Government anticipate will be refused entry under the new scheme to help reduce net migration?

By how much will the Home Office have to expand to process applications and enforce the temporary 12 months-on, 12 months-off scheme for low-skilled and seasonal workers? How many of those workers, who will not be able to access any benefits despite paying British tax and national insurance, will be put off by the new arrangements, not least by the fact that they will not be able to return to the UK for 12 months? What is the Government's impact assessment? Can the Government confirm that there is intended to be no low-skilled immigration in the future and what the impact will be on public services and UK businesses?

It is clear that this White Paper has not been thought through. It is impractical, unnecessary and cannot possibly be implemented in full for many years to come. Like Brexit, immigration policy based on this White Paper will be damaging to our economy, to our public services and to public confidence.

Baroness Williams of Trafford: I thank both noble Lords for their questions. I contrasted the points made by the noble Lord, Lord Kennedy, with those made by the shadow Home Secretary in the House of Commons, who said that, whether you are a doctor from Poland or a doctor from Pakistan, a single immigration system will work for you. The noble Lord then went on to say that he supported a single immigration system based on skills and not on where you are from.

Both the noble Lord, Lord Kennedy, and the noble Lord, Lord Paddick, asked why it had taken so long to get to this point. Noble Lords will remember that the MAC reported just in September. It was important to hear its advice. Moreover, the immigration White Paper

suggests a change in the immigration system that we have not seen for a generation—more than 40 years—so it is important that the White Paper discusses all the various aspects that will affect the new system.

The noble Lord, Lord Kennedy, talked about UK citizens working in the EU. Clearly, the EU will have its own arrangements for UK citizens, but we have tried today to outline the system for anybody in the world who wants to come to work and live in the UK.

Both noble Lords mentioned the target. My right honourable friend the Home Secretary made it clear this morning that we are committed to our manifesto pledge of controlling immigration to sustainable levels and that we favour a skills-based system that meets the needs of the UK economy.

Both noble Lords talked about the £30,000 salary threshold. That was a suggestion that will go out to consultation. We will hear various views on that figure from businesses across the country. The noble Lords also mentioned NHS workers. Nurses and certain medical practitioners are already on the shortage occupation list, which will continue to operate.

The noble Lord, Lord Kennedy, talked about the disincentive to students. Far from this country providing a disincentive to students, we have seen the number of students from outside the EU grow year on year. So I do not accept that point.

Both noble Lords talked about temporary workers, be they construction workers or other types of temporary worker. We will keep that under review: of course it is important that people who come here for a short period, even if it is to fill gaps in the labour market, meet the needs of the economy. We expect a full review from the MAC on that in due course. In the interim we will be listening to businesses about what their needs are and what their experiences have been during that time.

The noble Lord, Lord Paddick, talked about EU citizens, who must currently have sufficient funds to come here and can have those rights curtailed. Therefore, we have control of our migration system. However, free movement rules under the current system are quite broad and we need to take back control of our borders. We will not be in the European Union, although we fully view ourselves as being in Europe. He asked about additional staff. We will ensure that we have the staff to meet our future needs. Announcements have been made in the last couple of days about providing additional resource for Brexit and I am sure that, as time goes on, we will have more detail on that.

The noble Lord, Lord Paddick, also asked about the numbers of Swiss and EEA nationals refused. Under free movement we have very limited ability to refuse Swiss and EEA nationals who want to come to the UK, but in future they will have to meet the UK Immigration Rules, which will be the same for the whole world.

7.21 pm

Lord Maude of Horsham (Con): My Lords, does my noble friend accept that very many people who voted for Britain to leave the European Union were not driven or heavily motivated by concerns about immigration? This was not a consideration for very

[LORD MAUDE OF HORSHAM]

many of them and if we end up with a plan B for Brexit—that we remain in the European Economic Area with the attenuated form of freedom of movement of people that that involves—that should not be considered to be a bar to going down that path. Does she also accept that, in the system that she has helpfully outlined to the House, it would be essential for the system to operate in a way that is unbureaucratic, smooth and efficient in the issuing of consents to immigrants to this country and in the way the borders actually operate? What assurances can she give the House that the implementation of this by her department will be a bit better than it has frequently been in the past?

Baroness Williams of Trafford: I thank my noble friend for that question. When he says that not everyone who voted to leave the European Union was driven by immigration concerns, I totally agree. I was one of them and as an immigrant I can hardly complain about immigrants. He suggests that we perhaps adopt a model such as Norway. I cannot say what the House of Commons will do and I would not like to predict what will happen, but I think Parliament needs to work through the whole process in a way that meets the result of the vote of the people of the UK.

My noble friend is absolutely right to mention the smooth and unbureaucratic processes that people should experience as they go through the border. We have already talked about opening up the eGates to additional countries: the Five Eyes plus Japan, South Korea and Singapore. I think that that will make the journey through the border a lot smoother. As for a lack of bureaucracy, the Home Secretary has also talked about a more digitally friendly immigration system. That is important, as we are not trying to complicate the system but we are considering the whole world in our future immigration system.

Lord Green of Deddington (CB): My Lords, the Minister may know that I have been engaged in immigration policy for 18 years. I am actually quite astonished by this White Paper because it could be described as cloud-cuckoo-land. The Opposition spokesmen have already poked a couple of dozen holes in it and I fear that the Minister will have a lot of difficulty later with all the points that arise from it. Does she realise that the key point is that, far from reducing immigration, it is very likely that it will actually increase net migration, and might increase it considerably? Does she appreciate that that would be seen as a slap in the face for the roughly 38 million people who want to see immigration reduced? Finally, I will make only one point because the Opposition have raised many of them: can she assure the House that the sudden introduction of an uncapped route for unskilled workers for up to a year is not merely an attempt to fiddle the immigration statistics and that these people will be included in the numbers?

Baroness Williams of Trafford: On the noble Lord's second question about fiddling the numbers, the suggestion is that the uncapped route is up to one year. The reason we have had the row about students so many times is that the people included in the immigration

figures are those who stay for more than a year. Therefore, one would not include in the immigration figures people who are on a three-month holiday. We have to set the level somewhere and I do not think that anyone has argued about where one sets the time limit for being included in those figures. As for increasing net migration, we are suggesting the introduction of a system that is based on skills to meet the needs of the UK economy. Obviously, the idea is that the net migration figures should go down ultimately, but the system we are proposing today is the subject of consultation which will run for a year. I am sure that many views, such as those of the noble Lord, will be expressed on the future system.

Lord Scriven (LD): My Lords, the Cavendish Coalition of health and care providers says it is extremely concerned that these new visa proposals will not allow the number of care staff needed to sustain services. These are the providers of services commenting on the White Paper today. Such staff are not on the labour shortage list—physios, paramedics and other professionals allied to medicine. Can the Minister give an assurance that the new proposals will sustain health and social care services? If not, what changes need to be made to ensure that patients and the most vulnerable get the services from EU staff that they have been receiving for many years?

Baroness Williams of Trafford: The noble Lord is absolutely right to raise the issue of healthcare workers—the noble Lords, Lord Kennedy and Lord Paddick, have already raised it. I talked about the NHS staff who are already on the shortage occupation list, but he is right to raise the other staff. A salary of £30,000 is the suggested level. Clearly, these things will be worked through in the next year as we have an extensive consultation period and the Government will be very pleased to hear the views of NHS workers and managers of healthcare trusts on where we have got it right and where we have got it wrong.

Lord Dubs (Lab): My Lords, perhaps the Minister could clarify something and then answer a couple of questions. The Statement talks about an “electronic travel authorisation scheme”. Can she explain what that is? Is it an ID card for people coming into the country or is it something else?

My two questions are these. First, the Statement says that,

“in future everyone other than British and Irish citizens will need to get UK permission before they can come here”.

Will the process of getting that permission be showing a passport at, say, Heathrow, or will it be a matter of getting some sort of visa or other authorisation? The danger is that other countries will reciprocate and then the easy travel that we used to have to France and elsewhere long before the EU existed will no longer apply.

Secondly, the Statement also talks about,

“a streamlined application process for those visiting, or coming to work”.

Can the Minister give us an assurance that we will end the arbitrary decision-making and have a fairer, more balanced system? I think of the difficulties that people

have faced in trying to get here, such as the Libyan doctors who went to Tunis to get permission to come here for a week for training in dealing with medical trauma, but, having waited in Tunis, were arbitrarily refused and had to go back to Libya.

Baroness Williams of Trafford: The noble Lord's last point perfectly illustrates the type of bureaucracy that we are trying to unlock, such as for the Libyan doctors trying to come here. I assure him that we intend it to be a far more streamlined system. We accept that on occasion it has been tricky and has taken too long to get those authorisations, which can eat into the time that the NHS might need those doctors for.

The Irish will be treated like UK citizens—no question about it. On the ETAs—electronic travel authorisations—anyone who wants to come to the UK, apart from the British and Irish nationals I just talked about, needs to apply for permission to do so. That will be either an e-visa for those coming to work or study or for tourists from visa-national countries, or an electronic travel authorisation for tourists from low-risk countries. I think it will be very similar to the ESTA that the Americans insist on.

Lord Wigley (PC): My Lords, even if one accepts the need for some immigration control—and I do not—does the Minister not accept that the White Paper is fundamentally flawed with regard to setting a salary level? One size does not fit all. The average salary in London is £37,000, in Wales it is £27,000 and in Northern Ireland it is £24,000, which means there are different criteria for different areas. Paragraph 6.23 of this document says that,

“£30,000 is the level of household income at which an average family ... starts making a positive contribution to public finances”.

Surely that is a different matter; £30,000 as a household income is different from £30,000 as a salary level. That is a fundamental flaw in the document.

Baroness Williams of Trafford: My Lords, I repeat that £30,000 was a suggestion from the MAC. There will be a year-long period in which people can engage with the consultation. The figure is not set in stone. It is a salary that was suggested by the MAC.

Lord Hannay of Chiswick (CB): My Lords, is the Minister able to explain how this can be described as taking back control, when the largest proportion of immigration to this country, from outside the EU, is rising inexorably and the proportion coming from the EU, on which controls are now to be put, is dropping? Is that taking back control? Perhaps she can also explain why the Home Secretary is so pessimistic about the Prime Minister's deal going through. The only circumstances in which free movement will end on 29 March is if there is no deal. If there is a deal, it does not end until the end of December 2020.

On students, while it is welcome that the post-study period is being relaxed a little, does the Minister recognise that the figures given for the relaxation still leave us at a disadvantage to all our main international competitors, which give longer post-study periods of immigration?

Baroness Williams of Trafford: The UK is a very attractive place for students to come and study. I mentioned earlier the rise in the number of students coming here. We have never capped student numbers and students continue to come in ever-increasing numbers. The system we have in place is certainly not putting off students. They will come here because we have some of the best universities in the world.

On the Home Secretary being pessimistic about the future, this House and the other place would rightly criticise him if he did not plan for all eventualities. Therefore, he is absolutely right to plan for a deal or no deal. If we had a deal, I am not sure how different the White Paper would look.

On taking back control, we will take back control of our borders when we leave the EU on 29 March, and this is the first step.

Lord Marlesford (Con): My Lords, I refer to Chapter 4 of the White Paper, on border control. First, I expect my noble friend will agree that one of the consequences of the new system will be a pretty crucial change to the common travel area with Ireland. Currently, people flying from Heathrow to Dublin have their passport checked. People flying from Dublin to the UK go straight to baggage collection and do not go through immigration at all. That will have to change; otherwise, it will not be possible to check those people in the plane who do not have the entitlement that the Irish and British people have.

Secondly, does she agree that when she refers to the American ESTA system, crucially, this is based on using biometrics and involves the matching of eyes and fingerprints? Will she therefore ask those in her department who so cavalierly dismissed on Monday my attempt to introduce a national identity number linked to biometrics as being against civil liberties to think again?

Baroness Williams of Trafford: One thing I have to admire my noble friend for is that he very cleverly weaves in some of his issues. I am not going to revisit the issues we discussed on Monday. Of course, the common travel area existed long before the EU did—that is the point I was making to the noble Lord, Lord Dubs—and it will continue to exist after we leave the EU.

Lord Shipley (LD): My Lords, is the Minister aware of the statement this afternoon by the Federation of Master Builders? It says that the proposals the Government have announced today in the White Paper, “would devastate the construction industry”, and,

“would make it impossible to meet the Government's house building targets”.

This all relates to the definitions of lower-skilled and higher-skilled and the figure of £30,000 that has been mentioned. I ask the Minister: what detailed sectoral analyses have been undertaken on the impact of this White Paper? Surely we should not be in a position in which the Federation of Master Builders has to point out that this White Paper would devastate the construction industry.

Baroness Williams of Trafford: As I say, this is purely the beginning of a journey, which is the consultation process. These measures will not come in until 2021.

[BARONESS WILLIAMS OF TRAFFORD]

Of course, we will be working with the construction sector and others towards the implementation of the immigration system.

Lord Patel (CB): My Lords, I welcome the Statement saying that international graduates will be allowed to work in this country, but it is disappointing that it does not say whether or not there will be a cap on how long they can be employed. Perhaps we will hear about that later. I am encouraged by the Minister saying that the minimum salary level of £30,000 is for consultation. I hope that the Government will listen to the consultation and not ignore it. I say this because, like the construction industry, the professional organisations in science research, such as the Royal Society, the Wellcome Trust, Cancer Research UK, the MRC and many others, have grave concerns about our ability to recruit technicians—who do not earn £30,000. They are crucial to research. The same applies to PhD students and post-docs, who are the workhorses of biomedical research. If this is implemented, our science research will be absolutely devastated.

Baroness Williams of Trafford: I totally get the point that the noble Lord makes about technicians, particularly in research and science, because they are traditionally paid a lower salary. We will work through all this in the next year in getting towards the final suggestion for the salary level which, as I said earlier, is a suggestion from the MAC and not an intention from the Government at this stage. Regarding graduate students, if an undergraduate secures a graduate job the salary will of course be lower. At the moment, I think it is about £20,600. That remains the case but I hope that in the course of the consultation next year it will all be worked through. Please do not take it as a figure set in stone, my Lords.

Baroness Young of Old Scone (Lab): What account have the Government taken of this policy's impact on their own aspirations for housing development and infrastructure? Many of these projects last for longer than a year but we are talking about scarce construction workers, who are highly skilled but low paid, being able to stay only on a temporary 12-month work visa and then having to go home for a cooling-off period of at least a year. Yet these projects depend intensely on the continuity of their labour force, and about 30% of construction workers on projects in London alone come from the EU at the moment. This policy kicks the legs out from under the Government's aspirations to provide better houses for people in this country and create major infrastructure to promote productivity.

Baroness Williams of Trafford: The noble Baroness strikes to the heart of one of the Government's major priorities—as did the noble Lord, Lord Shipley—which is to build the number of homes that this country needs for people to live in. As I said, we will be working with the construction sector and this is purely a consultation period. Nothing has been decided fully but of course we want construction workers to be able to be here to build the houses that we want. I should mention one other thing: as a nation, we want to upskill our own workers to work in these sectors, as we proceed towards our exit from the European Union.

Plastic: Environmental Threat and Recycling

Motion to Take Note

7.43 pm

Moved by Baroness Neville-Rolfe

To move that this House takes note of the threat to the environment posed by plastic and the case for improved recycling.

Baroness Neville-Rolfe (Con): It is a great honour to introduce this debate today. I have been pressing for urgent action on plastics and recycling for 18 months, and yesterday we saw the publication of the Government's strategy on waste and resources. It is also Christmas, when we can all try to use less plastic and recycle the waste we produce. I am grateful to the number of distinguished participants here this evening. I think we are all here to learn, and I especially look forward to the comments from my noble friend Lady Vere of Norbiton.

In seeking this debate, I was motivated by the growing concern on all sides of the House about plastic in the oceans, on land and in the waste stream. This poses a huge threat to the global environment and therefore to mankind; it may also pose a threat to human health. Additionally, our recycling system, which could not of course solve the problem completely, is not fit for purpose, as the government paper implicitly acknowledges.

I agree with the paper, however, that the problem is important, and of course it involves all sectors of society, including national and local government, manufacturers, retailers, food service, consumers, the media, NGOs and the international community. Policies need to be sold to all these groups. Fortunately, this is a policy area where most people are anxious to do the right thing if we explain properly what we are about. The same goes for Governments and companies, as is shown by the large number of members of the UK Plastics Pact.

I am especially grateful to the many people who have written to me before this debate with helpful suggestions. This all shows that the issue is one that touches on many. I refer to my entries in the register of interests, especially my retail shareholdings.

Before coming to policy suggestions, I need briefly to set the scene.

The characteristic of plastics that causes the problem is their relative indestructibility. The physical basis of this problem of indestructibility is that most plastics are polymers: they consist of enormous molecules in long chains made by the use of clever processes, mainly invented by British scientists in the 1930s. These major scientific achievements have greatly helped to increase human welfare but, like many other advances, plastics have a downside. The enormous molecules of which they are composed are difficult to break down. Most are not attacked by water, which erodes most other materials over time. Some can remain unchanged for centuries unless they are treated vigorously, for example by incineration.

The consequence is that, as more plastic is produced each year, the world gets to contain more and more until we become enveloped in plastic both at sea and on land. The Library Note states that production has increased over time and that best estimates are that, globally, some 8.3 billion tonnes of plastic have been produced to date. That is more than a tonne per person on our planet. Moreover, a staggering 79%—that is well over 6 billion tonnes—is still present in the environment.

There are now enormous quantities of plastic at some locations, notably in the oceans, and it is being detected in ever more incongruous and dangerous places: in our own bodies, in fish and in animals' stomachs. It litters the ocean and often litters the countryside. After its initial use, plastic is usually useless and permanent. So plastics are a growing threat, and we need to take major action to prevent their build-up and to remove much of the existing discarded waste.

The scale of the problem, I suggest, can be seen by looking at my day. I start by cleaning my teeth with those brilliant interdental brushes—made of plastic and wire, and not recyclable. When I have a bath, I have moved back to soap from shower gel to avoid the packaging. However, new soap is needlessly wrapped in plastic. For breakfast, I have switched from prunes to dates as they come in a box, but the yogurt pot is plastic, luckily recyclable. The *FT* arrives on the doorstep in plastic. The dishwasher tablet is wrapped in plastic.

When I go off to the House, my Freedom Pass is plastic—a good use, to my mind. In the Bishops' Bar, I get 25p off my takeaway coffee by bringing in a beautiful reusable metal and plastic cup, given to me at Lord's cricket ground. It has lasted much better than the blue bamboo one given to me by the chair of the Environment Agency. The Order Paper is of course paper; I could dispense with it and rely on my iPad if the parliamentary website was a bit less clunky.

Then I do some shopping, which is where things get difficult. Most clothes contain some polyester or an equivalent, even if they are silk or wool; they wear and wash better. Plastic is now even becoming fashionable in its own right. When my bulging cupboard needs a clear-out, I take the discards to the Salisbury charity shop, but I am conscious that they will be waste and hard to recycle all too soon. I have a cup of tea with my daughter-in-law, who shops at the anti-plastic shop in Wandsworth and promotes recyclable plastic fashion—apparently, fishing nets from Sicilian waters are making excellent eco-nylon yarn. However, my granddaughter wears disposable nappies containing plastic and goodness know what.

Food shopping is even more difficult, despite the fine efforts in recent years of many supermarkets. Bags are now charged for and recycled, so I bring my own. Meat is on black plastic trays—on which more later. Most vegetables and fruit are wrapped in thin, unrecyclable plastic to keep them fresh. Spread and butter are sold in unrecyclable packs.

At my London home for supper, if I look round there is lots of plastic: table mats, the kettle, leads and plugs—I could go on. Before going to bed, I put out the rubbish. Food waste is in a special bin, which is

very good—well done, Southwark—and I have a big bin for mixed recycling, which is much easier than in Wiltshire, but in neither place am I clear about what I can recycle, and the packets do not help. On a typical day, I might also talk to my noble friend Lady Jenkin, who has done so much to highlight waste issues, but she is, sadly, but suitably, at a WRAP board meeting.

Looking at matters broadly, we can do several things to reduce the threat from plastics. First, we can innovate, for example by developing alternatives to plastics or new plastics that degrade much more quickly. Secondly, we can produce and use less plastic, whether degradable or not, as a consequence of other scientific or technical advances. Thirdly, we can regulate further to reduce the use of plastic and the permitted means for its disposal. Fourthly, we can recycle more plastic so that the volume of plastic in the environment grows more slowly or even ceases to grow. Fifthly, we can try to reduce the plastic already present globally, especially in the oceans.

This last point is a good example of the fact that there is a clear international aspect to the problem of plastics, as "Planet Earth II" showed us so vividly. For example, plans to reduce pollution in the oceans will need to involve all coastal states and ships if it is to be effective, and it will cost money, which brings me to my first suggestion. Development aid, including our own, should be spent on tackling the major pockets of plastic in Indonesia, the Chinese sea and elsewhere. This would be a good use of the 0.7% devoted to development and help coastal communities involved to improve their beaches.

Historically, much UK waste, including plastic waste, has been exported. I fear that we rather lost sight of the fragility of this arrangement. The recent decision by the Chinese greatly to reduce their imports of plastic waste shows how unwise it is to rely on others to solve your own problems. However, if we are to deal with the plastic already in the oceans, it is clear that progress can be made only on the basis of international co-operation. Can the Minister tell us whether there are any signs of progress in this area, including the use of development aid?

We now have a government strategy, and I welcome the fact that it is comprehensive and full of ideas. It makes many important and detailed proposals. They will need careful study. However, I am somewhat concerned on two counts: first, at the prescriptive nature of much of it, as, where possible, we should try to work with the grain of human nature and economic interests; and, secondly, at the lack of detail on the economic aspects. The environment is very important, but everything has a cost and we need to take decisions in the full knowledge of what they cost.

I am conscious that the strategy and the last Budget introduce new charges on producers, processors and consumers and a great deal of new regulation. Some of this rightly affects plastic. My challenge to the Minister, as a Conservative, in taking these policies forward and putting individual items out for consultation is that a proper assessment must be made of the cost impact and compliance costs for all concerned, including small business and consumers. The latter, for example, will face new charges on the drinks they buy and a

[BARONESS NEVILLE-ROLFE]

doubling of the levy on carrier bags. Can the Minister kindly give an undertaking that this individual costing and its publication will happen? We need to look at these proposals through an economic lens as well as an environmental one. That is the way to sustainable growth.

I turn now to some broad needs, as I see them. From my earlier analysis, it is apparent that there is an urgent need to produce materials—possibly new plastics and possibly not—that can fulfil the same function as present plastics more efficiently, either because less of them is needed or because they are more easily recycled. In principle, this can be encouraged by the use of both carrots and sticks. The Government proposed the use of the stick of taxation in the Budget. I worry about the complexity and compliance costs of such a tax and, unless it is a high tax, it may not change behaviour quickly enough.

This brings me to my next suggestion. How about carrots, perhaps funded from the revenue? Is there scope for support for much more R&D, perhaps in the context of whole sectors and the industrial strategy? In view of the environmental threat, the transformation of plastic feels a higher priority than some other areas. Plastic is also a product of the oil-refining industry, which is threatened by climate change. This makes such R&D doubly urgent.

The instinct of Governments today is often—too often—to regulate. There is a place for some of this, and I believe that the single-use plastic bag charge has been beneficial in changing behaviour. A ban on plastic straws, drink stirrers and cotton buds may also be justified. Substitutes are available, but the volumes are small and therefore the impact on the overall problem of these measures would be small. More significant would be control of plastic use in disposable nappies, sanitary ware and coffee cups. It would be good to find an economic incentive for manufacturers of these things rather than just to impose a ban or a charge, which is always passed on to consumers. We need good ideas.

I turn now to recycling. We have discussed this several times in response to Questions I have asked in this House. There is heightened urgency with the closure of the Asian market. It was highlighted this week—I am grateful to the noble Lord, Lord Giddens, for this—when the Royal Statistical Society published the winning international statistic of the year, which is that 90.5% of plastic waste has never been recycled. In England, where we try to recycle, I am more than ever convinced that one of the main factors reducing the effectiveness of our schemes is the lack of consistency across the country in what is recyclable and in what consumers are expected to do. This confuses the public and inhibits public and private investment. We need to reflect on whether the proposals in the government paper are optimal in this regard. Uniformity should take two forms. The bin systems need to be the same and manufacturers need to mark all plastic items with a common recycling label system.

However, we always need to allow for technological advance. The recycling company Viridor tells me that it has good hopes that a major step forward on recycling

black plastic will be made soon. If so, that would be a welcome change, which I see is not covered in the government paper. We also need to recognise that at times of low oil prices, recycling plastic is, given present technological possibilities, barely economic.

In conclusion, it was useful to be reminded in recent tributes to His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales on his 70th birthday that he was expressing concern about waste and plastic more than 40 years ago. The situation on the ground gets worse with every passing day. We must act now conscientiously and vigorously.

7.57 pm

Baroness Parminter (LD): My Lords, I sincerely thank the noble Baroness, Lady Neville-Rolfe, for that powerful introduction to this important debate. Over the past couple of weeks, I have had the privilege of meeting a number of equally forceful campaigners on plastics, including a delegation of women from the tiny Pacific state of Palau who have launched a pledge to tackle the manmade pollutants in their oceans and three women from Hampshire who have launched plastic-free Winchester and are harnessing the power of social media to stimulate community action to ensure that that town reduces the amount of plastic. They are inspiring women doing great things on plastics, but I am afraid I would not use the adjective “inspiring” with respect to the proposals which were launched yesterday by the Government in the waste and resources strategy and to how they intend to tackle the huge problem of plastic. I shall not repeat the statistics which were so well set out for us by the noble Baroness.

There are a number of welcome initiatives in the waste and resources strategy, but it lacks urgency in the face of the challenges. The Government’s aim is to eliminate all avoidable plastic waste by 2042. Compare that with the target in the UK Plastic Pact, which was launched this year by WRAP and the Ellen MacArthur Foundation, which already has 67 major businesses signed up to it. The target is for the elimination of all single-use packaging and for all plastic packaging which remains to be reusable, recyclable or compostable by 2025. That is the size of target for which the Government should have aimed.

There are a number of welcome initiatives in the waste and resources strategy and, as the noble Baroness highlighted, there is a welcome focus on recycling at the kerbside, which is not a panacea but is critical if we are going to tackle plastic pollutants. I think the phrase in the document is that kerbside recycling has flatlined. That is code for the Government admitting that we will not hit our target of 50% recycling by 2020. Places such as Flanders in Belgium are already hitting targets of 70% of household waste removed from landfill, so we need to do more.

It is good that the Government propose to do more on mandatory labelling. As the noble Baroness said, it is crazy that people do not know which plastics to recycle. It is great that the Government are thinking about mandatory packaging, but they make it absolutely clear in the strategy that all finance for and communication on that will be for business. Of course business must play its part, but when it comes to people’s health, we

have the fantastic government “five a day” campaign, which really helps get the message across. Here, we are talking about the health of our planet, on which we as humans rely. Would it not be great if our Government had an equally impressive communication strategy on recycling?

The document also says a lot about extended producer responsibility. For those who are not geeky types who focus on such things, that is about incentivising producers to segment, return products or design out, so that products can be repaired, reused or recycled. That is really important on plastics. There are two areas, one of which the noble Baroness mentioned: clothing—textiles—and tyres. Both have a huge amount of plastic run-off, yet the Government propose only two extended producer responsibility schemes by the end of the next Parliament. The Secretary of State talks about being a world leader on the environment. I point out that France already has 14 mandatory schemes, so more action is needed.

It is also disappointing that there is nothing in the document about cotton buds or stirrers. It says only that the consultation has ended, as it did at the start of December. If the consultation has ended, why did the Government not take the opportunity yesterday to say that we would ban stirrers, plastic straws and cotton buds? I raise this because I suspect that it may be going the same way as the latte levy on cups, which was not introduced.

I take issue with the noble Baroness, Lady Neville-Rolfe, in that I think planning and legislation have a place. We saw with the plastic bag levy, introduced under the coalition, just how successful such initiatives can be. Incentives such as levies drive up involvement, which can encourage recycling.

Yesterday’s initiative was welcome, but it lacks the urgency we need. Our oceans are being polluted now, our countryside is being blighted now and our greenhouse gas levels are rising fast. We need urgent action. Although we welcome what the Government have done, we need faster action.

8.03 pm

Baroness Byford (Con): My Lords, my congratulations must go to my noble friend Lady Neville-Rolfe on securing the debate and on the number of Peers taking part in it as we approach the rise of Parliament tomorrow. The environment is being threatened by the amount of waste that is either fly-tipped or just left, and plastic that has been dumped in towns, villages, the countryside and on our seashores.

Discarding or dumping of waste is inexcusable, and each of us needs to look at ways in which we can play our part. I was fascinated to hear my noble friend’s reflection on things plastic that she incurred daily. I accept that at present our recycling system is not fit for purpose, but I welcome the waste and resources initiative and think that there are some good ideas in it that we can follow.

I go back to the CPRE’s winter news, which highlighted the work of local groups. At every litter pick, the volunteers counted the bottles and cans they found and, of that, 34% of the litter was drink bottles made from plastic. The waste and resource strategy published yesterday indicates future aspirations. Back in 2015, as

my noble friend said, larger shops were required to charge 5p for a single-use plastic carrier bag. The scheme has been successful. In 2016-17, 2.1 billion single-use carrier bags were sold. From this, I understand that £66 million was raised, which was donated to good local causes, including the environment, education, health, the arts, charity, heritage and sport, to mention a few, often chosen by staff and customers alike. The new strategy suggests introducing a 10p per plastic bag charge. If that happens, will the same amount be given back to local places or will it be collected nationally for bigger projects that the Government might want to carry forward?

Litter dumped on our beaches is a disgrace. In a recent article, it was reported that volunteers had collected 27,696 single-use drink containers from 500 beaches. Of these, 15,820 were plastic bottles, 8,672 were cans and 516 were cartons.

Recently, the papers have been reporting on individual efforts being made around the country. The Government’s publication *Litter and Littering in England 2016 to 2017* reflected that 11,900 litter incidents were reported in apps. Another occasion saw volunteers taking part in the Great British Beach Clean, which collected 744 items of litter per 100 metres of beach, the majority plastic or polystyrene. It is a huge problem.

In a recent Written Question, I asked the Government what plans they had to use our fishing fleet to collect plastic from the seas around the UK. In the reply, my noble friend Lord Gardiner wrote about the initiative which supports fishers in Scotland and south-west England collecting litter during their usual fishing trips. I understand that a review is under way into what more can be done to reduce plastic in the marine environment. How soon will these plans be forthcoming?

It is said that one cannot deal with black plastic, but I am really glad that my noble friend mentioned it. Viridor, a recycling, resources and energy recovery company, has been running pilots around the country that have proved that it is not only technically possible to identify black plastic but that this material can be transformed into new plastic packaging. Together, working with partners and retailers, this new scheme has the potential to divert huge amounts of plastic away from landfill and, more importantly, prevent virgin plastic entering the marketplace in the first place. The company is a founding signatory to the UK Plastic Pact, which aims to make 100% of plastic packaging recyclable by 2025, with 80% of it collected for recycling.

We should surely review not only the amount of plastic that can be collected but what is used in the first place. Why, for example, are tins of dog food wrapped in packs of six and then rewrapped? Why are building bricks covered with plastic when there are other means of securing the load? Many products need to be plastic wrapped—particularly food, for health and safety reasons.

I have two questions for the Minister. First, will the Government include a recycling obligation on tins in addition to plastic bottles? Secondly, the waste resources strategy aims for all of us to reduce, reuse and recycle more, but will timetables and targets be set to bring those worthy aims into reality?

8.08 pm

The Lord Bishop of Salisbury: My Lords, I add my thanks to the noble Baroness, Lady Neville-Rolfe, for her persistence on plastic and for securing this debate. In the light of the comments of the noble Baroness, Lady Parminter, I observe that I enter the debate after three inspiring women.

I want to say “Well done” to the Government on the resources and waste strategy announced yesterday. It must be a bit of a relief to find an issue around which there is a good level of agreement for us to work on, but it means that there is a danger of complacency in the face of such an urgent task. In welcoming the government strategy, I also welcome those who have urged the need for more detail and smart goals, but it is set in the right direction, which is good news. In churches at the moment it is Advent, which is a period of preparation, not just for Christmas but for the coming of Christ in judgment:

“Now is the time to awake out of sleep”.

It is the time for this debate but I want to shout, “Sleepers wake!” There is an urgency in what we do, here and now. Plastics are incredibly useful, and we have overused them and misused them. They pollute and have got into the food chain and, thanks to “The Blue Planet” and the like, we now know this at more than an intellectual level and want to do something in response. Just before the shortest day, we need what Chris Rapley, professor of climate change at University College London, calls “dark optimism”.

Last Lent, the Church of England encouraged a plastic-free Lent. It got significant take-up and a lot of media attention. Those who tried to do it found it incredibly difficult, like the day the noble Baroness, Lady Neville-Rolfe, described in her opening speech. It is not just about supermarket packaging or eliminating plastic on the Parliamentary Estate—I wrote this with my cheap plastic pen after eating a salad from a plastic container downstairs in the River Restaurant. However, it would be a good start to address those sorts of issues. What is really needed is a change of behaviour that reduces, reuses and recycles plastic and all goods. The attention is currently on recycling, and we could certainly do much better, but we also need to reduce our consumption and reuse in a way that eBay, charity shops and church sales often facilitate.

This is a spiritual issue. Earlier this year, I spoke at the European Christian Environmental Network meeting in Katowice. I met some Norwegians there who were building Hope Cathedral with a roof made of plastic claimed from the sea. It is beautiful, transformative and creative—an imaginative project that does something beautiful with what is proving so harmful. It speaks to the human condition, lifts the spirits and points to what we need to do. I probably ought also to say that they asked me to be a patron, and I gladly accepted.

However, I am not so heavenly minded as to think that we simply need to encourage one another with the beauty of holiness, although a healthy respect for and reverence of creation is a good place to start. We need a framework of good law to support our actions. “Most people want to do the right thing”, somebody said on the radio the other day, “but if doing the right thing is made difficult, they won’t do it”. As we have

heard, recycling rates are in danger of stalling and not meeting the 2020 target, so it is good to see the proposals that have been made to regenerate recycling arrangements across the country, and good to see the engagement of business in helping to create and pay for these improvements. But there is still so much more to play for in the care of creation.

8.13 pm

Lord Hayward (Con): My Lords, I echo the comments made by previous speakers in welcoming my noble friend Lady Neville-Rolfe’s determination to get this debate. I intend to comment on one or two of her observations, but I was pleased that she set the scene with broad observations, which affect not only our society but society around the world. Talking of which, the vision that probably struck me most distinctly this year appeared on Sky: Henderson Island in the Pacific, an unpopulated island absolutely strewn with plastics of one form or another. It is such a depressing sight, and it ought to be a wake-up call to everybody.

Before I make other comments, I should declare my personal interest: I am an adviser to A Plastic Planet, which shares many of my views. Sian Sutherland is a personal friend, and I am a great admirer of the efforts that she and others in A Plastic Planet have put in, along with other, similar organisations.

Although I am strongly opposed to the overuse or the unnecessary use of plastics, I am not a fanatic who says that they do not serve a purpose in society. They clearly do. I have a bad back and I am conscious of weight issues. Also, because I originally come from the fast-moving consumer goods sector—more of which in a second—I am very conscious that many products need CO₂ to maintain them; therefore they have to be wrapped in plastic. However, I should probably acknowledge to this Chamber and to others that it is all my fault. I was the head of personnel at Coca-Cola who negotiated with the staff and the factory management at Pudsey factory in Leeds for the introduction of the first ever plastic bottles in this country. I look back at what we thought was a wonderful achievement of the 1970s. I now view it with a fair degree of guilt and embarrassment. But times change.

I will address my comments specifically to three areas. My noble friend Lady Byford and other noble Lords have already referred to the first, which is the question of the 10 pence charge on plastic bags. Earlier this year the Government said that they would do something; as yet, we have heard nothing. I despair when I go to a shop—a small premises—and somebody buys one can of lager, or one bottle of olive oil, and what happens? It is put in a plastic bag. As we have seen from the major supermarkets, people would not take a plastic bag if they were required to pay an extra 10 pence for it. I ask the Government: please introduce that charge quickly, as they promised they would, and to do it on the basis of all stores, not just the major supermarkets.

Secondly, I address my comments to the hotel and restaurant industries. Comments have been made about unseen elements. We talk about what happens in supermarkets, but huge amounts of plastic are used in the supply of vegetables and fruit into hotels and

restaurants. My noble friend Lady Neville-Rolfe referred to keeping it fresh, but we do not need to keep produce fresh if it is going into a hotel or a restaurant and coming straight out as a meal on that day. I therefore ask the hospitality industry to take a serious look at what it is doing, and ask it, please, to turn to the suppliers of fruit and veg and other products—I have had good discussions with the noble Lord, Lord Laming, in the Services Committee here on the subject—and say, “No, we will not accept products in plastic, because we do not need it. We have a turnaround of a day or two”—whatever it may be—“and that does not necessarily apply to freshness”.

I shall make an observation just before I come to my third point. My noble friend Lady Neville-Rolfe talked about her day; the other day I opened a 450-gram packet of Kellogg’s cornflakes. I say that not as an advertisement; to be honest, I was appalled that the cornflakes took up about 50% of the pack. I ask Kellogg’s publicly to open three, four or five of their packs of that size or others and measure the amount of utterly unnecessary waste packaging. I cite Kellogg’s, but I am sure there are only too many other examples.

My noble friend Lady Neville-Rolfe made a comment about keeping things fresh in the supermarkets. That was true but it is not necessarily true any longer. Shopping habits have changed, and people shop much more often now than they used to. Waitrose is a good case in point; it has cited that change in shopping habits. I have been round major supermarkets in the last few days. It is staggering how many of the wrapped products are cheaper than the unwrapped ones. Asda has virtually nothing unwrapped; it has changed to unwrapped sweets, but nothing else. Morrisons appears to offer a lot of unwrapped products, but most of its products are cheaper if they are wrapped. Sainsbury’s, which I was in today, is the opposite: the majority of products are cheaper unwrapped. It cannot be logical to wrap products and then charge less for them than when they are sold unwrapped. Society can change, and ought to.

8.20 pm

Baroness Bottomley of Nettlestone (Con): My Lords, like others I commend my noble friend Lady Neville-Rolfe. She should be excellent—she was a senior civil servant, a special adviser and a very successful businesswoman and a Minister. She has all the ingredients for preparing the policy paper, legislating and implementing the policy, and working with business to achieve it. It has been a delight, after a wearisome autumn of somewhat tedious ill-tempered debates, to find ourselves discussing in a rather more harmonious and constructive style. Her five-point plan is utterly to be recommended.

My noble friend Lord Hayward said that the present situation was all his fault—I was thinking that it was all my father’s fault. I was enormously proud when he worked for the plastics division of Imperial Chemical Industries in Welwyn Garden City. This was a magnificent product. ICI developed its products through the last century, and this product was massively popular—a miracle product that was going to be cheap, convenient and indestructible. It was wonderful for keeping food fresh, making materials look magnificent and attractive

in the shops, and making clothing. All across the waterfront, plastic was the future. But, as with asbestos but on a much wider scale, we have now lived to see it very differently.

With more than 8 million tonnes of plastic entering our seas each year, and consumption increasing rapidly, research by the World Economic Forum and, as has been said, the Ellen MacArthur Foundation, on the new plastics economy estimates that by 2050 there will be more plastic than fish in our seas.

I am with those who say that the Government should be praised for their serious and dedicated action on the environment, and specifically on plastic pollution. It is extraordinary that a five-pence plastic bag charge has had such a dramatic effect, reducing carrier bag use by 83%. Over my dead body will I pay five pence for a plastic bag, because for me, as for the right reverend Prelate, this is a fundamental spiritual matter. Maybe I am stingy, but I am a natural recycler, and I do not want to spend five pence more than I have to.

I need to let the right reverend Prelate know that at St Margaret’s carol service on Sunday night—where my husband, who is the Parliamentary Warden, was reading the lesson—all of us in the packed church were given candles. At the end all the candles were taken back to be thrown away—and then they were going to do the same on Christmas Day. So I have negotiated with St Margaret’s Church Westminster: I am having all those candles, although they will be a little singed at the top. I am following the right reverend Prelate in a campaign against conspicuous consumption and in favour of thrift.

The excellent Environment Minister, Thérèse Coffey, has announced her landmark policy on microbeads, preventing manufacturers adding that harmful form of plastic to cosmetics and personal care products. With cosmetics, we can all see the amount of plastic on the outside and the inside—all a way of making us feel good and beautiful, even if we are a hopeless case. This action puts us at the forefront of the international fight against plastic.

This year the Government set out their 25-year environment plan, including the objective of cracking down on all marine plastic pollution and eliminating all avoidable plastic waste by 2042. So this is an exciting moment: sustainability is at the heart of the Government’s industrial strategy, as well as the *Clean Growth Strategy*. Making efficient use of recycled resources and preserving the value of our natural capital are crucial elements of these initiatives.

With our entrepreneurial and innovative culture, there are myriad business opportunities in protecting the environment. Many years ago, when I was in the Department of the Environment with my noble friend Lord Caithness, Mrs Thatcher, having fought the miners, the economy and the Falklands, turned her attention to the environment. We were out saving the ozone layer. My charge was to make people use unleaded petrol, so we went through all the different mechanisms—the “polluter pays” principle, evidence-based policy, getting business on side to see the economic opportunities, and using the media to persuade people of the case, all of which are very important.

[BARONESS BOTTOMLEY OF NETTLESTONE]

We now have the wonderful David Attenborough, a man of great fame and prestige, leading the campaign, but at that time we had “Blue Peter”. There was a terrible moment when all the seals in the North Sea fell ill, and I was attacked ruthlessly—worse than by Jeremy Paxman—by “Blue Peter”, which said, “It’s all pollution”. Our then boss, the late Nicholas Ridley, said, “No, it’s not. I think it’s a virus”. As with all such matters, it took two months for the evidence to come through, so I was bullied by “Blue Peter” for two months, until it turned out to be a virus.

We need all the different components on side. There has been an impressive display of people in business giving us their examples. Asda, Tesco and Sainsbury’s are all letting people know, with positive PR, what they are doing to be environmentally friendly and responsible. Consumers, too, need to know what to do. I am exasperated beyond belief when I want to be good but I do not know how. Sometimes I think that recycling is all about producing masses of plastic dustbins and containers all over the place, and people have no idea what they are supposed to put into what. As my noble friend says, if we can make it simple, that will be really important.

I want to talk about evidence. A wonderful team at the University of Hull has been looking at plastic pollution. Professor Jeanette Rotchell and Dr Catherine Waller have conducted important research into pollution from microplastics—those small barely visible fragments—entering the environment. They found that 100% of samples of mussels from UK waters and from British supermarkets contained microplastics or other debris. Every 100 grams of mussels we eat contains approximately 70 pieces of microplastic. With the British Antarctic Survey, they also found that microplastic has even spread to the remote Antarctic wilderness, where levels were 100,000 times higher than they expected. Professor Dan Parsons from the School of Environmental Sciences is leading this work with the Natural Environment Research Council.

This is an exciting day. I am getting very friendly signs from the Minister, so I commend my noble friend’s Motion to the House.

8.27 pm

Lord Vinson (Con): My Lords, we are indeed grateful to my noble friend Lady Neville-Rolfe for instituting this timely debate on the disposal of plastic waste, the scourge of the planet. The subject is of particular interest to me because at one stage in my life I built up a plastics business employing 1,000 people. That experience convinces me that the best way to treat plastic waste is to recycle it where it is economic so to do, and then incinerate the inevitable balance, turning that energy into heat through CHP—combined heat and power units. This is the nub of my speech today.

The practice of such incineration is widely followed in many other countries—not least Germany, Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, the Netherlands and Sweden—and they do not have the problem of plastic waste disposal that we have. Here, the London Corporation has shown the way by pioneering incineration, and the Deptford plant heats 2,600 homes from that incineration heat.

How has the world got itself into this terrible mess with plastic waste? There is nothing inherently wrong with plastics. It is totally wrong to demonise them, because, as has been mentioned, they are one of the world’s greatest inventions. The car industry depends on them, and our electrical systems would not work without them. We use them in our homes for plumbing, and much of our food would deteriorate unless it was wrapped in plastic. Plastics are versatile, cheap and highly durable—hence the problem: their very durability is their snag. People are confused. It is not the use of plastic that is the problem, but its disposal.

Most plastics are thermoplastics, which means that they can be re-melted, but some, mostly the harder plastics, are thermo-setting, which means they cannot be re-melted. These are the ones that are harder to recycle. A lot of components are mixed types, so sorting, although it sounds easy, is in practice a nightmare.

Both sorting and recycling are fundamentally expensive and mostly uneconomic as the end product costs more than the virgin raw material. The hidden cost has to be borne by somebody, ultimately the consumer, and, as ever, the poor will pay. We should bear this in mind before we go mad on recycling. It also raises the question: what can be done with the inevitable scrap at the end of any sorting process? How do you sensibly recycle old carpets, ladies’ nylon tights, shoes, clothing or car parts? There is only one answer to the disposal of mountains of unrecyclable plastic material, and that is to incinerate it, as the Nordic countries do.

Tragically, over the years, Greenpeace, Friends of the Earth and EU directives have been biased against incineration. Consequently, we have sent our waste overseas for cheaper fingers to deal with. Understandably, they do not want to do it and only a fraction of the scrap sent to them has actually been recycled. The balance has been dumped or incinerated in open fires and a great deal of it has found its way back down into rivers and into the oceans, creating the very problem that concerns us today.

Even if it were possible to recycle a greater quantity of plastic waste, what does one do with the bulk detritus? What is the alternative to incineration other than burying it in landfill? Surely this is wholly unacceptable on environmental grounds, and landfill rubbish gives off toxic fumes. Do we really want mountains or islands of waste? Landfill should be taxed to encourage combined heat and power units. It is true that early incineration plants gave off a minute fraction of fumes—nothing compared to an erupting volcano. Those are what should be stopped if we are really concerned about massive amounts of chemicals getting into the atmosphere—of course, they cannot be stopped, but we must get these things into proportion. Even the small quantity of fumes given off by incineration can now be dealt with by scrubbing the gases as they pass through the chimney and using the residue ash as road fill. No disposal is perfect, but nor is dumping stuff in the ocean.

All the projections show that we shall be using oil or gas to generate electricity for many years until we get clean nuclear to take its place, so why not incinerate

waste plastic instead of using oil, turning that heat into electricity? That would be an effective form of recycling.

The plastic waste problem is a wonderful example of the law of unintended consequences. Ideological good intentions have turned disposal into an environmental disaster. The fundamental cause of worldwide problems of plastics disposal has been the intransigent attitude of Greenpeace and Friends of the Earth, which encouraged the EU to be against incineration. In objecting to the minor contamination of incineration, they have been instrumental in creating the catastrophic sea pollution we see today. I sincerely hope that the Green movement will see the error of its ways. Meanwhile, if we replace plastic packaging with paper, millions of trees will have to be felled to meet the new demand for paper. What does this do to the environment and the CO₂ that those trees would otherwise have reduced? We should let the trees grow and get on with their unique ability to extract CO₂ from the atmosphere; we should continue to use plastic but control its disposal.

I hope those who have been against plastic incineration will see that, paradoxically, their good intentions to date have done more harm than good. Post Brexit, even though to start with we are bound by the EU waste directive—a bit of madness—I hope we can interpret it more sensibly. There really is no sensitive alternative to incineration, and turning plastic scrap back into heat or electricity makes total common sense. Cremation is best for both humans and plastic.

8.33 pm

The Earl of Dundee (Con): My Lords, I begin by congratulating my noble friend Lady Neville-Rolfe on securing this important and timely debate. My remarks will touch briefly upon three themes and how they interconnect: first, the so-called circular economy; secondly, necessary adaptations to measures which so far have not achieved enough; and thirdly, within this process, how the United Kingdom can take a lead and give useful guidance.

The notion of a circular economy is much to be welcomed; as opposed to a linear approach, it takes in many aspects together. Thus, while looking at environmental benefits, it sets out to promote economic ones as well. A recent report has indicated that a faster development of circular economy activity could create about 500,000 jobs and reduce unemployment by 100,000. Does my noble friend the Minister agree with this concept and that estimate?

As several of your Lordships have already implied, central to success are more efficient designs to make it easier to recycle plastic products, to improve the separate collections of waste and, not least, to create markets for recycled and renewable plastics. To what extent are such aims now focused and co-ordinated within the Government's new plans?

Given that existing expedients have so far underperformed, there is the obvious need to adapt and further develop them so that they do better. For example, it has been objected that too much emphasis has been put on recycling targets for the collection system. The result is that councils and waste management

companies collect resources for which, at the moment, there is no market. Both the environment and the economy then suffer. Of course, businesses want to use recycled products. Yet we are exporting valuable materials which instead could assist clean jobs and stronger competition. If my noble friend the Minister should concur with this stricture, what steps will the Government take to redress it?

Regrettably, signs of incompleteness are also well demonstrated in what we come across here every day. A typical instance corresponds to what my noble friend Lord Hayward has just mentioned, such as shops and stores which manage to replace plastic straws with paper ones, only to present the same customers with plastic cups. Apparently, many states elsewhere have gone further than we have: Botswana, Chile and Peru have announced that they will ban plastic bags, bringing the total number of countries supporting the United Nations Clean Seas campaign to over 50; while India has pledged that it will eliminate all single-use plastics in the country by 2022. Can my noble friend say what commitments the Government will make in the latter regard? In the next few years, how does the United Kingdom intend further to assist international plastics control and improve recycling? And can she provide proper evidence and reassurance to us that, post Brexit with these matters, we will, therefore, give efficient guidance and leadership in Europe and beyond?

8.36 pm

Baroness Bloomfield of Hinton Waldrist (Con): My Lords, I too congratulate my noble friend Lady Neville-Rolfe on securing this debate on a subject of increasing importance and public awareness.

We have come some way since 2007 when, with a foresight that matches her business acumen, Anya Hindmarch launched her I'm Not a Plastic Bag campaign, forcing the overuse of plastic bags into the public consciousness. Following that, of course, Wales, and not the coalition, led the way in 2011 by charging 5p for single-use bags, resulting in a 71% fall in their use. England followed that lead in 2015 with similar results, but this has not compensated for the dramatic increase in the production of plastic.

There is now no doubt at all that the ubiquitous use of this incredibly versatile material is causing real and long-lasting damage to the environment. Worse, the actual production of plastic uses up valuable and scarce resources. Sir David Attenborough's "Blue Planet" series shocked us all into acknowledging the harm that we are casually inflicting on marine life—and, indeed, on our fellow man.

Recycling is the best method of dealing with waste, but too much ends up in landfill. The UK plastic packaging recycling rate has increased significantly since 2010 but, even without China, we are exporting too much of our waste to poor countries, thereby passing the buck to some of the world's most disadvantaged peoples.

But there is hope and there is indeed good news. New technology can help mitigate some of the harm that this plastic mountain is inflicting. Some of these technologies are supported by £60 million of government

[BARONESS BLOOMFIELD OF HINTON WALDRIST]
funding, and this has encouraged companies to develop innovative alternatives to fossil fuel-based products. This has involved experimenting in the use of substances as diverse as seaweed and the by-products of whisky production.

This is particularly necessary today, for, as oil prices have fallen, they have dragged down the cost of virgin plastic, which is made from oil. In many areas, it now costs more to recycle old plastic than to make new. When plastic was expensive, recycling helped offset the expense of recycling less profitable materials such as glass. The fall in price has had ripple effects across the industry, driving up the costs of recycling generally.

As costs have risen, a combination of technological advances has made other options increasingly viable—notably waste-to-energy incineration. Defra published its report on energy recovery from residual waste in 2014 and concluded, after studying much of the evidence, that energy from waste is generally better than landfill in terms of environmental impact. It also has little impact on health.

However, pure incineration itself cannot provide the whole answer. It is only 25% efficient, and the waste heat at the end of the steam-powered generating process is ejected into the atmosphere. Agile Energy Recovery in Inverurie, Scotland, is developing an alternative model that is 80% efficient. The company has identified ways to use the waste heat so that efficiency is maximised. This involves taking waste plastic which has reached the end of its life as a consumer product, at which stage it has become so degraded that the alternative method of disposal would be landfill. The Inverurie Energy Park established by this company is helping in the proposed development of a community-owned and run district heating network that could be provided by this power plant. It might also help secure commercial advantage for local businesses through competitively priced electricity and heat from the plant.

So plastics are also a valuable resource—too valuable to be put into landfill. Its value lies in its content of carbon and hydrogen, with a similar energy content to conventional fuels such as diesel. Through another technology—cold plasma pyrolysis—waste plastics can also be converted into hydrogen and methane for energy and ethylene, which is the major building block of most plastics.

The chemical recycling company Plastic Energy, with its technology headquarters in London, is another great example of a firm that combines addressing the problem of plastic pollution with creating an energy resource. It is a world-leading pioneer in the chemical recycling of plastic that cannot be mechanically recycled. It applies a patented thermal anaerobic technology process that turns this into a synthetic hydrocarbon oil which the company has termed Tacoil. This substance is then used to make new virgin, food-safe plastic.

Finally, I note that scientists at Swansea University are developing a chemical process that will convert plastic waste into hydrogen through a photo-reforming process using solar energy. Although only at proof-of-concept stage, in five years' time we might well be able to produce cheap hydrogen from this fossil-fuel reforming.

These are all exciting technological solutions to a problem that represents an enormous threat to the world we inhabit. Not only do many represent examples of the circular economy promoted by WRAP's UK Plastics Pact but they might even allow us, one day, to run our cars and heat our homes on plastic bags.

8.42 pm

Lord Teverson (LD): My Lords, I too thank the noble Baroness, Lady Neville-Rolfe, but I really want to congratulate her on having fixed two postponements so that this debate takes place one day after the *Resources and Waste Strategy* came out. I do not know how she did it but that was fantastic planning—if only the rest of the Government had that capability. However, that is for another day.

I welcome the Government's *Resources and Waste Strategy*. It is a good document but, exactly as my noble friend Lady Parminter said, it needs to be taken forward quickly and with much more urgency. The intentions are great—it is all about actions—but at the end of the day I question, as in many other areas, whether Defra has the time, ability and bandwidth to implement it with all the other important responsibilities that it has at the moment in terms of fishing, agriculture and the environment. That is one of the fundamental questions and I am not sure that the Minister will be able to convince me, but we will see.

I will not go through the statistics that the noble Baroness has already gone through, but the history is interesting. I too believe that plastics are one of mankind's greatest inventions; the issue is how we use them. We are absolutely right to focus on single-use and very short-term plastics.

I remember the 1960s, which came after the post-war utilitarianism and shortages that I did not experience. Suddenly in the 1960s there was an explosion of the disposable society. We actually almost celebrated disposable plates, disposable clothing and all that sort of stuff. We even had BMC cars with built-in obsolescence and rusting. The whole idea that you could throw things away was somehow thought to be a part of modern society. Indeed, we had that linear economy of “take, make, throw”. Exactly as the noble Earl, Lord Dundee, said, I am pleased we are now finally moving on to the concept of a circular economy and the idea of natural capital. That is the background to what we are talking about today.

The big thing that brought my attention to the problem is personal experiences. About five years ago when I visited Buenos Aires, I was admiring the anglers on the city coastline on the River Plate. I went closer to see them, and stretching out some yards and metres from that shoreline was a regular wave of plastic detritus. I wondered why that was not being cleaned up. Then last year, when I went to Cairo, there were whole tributaries of the Nile in urban areas where you could not see the water; they were full of plastic. That is why, in my remaining three minutes, I will talk about the international side of this.

Some 40% of plastics are produced in Europe and North America and some 30% in China—that is where it is all made—but the staggering statistic is that some 10 rivers in the world are responsible for 90% of the

plastic that goes in the litter bins of our oceans. Eight of those are in Asia, primarily south-east and east Asia, and two in Africa—the Nile and the Niger. The problem is very much international. The question is: how do we help, as part of that global challenge? One of the things I was pleased about in the strategy that came out yesterday was that it has quite a large chapter on international aspects of this problem. I was interested and pleased to read about the amount of work, research and effort we are putting into international areas—particularly in Commonwealth countries, I noted, but in fact the major difficulties and problems are in China, Vietnam, Thailand, Indonesia and the Philippines. How will we increase this aid and try to help the 2 billion households in the world that do not have any refuse collection facility at all to make sure that the problem is overcome?

Part of the problem is our waste exports of some 50,000 tonnes a month, as others have talked about. That is considerable. As we saw in the National Audit Office report earlier this year, the amount of control we have over that is severely limited. I very much welcome the fact that the Environment Agency, perhaps rather late, has decided to introduce a proper crime unit. Waste crime is a real issue, and I would be pleased to hear from the Minister that the EA will have sufficient resources.

I am going to stop there, except to say that we must not let this subject take emphasis away from our policy on climate change and the reduction of species and biodiversity in this country. We have to deal with plastics, but we have to deal with those other areas as well.

8.49 pm

The Earl of Lindsay (Con): My Lords, I also thank my noble friend Lady Neville-Rolfe for securing this debate and, in doing so, I declare an interest as chairman of BPI Pension Trustees Ltd and an adviser to British Polythene Industries, which is now a division of RPC Group plc.

In respect of the 80% of the globe's ocean plastic waste being found in or around eight or nine Pacific rim and African countries, it is an uncomfortable fact that some of that waste originates in the United Kingdom. There is a direct link between the lack of plastic recycling in the UK and the plastic pollution found in Asian and African rivers.

Why has the United Kingdom become so dependent on overseas markets for the export of our waste-collected plastic packaging? Too many waste collectors and waste management businesses in the United Kingdom have found it simpler and cheaper to export these materials to countries where labour costs are low and environmental controls are seldom enforced. As a result, investment in the United Kingdom's recycling infrastructure has fallen well short of what is now needed to address the challenges we face.

We urgently need a thriving UK plastic recycling sector. To achieve this, actions are needed to stimulate markets for recycled plastics and to encourage the recycling sector to invest in additional capacity and new processes. I therefore welcome the Government's proposals, announced by the Chancellor in his last Budget, for a truly circular economy, encompassing extended producer responsibility, and linked to an increased use of recycled plastic in all-new plastic packaging. That is a good start.

However, a substantial increase in our recycling capacity is unlikely to take place if UK recyclers remain uncertain about the market for their products. I therefore want to suggest three further actions that are needed. First, there needs to be a determined commitment from producers and retailers to specify the use of recycled plastic, as opposed to virgin raw materials, in all non-food packaging and indeed, in other plastic products.

Secondly, local authorities and their waste management contractors need to have a much greater focus on the segregation of different material types at the point of collection. Over the last 30 years, their focus has been on the tonnage collected, regardless of the differing quality of the materials recovered for recycling. This matters with plastic recycling, and it has been another key factor in the UK becoming so dependent on export markets where overseas markets can afford to accept co-mingled and heavily cross-contaminated plastic waste for recycling.

Thirdly, the Environment Agency must properly enforce regulations relating to the export of plastic packaging for overseas recycling. To date this has not happened. If these three actions were implemented, alongside the Chancellor's recent commitment to a circular economy, we could look forward to a plastics recycling sector in the UK that is fit for purpose.

Finally, I should welcome yesterday's publication by the Government of *Our Waste, Our Resources: A Strategy for England*. It is another major step in establishing policies and actions for ensuring that we move towards a truly circular economy for plastic packaging, as well as tackling the problems of waste crime. The noble Lord, Lord Teverson, was quite right to raise that. I have two questions on the strategy that I want to put to my noble friend the Minister. First, it is a strategy for England. How joined-up is waste strategy across the United Kingdom? To what extent are the UK Government working with the devolved Administrations to ensure that we have an effective UK-wide strategy for waste?

Secondly, can my noble friend assure us that policies, actions and regulations arising and flowing from the strategy will be rooted in science and evidence, such as full life-cycle analyses, and not merely driven by emotion?

8.54 pm

Lord Alton of Liverpool (CB): My Lords, the whole House is indebted to the noble Baroness, Lady Neville-Rolfe, for the way in which she introduced tonight's important and timely debate. Earlier this year, I asked what studies had been commissioned into burning large amounts of plastic waste. I do not share the enthusiasm of the noble Lord, Lord Vinson, for what he described as collective cremation.

However, the noble Lord, Lord Gardiner of Kimble, in his letter of 26 February replied:

"The Government has not commissioned any specific studies into the environmental hazards of burning large amounts of plastic waste and has no current plans to do so".

In the House of Commons, I took part in the Environment Select Committee's inquiry into acid rain. We were very clear about the effects of emissions on both people and the environment. How much carbon

[LORD ALTON OF LIVERPOOL]

dioxide do we expect to be released annually because of plastic incineration? I am disturbed that we are pressing on with this approach, without properly considering the consequences.

In that same reply the noble Lord, Lord Gardiner, told me that 60% of plastic waste comes from packaging, with only 40% recycled; we have heard a lot on that theme this evening. He said that the Government want councils to collect,

“a consistent range of materials including plastic bottles and pots, tubs and trays”,

and to “accelerate this process”. I hope the Minister will tell us what impact the reduction in rubbish collection by local authorities, which say they simply cannot afford to maintain weekly collections in many places, will have on that strategy.

The Prime Minister wants supermarkets to implement plastic-free aisles. However, in supermarkets such as Tesco, it is still 50% cheaper on average to buy fruit and vegetables wrapped in plastic than it is to buy loose produce. Little wonder then that hard-pressed customers, certainly in poorer areas, buy produce wrapped in plastic. Tesco is trialling a welcome reward system that pays customers 10p for every plastic bottle they return. However, Tesco’s Jason Tarry says:

“We would urge the government to move to a single, nationwide approach to waste collection that makes it much easier for people to recycle”,

perhaps echoing a point made by the noble Earl just a few moments ago. The point Mr Tarry made was that the UK has more than 300 different recycling collection arrangements. Wales, with a collection blueprint that most Welsh councils are signed up to, has unified its collection system, reaching its recycling target of 64% of household waste four years early, whereas in the United Kingdom as a whole, we still only recycle 43.2% of household waste.

Then there are plastic bottles by the billion. Last week I asked the Government how many plastic bottles are used in the UK each year; what proportion is recyclable; and whether, in their view, cans and glass bottles do more harm to the environment than plastic bottles. I also asked whether polyethylene terephthalate, or PET, has a lower carbon footprint than forms of alternative packaging; why there is only one site in the UK able to recycle PET for use in food-grade products; and what assessment they have made of the absence of such facilities on plastic waste exported for recycling. Perhaps the Minister can give us the answers to those questions in her reply this evening.

At present, the UK recycles 57% of the 13 billion plastic bottles used each year, but 5.5 billion plastic bottles escape household recycling collection. They are littered, landfilled or incinerated, or end up in our rivers, seas and oceans. The National Audit Office says that, in the first quarter of 2018, the UK recycled around 250,000 tonnes of plastic, but only 85,000 tonnes of this was recycled in the UK, with the rest sent abroad. In this dirty game of pass the parcel, we have replaced China with new foreign destinations, including Malaysia, Poland and Indonesia, where the plastic can end up in landfill. One estimate for the level of CO₂ released into the atmosphere in shipping 28,000 tonnes

of plastic across 8,827 nautical miles to Malaysia comes in at around 11,464 tonnes of CO₂. We add thousands of tonnes of CO₂ to the atmosphere to send plastics to a country that does not even always recycle them.

Last March, I asked the Government when, and how, they intend to respond to the projection by the Government Office for Science that plastic in the ocean is set to treble by 2025. I subsequently asked for the Government’s assessment of the *Living Planet Report 2018*, which says there has been a decline of 60% in species population sizes between 1970 and 2014. In his reply, the noble Lord, Lord Gardiner, said that the Government,

“have called for at least 30 per cent of the oceans to be in Marine Protected Areas by 2030. The UK is also leading the fight against plastic pollution”.

I welcome that and I hope that the Minister can tell us what progress is being made in galvanising the international community to combat the tsunami of plastic that contaminates our oceans, endangers and kills. It is our duty to be good stewards of what has been entrusted to us, a duty which too often we fail to honour.

8.59 pm

Baroness Gardner of Parkes (Con): My Lords, I congratulate my noble friend Lady Neville-Rolfe on getting this debate, which has been very interesting. I know very little about the subject, other than from the point of view of an ordinary person with their own household rubbish. I find things extremely difficult because the rules are all different depending on where you live. My youngest daughter was chairman of the West London Waste Authority, a £61 million enterprise that covered four London boroughs, two Conservative and two Labour. They all worked wonderfully together to get the best deal that they could, but they said that we need to see less usage of things that are not recyclable, and that people need to know what is recyclable.

As an ordinary consumer, I find it very difficult to know exactly what can and cannot be recycled. When I asked my daughter to give me one comment, she said, “The answer would be to use items that can be recycled”. For example, the polymer used in a margarine container has some 54 different elements to it, whereas a milk carton has just one. The latter can be easily recycled but the former cannot, and the two cannot be put together in any way. My neighbours and other people I know never know exactly what is readily recyclable and what is not.

Many years ago, I put it to the then Labour Government that we could provide national guidance. They were very opposed to that, saying that they did not want to create a nanny state. It is not a question of a nanny state now: we all want to know how to do more about recycling. We need to return to paper bags and to less complex plastics because, as I said, many of them cannot be mixed together. They have to be separated, which costs a great deal of money.

The West London Waste Authority has worked very well, but even so, we need to go back to an older system when less plastic was used in the first place. I support what my noble friend Lord Vinson said about

incineration. The energy generated by a big incineration system in Enfield—which I think I may have represented on the Greater London Council at that time—was converted by the national grid and was recycled to hospitals and to various other authorities. That was a very good use of the recycling system.

It is very difficult for people to know what to do with these bottles. Everyone is keen to have them, but the formulae are different for each type of bottle. There must be some way for an approved list to be drawn up by an authority so that an assessment can be made. For example, aluminium cans are part of a disposal scheme and no longer appear in household bins.

There is also a great deal of dumping of rubbish, which is a very serious issue. We are getting a bit of it in London. When the Airbnb people leave, on whatever day of the week, including days when the council is not doing a collection, they just dump their rubbish outside the front door. As a result, birds peck the bags open. If there was an obligation to have a bin, at least the birds could not peck their way through that. Rubbish is being strewn across many London councils—it is London that has this problem; I cannot speak for other areas.

This is a very worthwhile debate. People genuinely long to know exactly what is recyclable and what is not. It is very complicated to work out. A lot of thought and action are needed, and I hope that we will see them come out of this debate.

9.04 pm

The Earl of Caithness (Con): My Lords, I too am grateful to my noble friend for introducing this debate. I have spoken about plastics before, and particularly about the Great Pacific garbage patch. This brings me on to what the noble Lord, Lord Teverson, said, which was absolutely right: we are small players in the world list of plastics misuse. It is a global problem, and particularly acute in the Far East and Africa. But my noble friend Lord Lindsay was right to say that we have contributed to that by exporting so much of our rubbish; that has been bad.

We all know that there are environmental downsides with plastic. I think pretty well every country in the world has signed up to monitoring the amount of plastic it uses and is trying to diminish that use. But do not let us all fall into the trap of condemning every single plastic. Plastic per se is not the problem: it is we human beings and how we mishandle that plastic. We need plastic until a suitable alternative that is not so economically damaging can be found. To create a lot more houses we will need plastic. The building and construction industry depends on plastic. The electronics industry depends on plastic, as do microwaves, fridges and all our wiring: we need that plastic. Transportation has benefitted the environment hugely because it has plastic in it. Aircraft are using much less fuel than they used to. Our cars are much more economical as a result of having plastic. Do we really want to turn the clock back and use other materials before we know whether they are less damaging?

I move quickly on to packaging, which has been the subject of much debate. Agricultural products in world trade terms were worth about \$964 billion in 2006. By

2016 that had jumped to \$1.61 trillion. Why do we need all that packaging? Because we buy food that is imported from all around the world. One has to think of who has handled that food. It has been handled by the producers, the processors, the manufacturers, the distributors, the traders, the retailers and by us in the shops. We pick it up and then put it down again because we do not like the bit that we picked up. Plastic is stopping a whole lot of pathogens travelling around the world. That is why plastic is such an important ingredient in the food industry—and until we find something that is more environmentally beneficial, we will have to continue to use it.

The World Health Organization says that nearly 3% of deaths are due to malnutrition, from not having enough vegetables and fruit. That figure would shoot up considerably if we stopped plastic packaging.

Another benefit of plastic is recycling. Most polymers can be recycled, thank goodness. My noble friend Lady Neville-Rolfe mentioned clothes. I challenge every one of your Lordships who has condemned plastic to take off any clothes of theirs which contain plastic and throw them away—not in the Chamber, my Lords, because you will not be left with very many, but when you get home.

My noble friend also mentioned that yoghurt pots can be recycled, which is wrong: only 50% of yoghurt pots can be recycled. The problem, as my noble friend Lady Gardner of Parkes mentioned, is that we do not know what we can recycle. I will come back to that in a minute.

I want to turn to what my noble friend Lord Hayward said about plastic Coca-Cola bottles. I congratulate him. He has done a phenomenal job in introducing plastic—providing they are PET bottles, because they are better than cans. They are more environmentally friendly. Cans produce higher greenhouse gas emissions when they are created. They are better than tetra cartons, because tetra cartons use six times as much water in production. Let us not just look at plastics by themselves. We must look at the whole environmental situation before we condemn it.

The noble Lord, Lord Alton, mentioned that there was only one site in the UK that was recycling PET plastic. Well, of course we do not recycle enough, and we contaminate a lot of plastic that we should not contaminate, which means that it cannot be recycled.

While we are on recycling, I congratulate the Government—three cheers for yesterday's strategy paper. It is very good, but when will the consultation end? Will my noble friend give us a date for when we will get to the action?

We need consistent collections, consistent labelling and a good deposit return scheme, which I remember from when I was young. That will help the situation enormously.

9.10 pm

Baroness Bakewell of Hardington Mandeville (LD): My Lords, I am also grateful to the noble Baroness, Lady Neville-Rolfe, for securing this rescheduled debate and her inspiring speech. I draw attention to my entry in the register of interests as a district councillor and a vice-president of the LGA.

[BARONESS BAKEWELL OF HARDINGTON MANDEVILLE]

Yesterday, the Government published their *Resources and Waste Strategy*. I have not had the opportunity to study it in depth, but at a first glance it is encouraging. Plastics have long been the saviour of the housewife as the ultimate convenience packaging in keeping food fresh and making it look attractive in supermarkets. Long gone are the days of the local grocer who sold loose biscuits, which were weighed out and taken home in a paper bag. These were often very soft. However, we have now reached the stage in the UK and other countries whereby we are swamped by discarded plastics and packaging. This is unsightly, damages our environment and is a threat to animals and other wildlife. Many noble Lords referred to this.

There have been campaigns to encourage householders and individuals to recycle. In many areas this is successful, but there is no uniform system across the country. While it is important for local authorities to be able to adopt a system that best suits their area, this is leading to confusion and poor rates of recycling, with more rubbish ending up in landfill than is necessary, as has been mentioned.

Efficient kerbside collection of recyclables is a key element to reducing the amount of waste going to landfill. Asking the consumer to separate their waste before putting it out for collection is not an arduous task. In Somerset, we separate out cardboard, paper, cans, foil, glass and plastics. We also have caddies for kitchen food waste. Recyclable and putrescent waste is collected on a weekly basis by a single-pass vehicle with compartments for the various items collected. Only by encouraging the council tax payer to separate their waste themselves can we ensure that recyclables do not end up going to landfill. Our residual waste used to be collected fortnightly, but it is now about to move to three-weekly. There has been no public outcry about this.

Not all plastic food packaging has a number on the bottom within the recycle symbol, nor does everyone know that plastics marked one to three are easily recyclable, numbers four to five are slightly more problematic and anything over five is not recyclable in the usual way. There is a great need for more information to be available to the public. Do the Government plan to ensure that all plastics, whether bottles, containers or pots, are to be marked on the bottom with the number indicating how safe disposal should be carried out?

Most people want to act responsibly and dispose of their rubbish in a way that does not harm the environment, but not all. It is important that the rest of us challenge anti-social waste disposal behaviour whenever we encounter it. It is simply unacceptable to walk along opening a packet of sweets or cigarettes and to throw the packaging on the ground for others to pick up.

As others have mentioned, the waste industry is on board with various initiatives, including generating energy from non-recyclable waste. Viridor is one such company. Each year it processes around 1 billion pieces of post-consumer plastics into quality new materials to be sold back into the manufacturing chain. It is also a founding signatory to the UK Plastics Pact and is now one of the leading processors of domestic plastics

in the UK. It works with major brands. The whole aim is to increase recycling. As has been said, the UK Plastics Pact aims to make 100% of plastic packaging recyclable by 2025 and 80% of plastic packaging collected for recycling. These targets appear way ahead of the Government's. Why have the Government not set higher targets?

Glass production has almost reached a totally circular process, but we are a long way behind with plastics. Recycling rates rose sharply from 2010 until 2016, but have now stalled and reached a plateau. This now needs to be kicked back into action. There are several reasons for this plateau and some solutions.

The UK's waste recovery sector has ageing and increasingly obsolete recycling technology and systems. Significant investment is required. Will the Government's new policy enable this investment to take place?

Often, packaging is poorly designed. I hope that this week's strategy has incentives, as opposed to sanctions, for companies to produce easily recyclable product packaging. Currently, there are neither incentives nor penalties for not doing so.

Similarly, there are no effective fiscal measures in place that incentivise using secondary materials; for example, recycled plastic in shampoo bottles. This area is governed by the packaging recovery note, or PRN, system, which is outdated, does not incentivise the use of secondary materials and fails to shift the cost of recycling away from local authorities.

As my noble friend Lady Parminter and the noble Baroness, Lady Byford, have said, a step change in line with the UK Plastics Pact is possible to deliver major improvements by 2025. This would see 70% of plastic packaging effectively recycled or composted; an average of 30% recycled content in all plastic packaging; and 100% of plastic packaging reused, recycled or composted. However, the Government's target is only 75% by 2030. This again demonstrates a lack of ambition.

Now is the time for targets to be shifted away from simplistic recycling percentages and tonnages to smarter material-specific, carbon-based or resource-efficiency targets, balancing the benefits of reuse, recycling, and recovery—I was heartened by the number of Peers who used that phrase.

I am pleased that the Government are including a deposit return scheme for single-use plastic bottles. Initiatives are taking place with existing DRS vending service suppliers. Any scheme has the potential to attract media and political attention but would target only a fraction of the waste generated in the UK. Many of these bottles are often the chief culprits in litter.

Black plastic is currently not recyclable. However, again, progress is being made whereby it could be collected with mixed-coloured plastic, separated and recycled into new black products. This has huge potential to divert large volumes of plastic away from landfill and prevent virgin plastic being used.

As mentioned by the noble Lord, Lord Vinson, a useful destination for plastic that is not recyclable is also key. Up and down the country, there are many waste-to-energy plants which heat the waste to a very high temperature. This heat is then converted into

electricity, which can be either sold to the national grid or used to provide power to nearby industrial units or housing developments. I visited one such plant in Exeter recently, run by Viridor. The quality of the air emitted from the top of the chimney is tested regularly and is always found to be cleaner than the general air in that area. The reuse of plastic in this way is a win/win situation. Does the Minister agree?

The mounting problem of plastic waste must be tackled from a variety of angles, with everyone playing their part: government encouragement for industry to invest in new plant; resources for local authorities to switch from mixed-waste collection to separated recyclables; information for consumers on which materials are easiest to recycle, enabling them properly to play their part; and heavy penalties for those who wantonly ignore legislation and continue to pollute our planet. Many strands are needed to ensure a successful outcome. It is a question of balance. I look forward to the Minister's response.

9.19 pm

Baroness Jones of Whitchurch (Lab): My Lords, I am very grateful to the noble Baroness, Lady Neville-Rolfe, for securing this debate today and for her considerable energy and hard work in championing these issues. It is great to see them being taken so much more seriously than in the past by this House, by consumers and indeed by the Government.

As noble Lords have said, it is good to have so much agreement around the House during this debate, although I have to say to the noble Baroness, Lady Bottomley, who I see has not re-joined us, that I do not think Mrs Thatcher's legacy will be as a champion of the environment. Of course, we welcome yesterday's publication of the Government's long-awaited waste and resources strategy: it brings together a number of resource policy challenges into one coherent whole, which was long overdue. The fact is that the Secretary of State has generated a lot of good headlines on this issue since his appointment, and I do not doubt his sincerity in wanting to make a difference, but I agree with many noble Lords that he needs to match ambition with action on all the issues we have been debating today.

Somewhere in Defra there is a black filing cabinet with the results of all the consultations already launched, with great publicity, to tackle the environmental pollution and plastic waste issues we have been debating. Many of these issues are recycled in the waste strategy again today, but rather than legislation we are expected to be satisfied with more consultation. So we are promised further consultation on a deposit return scheme for single-use drinks containers, which would indeed cut down on the 3 billion plastic bottles which are currently not recycled, but of course further consultation will result in more delay in addressing that problem, and we are still awaiting details of the latte levy, which would cut down on the 2 billion single-use coffee cups thrown away each year. And how soon do the Government intend to introduce a ban on plastic straws and cotton buds? It would be an easy win and they are already committed to it.

Of course, we also welcomed the announcement in the Budget that a new tax will be introduced in 2022 on plastic packaging containing less than 30% recycled plastic. It is a promise repeated in the waste strategy, but why the delay? It means that an additional 700,000 tons of plastic packaging will be dumped in landfill before the new tax is introduced. Meanwhile, once again the European Parliament is ahead of the game on this, having voted for a complete ban on single-use plastics to come into effect by 2021. Will the Minister clarify whether the Government will introduce the ban if it becomes an EU directive before the end of the Brexit transition period?

There is clearly a need for much bigger incentives across the supply chain if we are to drive market demand for recycled plastics rather than cheaper virgin plastic products. Sadly, all too often producers of recycled products find that they simply cannot compete on price with virgin oil and plastic and therefore cannot sell their recycled materials. We need to address that market failure. We also need, as noble Lords have said, to invest in fast-track technological advances for more sustainable alternatives. I hope that the Minister will send a message to companies that remain intensive plastic users or producers that, if they do not change, they risk not only possible government intervention but reputational damage and liability risks from the impact of plastic pollution in the future, which could affect their bottom line.

We need action on recycling too, as a number of noble Lords said. The reality is that all four UK nations, as well as the EU, have signed up to meeting a recycling target of 50% of household waste by 2020 but, as we have heard, the latest figures show that England's recycling rates have flatlined way below that target, while Wales, for example, is doing considerably better. We need to address the reasons for that disparity. Of course, reducing unnecessary waste in the first place clearly helps, so I very much welcome the Government's new plans on producer responsibility, which will begin to address the issue of unnecessary packaging, for example. We need to make sure that everyone in the supply chain takes responsibility for minimising waste in the first place. This includes, but is not limited to, plastic packaging. There is so much more that can be done by suppliers and supermarkets. Currently initiatives are taken on a voluntary basis, with supermarkets such as Iceland, Co-op and others announcing ambitious targets for their own stores. But at the same time many other supermarkets are refusing to divulge how much plastic packaging is used, claiming that the information is commercially sensitive. Can the Minister clarify whether the Government are considering greater transparency of data and an end to supermarkets hiding behind confidentiality agreements, so that we can all see who the real culprits are? Can she also confirm what the target date of 2019 for extending producer responsibility means in practice and whether it will indeed be a compulsory scheme?

Several noble Lords identified that recycling levels would increase if local authorities had consistent collections of domestic and business materials. Clearly, we all agree that we need a common set of rules for what should be collected, including bottles, pots, tubs, trays and food waste, with clear signage and labelling.

[BARONESS JONES OF WHITCHURCH]

When I raised this in an Oral Question recently, the noble Lord, Lord Gardiner, reiterated his faith in localism and said that,

“local authorities are the best people to look after these matters”.—
[*Official Report*, 9/10/18; col. 8.]

But this approach has blatantly failed us and there is now a desperate need for a national system for recycling, with standardised rules which will help consumers understand how to use recycling services to maximum effect—a point that the noble Baroness, Lady Gardner, made with great effect. This change will occur only if local authorities are fully funded to implement these requirements to cover the costs of new equipment and, indeed, early release from long-term, inefficient waste contracts. Can the Minister confirm that this is indeed the intention?

We also need to capitalise on the clear mood of change among local residents and consumers. The Treasury’s consultation, *Tackling the Plastic Problem*, received an unprecedented 162,000 responses. Consumers clearly want assurance that the materials they set aside for recycling are genuinely going to good use. We know from the plastic bag initiative that consumers will embrace change if given the right incentives. I think it was the noble Baroness, Lady Bottomley, who said that she would not pay the extra 5p—that is not my experience and most people I have talked to certainly would do that. Campaigns such as Love Food Hate Waste have been highly effective in raising awareness. Can the Minister explain what steps the Government are taking with WRAP and others to harness the genuine consumer concern that exists about recycling, landfill and pollution, by making sure that they become the champions of change?

Will the Minister please clarify the current state of negotiations on recycling targets at a European level? She will have seen press reports that the UK Government were opposing a new target to recycle 65% of urban waste by 2035, as agreed by the European Council and Parliament earlier this year. Can she clarify whether this is the case and what this says about our ambition to be a world leader in this field?

Finally, it is clear that unless we act decisively, both domestically and globally, we are going to start running out of resources. We have to put a new value on materials which can be used again and again in a circular economy. Some radical thinking is taking place among enlightened businesses and Governments about how we can add value through reuse, repair and closed-loop reprocessing. I was very pleased to see the waste strategy begin to address those issues. The Minister will know that in the short term a detailed circular economy package is being drawn up at European level and has received provisional political agreement. I would be grateful if she could confirm that the Government intend to embrace that package if it is agreed at that level. The truth is that, on the environment, the EU is streets ahead of us. I hope she is able to reassure the House of the Government’s determination to match, if not exceed, the EU’s ambitions so that we can have some hope that we will be able to take pride in our clean environment in the future.

9.29 pm

Baroness Vere of Norbiton (Con): My Lords, I thank my noble friend Lady Neville-Rolfe for securing this important and long-awaited debate on plastics. It comes at a timely moment, following the launch of our resources and waste strategy yesterday, and I apologise to all noble Lords who have had to redraft beautifully crafted speeches. It has been an excellent debate and I am saddened only by the scoresheet. Excluding the Front-Benchers, we have heard from 10 Conservatives, two Liberal Democrats, one Cross-Bencher, one right reverend Prelate and not a single partridge in a pear tree, or indeed a single Labour Back-Bencher. I hope they are enjoying the Christmas festivities.

On both elements of my noble friend’s debate, the Government wholeheartedly agree: we must tackle the threat that plastics pose to the environment and we must impose recycling. Since the invention of man-made plastics in the mid-1800s, plastic has become increasingly pervasive because it is versatile, cheap and malleable. It has revolutionised essential sectors such as healthcare, from providing 3D-printed plastic prosthetics that are cost-effective and comfortable to providing a sterile, flexible material that can be used to transport blood.

However, in recent decades it has become ever more evident that we are not managing this resource as we should. Plastic straws wash up on our beaches; plastic stirrers and cotton buds run along our waterways; plastic wrappers litter our environment. More than 1 million birds, and over 100,000 sea mammals and turtles, die every year from eating and getting tangled in plastic generated by humans. In 2017 fishing vessels belonging to a scheme called Fishing for Litter, mentioned by my noble friend Lady Byford, which supports fishermen to bring the litter they catch during normal fishing back to the shore, retrieved 166 tonnes of litter from UK waters. I will write to her with further details about future plans.

The adverse impacts of plastic have been understood for years now, far predating the illuminating series “Blue Planet II”. The growth of plastics worldwide continues apace, as does the pollution, as noted by the noble Lord, Lord Teverson. Plastic pollution is projected to increase threefold by 2025 compared to its 2015 levels. We must act now to prevent further environmental degradation.

The Government have already acted to protect the environment and in many cases have gone beyond the action taken by other countries. Domestically, this Government have introduced a charge on plastic bags in supermarkets and larger retailers. Thanks to the public’s support, this has taken 13 billion plastic bags out of circulation and resulted in millions of pounds donated to local causes. The Government are going further. In August, the Prime Minister announced a consultation on extending the plastic bag charge to all retailers, and possibly increasing the levy to 10 pence. We expect that this increased levy, too, will benefit local charities. The consultation on extending the charge will be launched shortly and I agree with my noble friend Lord Hayward that we need to resolve this quickly.

We have consulted on ending the sale of plastic straws, drink stirrers and plastic-stemmed cotton buds where there are alternatives. Our response is due to be

published by March 2019, which I am sure will please the noble Baroness, Lady Parminter. If noble Lords cast their minds back just a year, in 2017 we published our litter strategy. It made it clear that it is everybody's responsibility to make sure that they dispose of materials responsibly.

It is not just large plastic items that damage the environment; microplastics are harmful too. We have therefore introduced one of the world's toughest bans on rinse-off cosmetic and personal care products that contain microbeads. We have also launched a research project into the impact of other microplastics, including those from tyres and from textiles such as clothing, as mentioned by my noble friend Lady Neville-Rolfe, so that we can identify where to intervene.

Internationally, the UK is a global leader in co-ordinated action on plastics. In April the UK signed up to the *Commonwealth Blue Charter*, together with 52 other Commonwealth countries. Furthermore the UK, together with Vanuatu, is leading one of the nine blue charter action groups, the Commonwealth Clean Oceans Alliance. Over a third of Commonwealth countries have joined the alliance, its numbers having grown from just seven to 23 since its launch in April this year. The Prime Minister has announced up to £66 million to support research, waste management and sustainable manufacturing in countries across the Commonwealth to prevent plastic waste entering the oceans in the first place. As part of this package, the World Economic Forum, with the support of the UK and Canada, launched the global plastic action partnership. This helps to deliver the goals of the Commonwealth Clean Oceans Alliance and those of other countries around the globe.

At the Global Environment Facility conference this year, the UK pledged up to £250 million to reaffirm its commitment, together with 29 other international donors, to help developing countries tackle global environmental degradation, including plastic pollution. Finally on international action, UK aid can be invested in Asian ODA-eligible countries. The UK has invested £6 million of UK aid in the Commonwealth litter programme to tackle marine litter in six countries in the Pacific, Asia and the Caribbean. Defra is also working in partnership with Indonesia to address marine litter and support its ambitions to reduce marine plastic pollution.

The Government have already achieved all these things domestically and internationally, but of course we want to go further. Our 25-year environment plan states that over its life we will eliminate all avoidable plastic waste. The plan sets out action at every stage of the product life cycle, from production to consumption and end of life. Our strategy on resources and waste sets out further measures to support these aims, bring plastic pollution under control, improve recycling and work towards a more effective circular economy, as mentioned by my noble friend Lord Dundee.

Turning to the first life stage—production—we will reform the current producer responsibility system to incentivise sustainable design, including the use of more recycled materials, and require packaging producers to fund the collection and disposal or recycling of their packaging products. To aid this, the Chancellor announced a new world-leading tax on plastic packaging. This tax, which is subject to consultation, will apply to

plastic packaging that does not contain at least 70% recycled plastic. This will transform financial incentives for manufacturers to look at packaging design and to produce more sustainable packaging by reducing the amount of virgin plastic that they use. A tax to promote recycled content will improve our already-strong recycling rates for packaging. In 2016, 44.9% of UK plastic packaging was recycled. This is not unfit for purpose, as noted by my noble friends Lady Neville-Rolfe and Lady Byford, but it perhaps requires improvement.

On the 50% target noted by the noble Baroness, Lady Parminter, we are working very hard with local authorities to make sure that we achieve it. Importantly, the tax will increase the value of and demand for these recycled materials and support a circular economy for plastics.

The actions of the Government are being supported by the work of industry and beyond. In April, the Waste and Resources Action Programme, commonly known to all noble Lords as WRAP, and the Ellen MacArthur Foundation published their UK plastics pact with support from Defra and more than 80 NGOs, government organisations, businesses and service providers covering more than 80% of plastic packaging sold in UK supermarkets. The pact brings these organisations together with the aim of making 100% of plastic packaging reusable, recyclable or compostable by 2025.

Black plastic has been a consistent theme in today's debate. We are pleased that several UK plastic pact members, including Waitrose, Aldi and Lidl, have committed to reducing or eliminating black plastic packaging, while other companies are using detectable pigment that enables black plastic to be recycled. We hope and expect that members of UK plastic pact will do what they can to support innovation in the production and deployment of plastic. I also hope that the producers and retailers among them will have heard contributions by noble Lords today expressing surprise at the unexpected cost differential between packaged and unpackaged goods, particularly fruit.

The Government are playing their part in supporting plastics innovation. In June, we launched the £20 million Plastics Research and Innovation Fund, which will support UK scientists to innovate and create more environmentally friendly plastics.

I move from the production phase to the next life stage, which is consumption. Understanding how we as consumers use and discard materials is central to attacking the scourge of plastic waste. As my noble friend Lady Neville-Rolfe noted, we need to work with the grain of human nature. I noted with interest the plastic-free Lent mentioned by the right reverend Prelate the Bishop of Salisbury, which goes to the heart of the matter. It is up to all of us and all organisations to work to reduce consumption and encourage people to do the right thing. Our strategy outlines measures that we will take to incentivise consumers to purchase sustainably, including a new review of eco labelling and work with WRAP to assess the benefits of plastic-free supermarket aisles.

Turning to the last life stage, end of life and, more specifically, recycling and collections, where reuse is not plausible we want to recycle as much as possible, and we have made progress in this area, but there is

[BARONESS VERE OF NORBITON]

much more to do. Our resources and waste strategy will deliver significant and comprehensive change to achieve a 65% recycling rate by 2035—I believe that is the rate that the noble Baroness, Lady Jones, mentioned.

We plan to make recycling easier and clearer by ensuring that more householders can recycle the same set of materials wherever they live—something that has been mentioned so many times today and on which we need to act. We will publish a consultation document in the new year on measures to support consistency in recycling, including to reduce the risk of contamination. We want all local authorities to collect a consistent range of materials for recycling. This is to make it easier for all households to recycle and do away with current confusion over what can be recycled.

It was noted that local authorities might not have the resources to put in place any new requirements, but it is too early to talk about resources, as clearly we cannot confirm what the outcome of the consultation will be or what changes will need to be made to the system. We already work with WRAP to promote the framework for greater consistency in recycling and to encourage local authorities to extend collections to include all plastics and food waste. WRAP works with local authorities to improve communications. Recycling should rightly include tins, as my noble friend Lady Byford noted. Together with the clear labelling of packaging, as mentioned by the noble Baroness, Lady Bakewell, this is something that we plan to improve through our proposed producer responsibility reforms, which will enable clearer communications and ensure that all households can confidently recycle more.

It is not just households whose recycling rates need to improve. It is essential that businesses recycle more and use less. I note the nod of my noble friend Lord Hayward towards the hospitality industry in this regard. WRAP has published advice to businesses on recycling, and we will publish plans to help businesses recycle more, including by funding research into shared collection services.

Recycling is one aspect of end of life, but perhaps the biggest change we want to make, subject to consultation, is the introduction of a deposit return scheme in England. We know that well-run deposit return schemes work. The consultation will be published shortly. In the last Budget we provided £20 million to support measures to tackle plastics and boost recycling, £10 million more for plastics R&D—the innovation referred to by my noble friend Lady Neville-Rolfe—and £10 million to pioneer innovative approaches to boosting recycling and reducing litter, such as smart bins. This is in addition to the £20 million in the Plastics Research and Innovation Fund.

I turn to a topic raised by a number of noble Lords: energy from waste. I particularly thank my noble friend Lady Bloomfield for her instructive contribution in this area. Energy from waste has a role to play in directing waste from landfill to produce energy. We do not want it to replace recycling and reuse, but it will continue to play a role and is a proven and safe technology. Emissions from incineration and energy recovery facilities are closely monitored and regulated

by the Environment Agency, and plastics are burned in an energy-from-waste facility only as part of the mix of waste that cannot be reused and/or recycled.

On carbon dioxide release from energy from waste, I understand that Public Health England's position remains that modern, well-managed incinerators are not a significant risk to public health. Although it is not possible completely to rule out adverse health effects, risks from modern, well-regulated municipal waste incinerators are likely to be very small, if detectable at all. Innovation in energy from waste is an important area, and Defra is working with other governmental departments to achieve this. The Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy has a heat networks investment project, with a capital fund of £320 million, and we are working to ensure that this project helps to utilise energy-from-waste plants as a source of heat.

The export of waste to developing countries was mentioned by a number of noble Lords, including the noble Lord, Lord Alton, and my noble friend Lord Lindsay. We are clear that waste must be properly managed, whether processed at home or abroad, and we work closely with the waste industry, the Environment Agency and local authorities to achieve this. We state in our strategy:

“We want to promote UK-based recycling and export less waste to be processed abroad”.

We also include measures that we will take to increase the monitoring and enforcement of exports, which should create a more level playing field for domestic recyclers. However, waste exports will still play an important role in resource management. There must be a balance. Where the UK cannot currently recycle materials economically, exports can help to ensure that those materials are recycled rather than landfilled.

On enforcement, the Government are serious about tackling fraudulent international exports of waste. In 2016-17, the Environment Agency brought 138 prosecutions against businesses and individuals for waste-crime offences, yielding more than £2 million in fines.

My noble friend Lord Lindsay asked how the waste strategy would be joined up across the UK. It is true that many aspects of waste within the UK are covered by EU legislation and policy implementation is devolved. For example, each of the four devolved nations has the ability to manage its own municipal waste and set its own recycling targets. Some aspects of waste management policy are managed at a UK level, but always in close co-operation with the devolved Administrations. For example, the UK Government lead on tax measures to encourage recycling.

My noble friend Lord Lindsay also mentioned the fact that we need to base our policy on science-based evidence, and I completely agree. The evidence annex accompanying the resource and waste strategy provides the underpinning to the document. It is positioned within the policy analysis framework provided by Her Majesty's Government's Green Book, and its primary purpose is to explain the rationale for intervention and to provide transparent evidence behind the actions in the strategy. Our upcoming consultations on consistency, the deposit returns scheme and extended producer responsibility will also be accompanied by robust impact assessments. That goes to the point raised by my noble friend Lady Neville-Rolfe about information on costings

and the impact on consumers and business being available as we consult on these matters and take them forward.

The noble Lord, Lord Alton, mentioned the recycling of PET. It is of course our strategy and our policy to promote recycling of all types of plastic, including PET. We believe that reforms to producer responsibilities and the plastic tax will encourage more recycling of PET. As the value of the recycled PET rises, we expect the number of domestic recyclers to increase.

Finally, on questions raised about timing and resources, a certain number of noble Lords were not happy about the timing. This is a broad and quite complicated area, and many of the elements are interlinked. However, I can say to the noble Baroness, Lady Parminter, in particular, that more details on timing, particularly over the short term and what we plan to do next year, will be available shortly. Certain noble Lords have talked about consultation as if it is a bad thing. I understand that it causes a delay and that it does not mean that action can be taken immediately, but sometimes action should not be taken until we have consulted and made sure that the action is absolutely right. The consequences of taking action that has not been properly consulted on, particularly in these sorts of areas, are not worth the risk.

The Government are committed to leaving the environment in a better state than we found it, both in the UK and abroad, and that statement is as true now as it will be after we leave the European Union. Our resource and waste strategy spells out how we will ring the changes and ensure that our actions and decisions no longer come at a cost to future generations.

9.49 pm

Baroness Neville-Rolfe: My Lords, it has been a rich and entertaining debate, and I thank all who have taken part, despite the two postponements and this evening's delay. I particularly thank my noble friend the Minister for her lively and positive responses, including on the important issue of international action. I believe there is a shared sense of urgency across the House in the battle against plastic waste, and a shared determination to make things simpler and better, so that they cut through. I very much look forward to seeing a clear single system for recycling and for packaging—and, indeed, to our debating the Government's waste strategy more fully, and the various consultation documents that have been promised.

Motion agreed.

Ecumenical Relations Measure
Church of England (Miscellaneous
Provisions) Measure
Church Property Measure
Church of England Pensions Measure
Motions to Direct

9.50 pm

Moved by The Lord Bishop of Chichester

That this House do direct that, in accordance with the Church of England Assembly (Powers) Act 1919, the Ecumenical Relations Measure be presented to Her Majesty for the Royal Assent.

That this House do direct that, in accordance with the Church of England Assembly (Powers) Act 1919, the Church of England (Miscellaneous Provisions) Measure be presented to Her Majesty for the Royal Assent.

That this House do direct that, in accordance with the Church of England Assembly (Powers) Act 1919, the Church Property Measure be presented to Her Majesty for the Royal Assent.

That this House do direct that, in accordance with the Church of England Assembly (Powers) Act 1919, the Church of England Pensions Measure be presented to Her Majesty for the Royal Assent.

The Lord Bishop of Chichester: My Lords, the four Measures before us deal with significant areas of the Church of England's life in ways that strengthen, update or consolidate her mission. First, the Ecumenical Relations Measure deals with ecumenism by updating the provision of existing legislation on ecumenical relations that is contained in the Church of England (Ecumenical Relations) Measure 1988. That Measure created a framework within which a wide range of ecumenical co-operation with partner Churches has been successfully fostered.

The ecumenical environment has developed in the 30 years since the General Synod and Parliament last legislated in this area. Legislation needs to catch up with those developments so that it can continue successfully to foster a wide range of ecumenical co-operation. If the Measure is passed, a new canon will be enacted by the Synod to provide a general framework and set some boundaries—but much of how to go about making these arrangements work in practice will be set out in a code of practice issued by the House of Bishops under Section 3 of the Measure.

The Measure will also address some uncompleted business from 1988, with provision now being made to enable a member of the Salvation Army to preach at a Church of England service. The rules are also being relaxed in relation to non-designated Churches more generally, so that a member of any Trinitarian Church can be invited to read the scriptures or to lead prayers at a Church of England service.

The Church of England (Miscellaneous Provisions) Measure is the 12th in a series of miscellaneous provisions Measures dealing with uncontroversial matters that do not merit separate free-standing legislation. The fact that the matters it deals with are not controversial does not, however, mean that they are not important. For example, Section 1 will enable the Church Commissioners to support the work and mission of the Church of England more generally by creating a new power for them to make grants out of their general fund to the Archbishops' Council, whose objects are,

“to co-ordinate, promote, aid and further the mission of the Church of England”.

A grant could be made to the council under the new power for any purpose that came within those wide objects. Other examples are Sections that address securing the availability of clergy for taking funerals and ministering to bereaved families, and the working of provincial courts so as avoid anomalies between the Provinces of

[THE LORD BISHOP OF CHICHESTER]

Canterbury and York. Despite the dry technical nature of much of this legislation, it is hoped that these miscellaneous provisions will make a real difference to the mission and work of the Church of England.

The Church Property Measure and the Church of England Pensions Measure are both consolidation Measures, bringing together in one place provisions relating to a particular area of ecclesiastical law that are currently spread across a large number of different enactments. They do not make substantive changes to the existing law. The Ecclesiastical Committee has reported that it is of the opinion that all four Measures are expedient. I beg to move.

Baroness Butler-Sloss (CB): My Lords, I am chairman of the Ecclesiastical Committee. These four Measures came before 18 members of the committee, and we

have reported. We found each of the Measures expedient and we were happy to support them, as I am happy to support them today.

Lord Lexden (Con): My Lords, as a recent arrival on the Ecclesiastical Committee, I thank our chairman for the meticulous way in which she conducted our discussions, towards the end of October, on these four Measures. I also thank the right reverend Prelate for the clarity and fullness with which he explained them; two, as he says, are consolidation Measures but important in their own right. I was particularly interested in the first Measure, which promotes the ecumenical activity of the Church of England; this is so very important. I am extremely happy to support the four Measures this evening.

Motions agreed.

House adjourned at 9.56 pm.

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