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PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES
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HOUSE OF LORDS

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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

Thursday 24 September 2020

The House met in a hybrid proceeding.

Noon

Prayers—read by the Lord Bishop of Carlisle.

Arrangement of Business

Announcement

12.07 pm

The Lord Speaker (Lord Fowler): My Lords, the Hybrid Sitting of the House will now begin. Some Members are here in the Chamber, respecting social distancing, others are participating remotely, but all Members will be treated equally.

Oral Questions will now commence. Please can those asking supplementary questions keep them short and confined to two points? I also ask that Ministers' replies are similarly brief.

Emergency Services Network

Question

12.08 pm

Asked by Lord Harris of Haringey

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact of the decision to ban Huawei equipment on the delivery of the new Emergency Services Network.

Lord Harris of Haringey (Lab) [V]: My Lords, I beg leave to ask the Question standing in my name on the Order Paper and draw attention to my interests in the register.

The Minister of State, Home Office (Baroness Williams of Trafford) (Con): My Lords, the removal of Huawei equipment from EE's network is being managed and monitored closely to ensure that any disruption to the build or operation of the emergency services network—otherwise known as ESN—is avoided. We do not anticipate any impact on programme schedules.

Lord Harris of Haringey (Lab) [V]: My Lords, I am sure that that is intended to be good news, but this has been an omnishambles from day one. It was supposed to take four years; now it is 10. We are the only country in the world using this technology. Is there any police, fire or ambulance chief who has confidence in this project? Last year, the PAC was told that it was running £3.1 billion over budget and would cost £9.3 billion, and now it has been delayed by another two years. So what will the final bill be before we have a communications system on which our emergency services can rely?

Baroness Williams of Trafford (Con): The noble Lord is absolutely right to point out that this has been a very challenging programme. There are police chiefs who have confidence in it and are keen to take it forward. In terms of the final bill, we understand that it will be some £10.3 billion.

Lord McColl of Dulwich (Con) [V]: My Lords, the London Fire Brigade and other emergency services are very concerned about the effect of the ban of the use of the Huawei equipment on the upgrade of the ESN. What is Her Majesty's Government's plan for damage limitation? Is the predicted overspend really as much as £3 billion? What plans do the Government have to deal with this?

Baroness Williams of Trafford (Con): My Lords, as I said initially, there is every plan in place to ensure minimal disruption. In terms of the Huawei equipment in the EE part of the ESN—the dedicated core network—EE is already working to remove it by 2023, well in advance of the 2027 deadline that DCMS set out.

Viscount Waverley (CB) [V]: My Lords, this matter can be added to an increasingly long list in a generally deteriorating set of relations with China. How much is the Huawei issue about political manoeuvring over security, when GCHQ has cleared that organisation for the supply of hardware year on year for the past 10 or so years? Have the Government altered their approach to Huawei to ensure being at one with the US, or is any effective high-level diplomacy being conducted, beyond megaphone diplomacy, to put the relationship with China on track? Do insurmountable red lines exist? If so, what are they?

Baroness Williams of Trafford (Con): I will respond to the areas raised by the noble Viscount that pertain to the Home Office and are linked to DCMS. Clearly, in January, the government restrictions on the use of Huawei equipment introduced the restrictions in 5G and FTTP networks. We expect the decision to be brought into law by the forthcoming telecoms security Bill.

The Lord Speaker (Lord Fowler): I call Lord Desai. No? We will move on. I call the noble Lord, Lord Paddick.

Lord Paddick (LD): My Lords, this new emergency service network will operate on old 4G technology, and current estimates are that it will cost £33,000 per user. We learned from the King's Cross fire and the 7/7 terrorist attacks the importance of this network working on the London Underground but, to date, it does not—even though my own iPhone does. How and when will this be resolved?

Baroness Williams of Trafford (Con): The noble Lord is absolutely right to point to the importance of emergency networks in the London Underground. In fact, that work and that testing has begun with TfL—I visited one of its sites in Canada Water—but it has been delayed because of Covid-19, for very obvious

[**BARONESS WILLIAMS OF TRAFFORD**]
practical reasons. I can assure the noble Lord on this. The testing is absolutely imperative, so that the technology that we have works in emergency situations such as those he referred to.

Lord Foulkes of Cumnock (Lab Co-op) [V]: My Lords, will the Minister admit, in a moment of frankness and honesty, that this project is a total shambles? Will she tell the House what the arrangements are for consulting with the authorities in Scotland and Wales? What is their view about this interminable delay?

Baroness Williams of Trafford (Con): Well, I think I was quite frank initially in saying that it had been a challenging project. It is a project that I have paid particular attention to in trying to get it moving, in terms of emergency services testing it and taking it up. In terms of the Scottish view on it, we engage with all devolved Administrations on this sort of thing, and we want to get it up and running as soon as we possibly can.

Lord Lucas (Con) [V]: My Lords, it looks as if this system is going to come on stream just at a time when the rest of us are moving on from 4G to 5G. Would it not be a good idea to start working now on the 5G replacement and use this as an exemplar of Dominic Cummings's new way of government contracting and delivery?

Baroness Williams of Trafford (Con): My Lords, I will keep away from politics and say that, to meet DCMS's original requirement relating to 5G RAN only, EE had already anticipated that a proportion of Huawei 4G RAN equipment would need to be replaced with equipment supplied by other vendors, and this would be increased to meet the new requirement for 5G.

Lord Mackenzie of Framwellgate (Non-Aff) [V]: My Lords, communications are clearly critical within and between the emergency services in dealing with major incidents. Could the Minister tell the House whether there have been essential improvements in comms technology recently, allowing better communications and connections between and within responder services? Have improvements been made? Can she guarantee that improvements are being made in communications in underground locations?

Baroness Williams of Trafford (Con): What I should say to the noble Lord is that the testing of the product is the essential bit in terms of gaining that confidence that noble Lords have talked about that the ESN will get online and will work, as the noble Lord, Lord Paddick, said, underground, above ground and in remote areas.

Lord Blunkett (Lab): To be fair to the Minister, 20 years ago the analogue system was a shambles as well. But I would like her to agree to talk to her colleagues in DCMS about why we should not reach the kind of partnership deal with Huawei, using UK or European partners, that the Trump Administration have reached with TikTok.

Baroness Williams of Trafford (Con): I can certainly take that back, and I thank the noble Lord for telling me some of the historical problems that have been faced. Certainly, we want to make sure that the system works, cannot be disrupted and works in all areas where the emergency services need coverage.

Lord Truscott (Ind Lab): The critical national infrastructure comprises many components. Emergency services are one; civil nuclear power is another. Does it make sense to ban the Chinese from one part of the critical national infrastructure and not another?

Baroness Williams of Trafford (Con): What is important with the infrastructure to which the Huawei systems relate is where security lies in terms of national security and, going forward, the security of people's devices and that sort of thing.

The Lord Speaker (Lord Fowler): My Lords, all supplementary questions have been asked, and we now move to the next Question.

Northern Ireland: Victims Payment Scheme Question

12.18 pm

Asked by Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what recent engagements they have had with victim groups in Northern Ireland on the Troubles-related incident victims payment scheme.

Viscount Younger of Leckie (Con): My Lords, it is clear, through engagement with victims and survivors, that the hurt and suffering caused by decades of terrible violence have had a profound and deep-rooted impact on individuals and generations of families in Northern Ireland. Ministerial and official-level engagement with victims' groups took place throughout the consultation period for the victims payment scheme and has continued throughout this year, since the publication of the regulations in January and the publication of guidance on 14 August.

Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick (Non-Aff) [V]: Given that the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland changed the victims' pension scheme, expanding eligibility to potentially thousands more victims than originally anticipated, and that the NIO made the regulations and guidance, surely the Treasury rule that the department responsible for the policy is responsible for funding should apply. In view of standing by victims, when will Government provide the funding?

Viscount Younger of Leckie (Con): My Lords, the Executive committed to delivering such a scheme six years ago, and the UK Government have provided generous financial support to the Northern Ireland Executive. The funding of the scheme, as the noble Baroness will

know, is to come from the block grant. It is a devolved matter, and devolved matters are traditionally funded from this particular part.

Baroness Goudie (Lab) [V]: My Lords, the victims payment scheme must be implemented without further delay or obstacles, but the seriously injured victims themselves must be fully involved in the process. It is now almost a year since the scheme was established, and it was supposed to have opened over four months ago. Many of the victims are now elderly. They must not be denied financial security; the wait must now be over.

Viscount Younger of Leckie (Con): Absolutely, the noble Baroness makes a very good point. That is why it is up to the Northern Ireland Executive to move forward as fast as they can to honour the payments that should be made to the victims; that is for the Executive, not the UK Government.

Lord Hay of Ballyore (DUP) [V]: My Lords, it was deplorable that Sinn Féin was allowed to hold this pensions scheme up for so long, and some victims have suffered serious financial loss because of the long delay in establishing the scheme. For many victims, the worry is that the scheme could be further frustrated by the lack of funding. The major part of the funding, of course, will come from the Northern Ireland Executive. However, let me say to the Minister that the Northern Ireland Executive will not have all the funding for this scheme. As the scheme will apply right across the United Kingdom, will the Treasury also provide some funding? I think it is the Treasury's duty to part-fund this particular scheme, because it goes right across this United Kingdom.

Viscount Younger of Leckie (Con): As I said earlier, we believe that the funding is adequate, and the funding of the scheme, as I say, comes from the block grant. Of course, I should make the point that we are not entirely sure yet how much is required. That is a matter for the board to take forward and understand: the number of victims and how much is required.

Lord Lexden (Con): My Lords, would not the Government be widely applauded if they made the money required available? It is not a colossal sum, compared with recent increases in public spending in Northern Ireland. This would put pressure on the Northern Ireland Executive and earn the gratitude of truly heroic people who have been waiting for their pensions for far too long.

Viscount Younger of Leckie (Con): My noble friend is right; they have been waiting for far too long. I reiterate—again—that the funding is there, and it always was there. The delay was entirely up to the parties that had failed, up until recently, to agree the way forward. Now we are making some progress with the designation of the department. Funding is there, and that has never been—and is not now—a block.

Baroness Suttie (LD): My Lords, I add my voice from these Benches to the issue of long-term funding. As other noble Lords have said, victims have waited

far too long for this scheme to come into being, and the non-designation of a department caused unnecessary delay to victims. I press the Minister one more time: will he commit to securing the long-term funding that is so desperately needed to move forward?

Viscount Younger of Leckie (Con): I think this must be the third or fourth question on this matter; I believe I have answered that. The funding is there, and there are other ways in which this goes forward, but the funding is not a block.

Lord Caine (Con): My Lords, like the noble Lord, Lord Hay of Ballyore, I deplore the way in which Sinn Féin has frustrated this scheme. Does my noble friend agree that Sinn Féin's obstructionism of victims' payments is part of a broader narrative on its part that seeks to rewrite the history of the Troubles and legitimise the activities of the Provisional IRA? Will he confirm that this Government will always resist any such attempts to rewrite history in this way, and will never accept any kind of equivalence between the victims and perpetrators of terrorism, and indeed the perpetrators of terrorism and the security forces?

Viscount Younger of Leckie (Con): I believe my noble friend is alluding to the guidance we have published recently. The guidance will support the independent board, whose job it is to decide on what payments are made and to whom. I reiterate to my noble friend that the UK is, and remains, fundamentally opposed to the notion of terrorists receiving compensation. We have clarified that the guidance does not apply to people injured by their own hand.

Lord Loomba (CB): My Lords, the payments scheme was due to open in May this year, and it is now September. With the judge's scathing ruling regarding the Executive's delay of the scheme, and with the Justice Minister estimating—even before the new swathes of Covid restrictions now in place—that it will take until March 2021 for the administration of the scheme to be set up, can the Minister say if victims will be compensated for payments lost during the delay period?

Viscount Younger of Leckie (Con): The noble Lord raises a very important point about timing, and the Justice Minister said recently, as the noble Lord may know, that it is anticipated that the scheme could be open for applications by early March 2021. The noble Lord and I would say, "Let us see whether we can do better than that." What needs to be done, beyond the designation of the department, is to set up the independent board—which is beginning—the processes and IT systems, and the staffing and resources leading to the application process. Some work has been done on this latter point, but much work needs to be done. We hope that it is sooner than March.

Lord Murphy of Torfaen (Lab) [V]: My Lords, funding from the Government is, of course, vital to the success of this new scheme, but so is funding for the wonderful Warrington peace centre, set up to help victims of terrorism. Tim Parry, who was killed by the IRA in 1993, would have been 40 this year, and it

[LORD MURPHY OF TORFAEN]

would be tragic to see this very important service ended. Can the Minister assure the House that the Prime Minister's promise, made in March, to help this centre will now be honoured?

Viscount Younger of Leckie (Con): I remember the tragic story of Tim Parry. I remember it very clearly; we all do. I will need to write to the noble Lord about that, but I see no reason at all to say that things have changed. I would like to just confirm in writing that the honour of this funding will be there.

The Lord Speaker (Lord Fowler): I now call the noble Lord, Lord Bruce of Bennachie. Lord Bruce, you need to switch your thing on—I think we will go to the next questioner, and come back to you, Lord Bruce. I now call the noble Lord, Lord Browne of Ladyton.

Lord Browne of Ladyton (Lab) [V]: My Lords, does the Minister accept that in circumstances where there is no Victims' Commissioner, and where politics and politicians have failed these victims for a long period of time, the UK Government have a duty to amplify the voices of victims so that they are heard above the partisan political point-scoring that goes on around their issues? One way to achieve this would be for the relevant Ministers to meet publicly with victims to call for the quickest possible payment of their entitlement, while privately advocating for the necessary funding that the payment demands.

Viscount Younger of Leckie (Con): I remember that I answered a Question in June, and I made the point that every effort was being made by the Secretary of State to get the parties together to make progress on this particularly important matter. That has now begun to happen; I, and others, would say that it is too slow, but we are now at the point where a department has been designated, and I am pleased to say that progress is being made.

The Lord Speaker (Lord Fowler): My Lords, I am afraid the time allowed for this Question has elapsed. We now move to the third Oral Question.

Mental Health Services: Young People Question

12.29 pm

Asked by **Baroness Massey of Darwen**

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether mental health services for young people will be expanded to deal with concerns expressed during the COVID-19 pandemic; and if so, how.

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department of Health and Social Care (Lord Bethell) (Con): My Lords, Covid inevitably puts pressure on young people, which is why we are increasing support through our £8 million Wellbeing for Education Return fund, which raises awareness of the tools available to support mental

well-being and ensure that children and young people are directed towards the right services. That is part of our commitment to invest at least £2.3 billion of extra funding a year into mental health services by 2023, which will see 345,000 more children accessing specialist mental health support each year.

Baroness Massey of Darwen (Lab): I thank the Minister for his response. Is he aware of the demands of professionals, parents and children themselves to prioritise mental health services? What he says is good, but is it enough? Some 80% of young people say that their mental health has become worse during the Covid pandemic. Will the Government urgently expand services for young people through increased counselling in schools and community services? Otherwise, the human and financial costs will be enormous.

Lord Bethell (Con): My Lords, we are greatly concerned about the human and financial costs, as the noble Baroness rightly points out, which is why we put in place the Wellbeing for Education Return fund. It is training the trainers, working through the Anna Freud centre, the well-respected child mental health charity, and it is already having a huge impact. Some 95% of the attendees in a recent session said that they were extremely or somewhat pleased with the programme, and we are expecting it to be rolled out across schools.

The Lord Bishop of Carlisle: My Lords, I spoke last week with a young person whose father, sadly, died recently of Covid-19, and she told me about the impact that experience has had on her own mental health. I am therefore grateful for the reassurance from the Minister that Her Majesty's Government will be strengthening access to mental health services in our schools and, I hope, in our colleges and universities. Are there any plans for bereavement support and counselling to form part of that provision?

Lord Bethell (Con): The right reverend Prelate the Bishop of Carlisle is right to emphasise bereavement support. We all remember well the difficulties faced by family or friends who were bereaved in the terrible circumstances that we were put under during Covid. We have put £9.2 million of additional funding into mental health charities, which includes charities that provide bereavement support. However, I will take away the well-made points of the right reverend Prelate and will look into whether more could or should be done.

Baroness Wyld (Con): My Lords, we know that a particularly risky time for children and young people is when they move across and between services, whether that is accessing CAMHS for the first time or moving on to adult services. Can the Minister reassure me that face-to-face appointments will still be made available for those important relationships to be established and embedded?

Lord Bethell (Con): My Lords, face-to-face appointments are incredibly important for some people, which is why we have emphasised the return to work, particularly in GP surgeries. However, I would like to make the case for internet or telephone services. They have

proved to be extremely popular among some mental health patients, who find the direct intimacy of face-to-face too overwhelming and prefer instead to do Zoom or telephone consultations. We are supporting analysis of where these rightfully work and in the meantime are supporting face-to-face when preferred or necessary.

Baroness Greengross (CB) [V]: My Lords, I declare my interests as in the register. Like young people, many older people have suffered a significant deterioration of their mental health during the pandemic. Due to social distancing restrictions, many counselling and other mental health services can be accessed only online. Recent research by the International Longevity Centre found that 11.9 million people in the UK lack the digital skills they need for everyday life, and ONS figures published in May show that only 47% of adults aged 75 and over use the internet. What support will the Government give vulnerable older people experiencing mental health issues, and how will they support those who are digitally excluded so that they can still have access to mental and other important health services?

Lord Bethell (Con): My Lords, the digital gap in social care, particularly for older people, is enormous, and the noble Baroness is entirely right. NHSX has a large programme called Joined-up Care, which is seeking to help bridge that gap. It includes, for instance, the provision of a large number of iPads to social care homes. However, the noble Baroness is right that that will not be enough to provide the care for those for whom digital access is simply too challenging or unavailable, which is why we will continue to support face-to-face and direct forms of care when necessary.

Lord McNicol of West Kilbride (Lab) [V]: My Lords, it should be alarming to know that suicide rates in the UK have soared to record levels, with the highest rates over the past two decades recorded at the end of 2019. I hope the Minister will share my concern that these alarming figures will only continue to rise post lockdown and that everything needs to be done to prevent that. Can the Minister say what Her Majesty's Government are planning to do to tackle specifically the risk of increasing suicide rates post lockdown?

Lord Bethell (Con): We are deeply concerned about suicide; any suicide is too many. The noble Lord will be aware that the increased numbers recently are in part due to the recategorisation of suicide among the coroners' courts. Nonetheless, we take this issue very seriously. The programme to help people identify those who show the markers of suicidal thinking has provided a very important impact on this issue. We are deeply concerned about Covid, and we continue to support suicide charities.

Baroness Parminter (LD) [V]: My Lords, calls to the eating disorder charity Beat's helpline nearly doubled during lockdown, and at the same time fewer children and young people started treatment for eating disorders compared to the previous year. What are the Government doing to ensure sufficient funding for children and young people's eating disorder services so that young people can access the help they need?

Lord Bethell (Con): My Lords, provision for young people is at every level of the health service. It includes direct school interventions through the programme I discussed earlier, it is within the NHS, where we have an enormous emphasis on eating disorders, and it is in young adult care. The provision of £9.2 million to charities during Covid included charities that support young mental health and eating disorders, and it remains a major priority for the Government.

Baroness Fall (Con) [V]: My Lords, I congratulate all those who worked so tirelessly to make sure that students have gone into higher education this autumn. However, let us be honest: a lot of young people going to these places are sitting in their rooms, lonely, having virtual lessons and very little social interaction, and that will have a huge effect on their mental health. I urge Ministers to take responsibility for the mental health of our students as they are social distancing.

Lord Bethell (Con): My noble friend Lady Fall is right that the plight of students is tough; going to college will not be like it was in our day. That is why the DfE is putting together a Covid catch-up package of £1 billion, which will include support for universities and for the mental health of students.

Baroness Wheeler (Lab): My Lords, may I return to the issue of counselling? The criteria of the Children's Commissioner, Anne Longfield, of a counsellor in every school for every child who needs one would help relieve pressure on struggling CAMHS services. Does the Minister acknowledge that the children's mental health system will struggle to cope as long as we are failing to provide early help to tackle problems before they become crises, and will the Government commit to ring-fence funding for mental health in schools, colleges and universities to enable them to provide mental health support to all young people who need it?

Lord Bethell (Con): My Lords, we are rolling out our response to the Green Paper on mental health for young people. That has included the implementation of mental health support teams, which will make a big impact. In addition, and in response to recent circumstances, on 8 September we launched a mental health well-being campaign specifically for children and young people through the PHE website. It encourages a personal mind plan and the use of a quick and easy interactive tool, and 2.5 million mind plans have been completed since its launch.

The Lord Speaker (Lord Fowler): My Lords, the time allowed for this question has elapsed. We now come to the fourth Oral Question.

Schools: Great British September Clean Question

12.40 pm

Asked by **Lord Robathan**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to encourage schools to participate in Keep Britain Tidy's "Great British September Clean" campaign.

The Minister of State, Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park) (Con) [V]: My Lords, we are proud to support national clean-up days such as the Great British September Clean, and we continue to use our influence to encourage as many people in businesses as possible to participate in such events. We want every child to have the opportunity to learn about the impact of litter. The Eco-Schools programme, run by Keep Britain Tidy, works with schools to change littering habits, putting young people at the heart of environmental issues.

Lord Robathan (Con): My Lords, I am pleased to hear what the Minister says about getting every child involved. If children were better educated about the ghastly scourge of litter, over time they and their families might not dump litter in our towns and countryside, as currently happens. So will my noble friend convene a meeting with an Education Minister and me to consider adding to the national curriculum for year 6 an afternoon picking litter on our roads and lanes—one afternoon of their education? Besides the fact that 10 year-olds would probably quite enjoy the afternoon, it might gradually inculcate into our society an understanding that dropping litter is just not acceptable.

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park (Con) [V]: Of course I understand the noble Lord's point. The Keep it, Bin it campaign, run by Defra with support from Keep Britain Tidy, has had an impact on young people's attitudes. One of its goals was to align young people's slightly more casual attitudes towards litter with those of the general population, and polling suggests that that gap has considerably narrowed. In addition, 70% of schools in England are members of the Eco-Schools programme, and we are working hard to increase that.

Lord Brooke of Alverthorpe (Lab) [V]: Will the Minister give schoolchildren a strong lead on a continuing basis to learn to recycle and to reduce the growing litter problem, particularly with cans and bottles? Will the Government introduce a deposit return scheme on bottles and cans, as they are doing in Scotland, and as they have in the whole of Scandinavia and in Germany? Will they offer this incentive to schoolchildren to learn about recycling and avoiding littering by introducing such a scheme? Will the Minister commit the Government to that, please?

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park (Con) [V]: My Lords, as well as the Eco-Schools programme, there are many other resources available to schools if they wish to teach pupils about the impact of litter and the importance of not littering. Organisations like Keep Britain Tidy, the Campaign to Protect Rural England and the Marine Conservation Society have all produced excellent resources for schools about litter and the damage that it can do to the environment. We are committed to introducing a deposit return scheme, and I see no reason why that cannot operate effectively in our schools.

Baroness Bakewell of Hardington Mandeville (LD): My Lords, while a national clean-up is to be welcomed, and helps to generate community spirit, would it not

be better for the Government to mount a hard-hitting campaign to encourage the nation to dispose of its waste in a more environmentally friendly way? That could be coupled with stringent fines for offenders. Only in that way will people—and it is not only children—change their habits and take their rubbish home rather than throwing it out of car windows and leaving it behind after picnicking. Does the Minister support such a strategy?

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park (Con) [V]: The Government support a dual strategy. We are launching and running a number of educational campaigns, using both conventional media and social media, and as I said in a previous answer, we are seeing the impact of that, particularly on young people's attitudes. In addition to that, and to supporting numerous rubbish collection or litter days, we are also empowering local authorities to take stronger and more robust action against people who continue to litter.

Baroness Meyer (Con) [V]: My Lords, if we are to encourage schools to participate in the Keep Britain Tidy campaign, does the Minister not agree that we should encourage adults, even more so, to set an example? Britain has the reputation of being the dirtiest country in Europe. Is it not time for zero tolerance? In all my years I have never seen anyone fined for littering. As part of this campaign, I suggest that the Government and the public authorities also raise their game. For example, does the Minister not agree that there is an urgent need for more rubbish bins and recycling points, more frequent removal of litter from public places, and proper enforcement of fines?

The Lord Speaker (Lord Fowler): Baroness Meyer, may I just say that short questions are required? I am sorry, but that was rather too long.

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park (Con) [V]: It is, of course, already an offence to drop litter, and councils have legal powers to take action against offenders. Anyone caught littering can be prosecuted in a magistrates' court, which can lead to a criminal record and a fine of up to £2,500 on conviction. Alternatively, councils have been given powers to issue fixed penalties—on-the-spot fines of between £65 and £150—and we have recently published improved guidance to councils and others on the use of their fixed-penalty powers for littering and related offences. In addition, we have significantly increased the penalties for fly tipping.

Baroness Jones of Whitchurch (Lab): My Lords, to follow up the question asked by the noble Lord, Lord Brooke, given that plastic bottles remain one of the main sources of litter, can the Minister clarify exactly when we will see the long-awaited bottle deposit scheme?

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park (Con) [V]: The Government committed, in our 2019 manifesto, to introduce a deposit return scheme for drinks containers, and we are seeking powers in the Environment Bill to enable us to establish deposit return schemes. The Bill needs to complete its journey through both Houses,

and I very much hope that will happen as quickly as possible. The specific details of a DRS will be presented in a second consultation in very early 2021.

Lord Addington (LD): My Lords, if the Minister has that meeting with the Department for Education, will he consider the fact that there is no shortage of subjects that would like a little bit of curriculum time? At the moment we have a very squeezed curriculum because of the pandemic, and there was not that much space there in the first place. Before taking time out of the school day, please have a think about what damage that may do to the rest of the education system.

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park (Con) [V]: Increasingly, many schools put emphasis on an environmental component of the curriculum. I have spoken at hundreds of schools, and I am yet to visit one where the environment is not a major focus. What is useful in the approach of most schools today is that they weave this issue through existing curricula. In addition, the Government have been ramping up our support for national clean-up days, and we have been proud to support and endorse many of those events. This month, for instance, we are encouraging as many people in business as possible to participate in the Great British September Clean and the Great British Beach Clean, and we anticipate that numerous young people will join in those events—and, we hope, become lifelong environmentalists.

Baroness Verma (Con): Will my noble friend also work with small businesses in the fast food industry to ensure that they have bins available so that people, particularly young people going out for lunches, can bin their rubbish after their meals?

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park (Con) [V]: The noble Baroness makes an important point. We believe fundamentally that businesses should try to reduce the amount of litter that their products generate. The litter strategy sets out how we intend to work with the relevant industries to tackle certain types of particularly problematic litter, including, of course, fast food packaging. Councils do have powers to tackle persistent unreasonable behaviour, and, through the Environment Bill, we will increase those powers.

Baroness Bennett of Manor Castle (GP) [V]: My Lords, I am sure the Minister will agree that, with litter and waste, prevention is better than cure. In the light of the *Which?* study out this morning showing that two-thirds of branded grocery packaging is not fully recyclable, what steps are the Government taking to force companies to switch to less packaging and less damaging packaging, and to cover the costs of dealing with the waste? Following on from the questions asked by two other noble Lords, why do we need another consultation on England's bottle deposit scheme, when we are already world-trailing on delivery of this?

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park (Con) [V]: On the second point, consultations are more often than not a statutory requirement, but on the broader point, the Government absolutely agree that the emphasis

should be shifted as far as possible on to producers. As noble Lords will know, we are introducing extended producer responsibility through our legislation, and that means making those producers pay the full lifetime costs of collecting and managing packaging when it becomes waste. But we also want to encourage businesses to design and use packaging that is easily recyclable, and these reforms will complement the introduction of a tax on plastic packaging that does not contain at least 30% recycled content.

Lord Randall of Uxbridge (Con) [V]: Does my noble friend agree that apart from parental behaviour, role models are an excellent way of encouraging young people to have a positive attitude to litter? Have Her Majesty's Government been able to enlist sports or other celebrity personalities to engage with the campaigns?

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park (Con) [V]: That is an extremely important question and I am afraid that I can only partially answer it. However, the Government, having taken the steps they have and planned future steps, are providing something of a role model. We have reduced the annual sales of single-use carrier bags by over 7 billion through the 5p charge. We introduced a world-leading ban on microbeads in rinse-off personal care products. We are introducing a ban on the supply of plastic straws, cotton buds and stirrers. Our Environment Bill takes that much further. On the international stage, we are among the biggest contributors in the world to tackling the scourge of plastic pollution in our oceans. But I take my noble friend's question on board and will get back to him.

The Deputy Speaker (Lord Faulkner of Worcester) (Lab): My Lords, the time allowed for this Question has elapsed, and I apologise to the two noble Lords who are unable to ask their questions.

Business of the House

Motion to Agree

12.50 pm

Moved by Lord Ashton of Hyde

That the debate on the motion in the name of Lord Bethell set down for Monday 28 September shall be limited to 4½ hours and not 3 hours.

Motion agreed.

Sentencing (Pre-consolidation Amendments) Act 2020 (Exception) Regulations 2020

Motion to Approve

12.51 pm

Moved by Baroness Scott of Bybrook

That the draft Regulations laid before the House on 24 June be approved. *Considered in Grand Committee on 16 September.*

Motion agreed.

12.51 pm

Sitting suspended.

Arrangement of Business

Announcement

1 pm

The Deputy Speaker (Lord Faulkner of Worcester) (Lab): We now come to Questions on an Answer to an Urgent Question asked in the House of Commons. I beseech Members to make Questions and Answers brief, so that I can call the maximum number of speakers.

End of Eviction Moratorium

Commons Urgent Question

The following Answer to an Urgent Question was given in the House of Commons on Wednesday 23 September.

“The Government have taken unprecedented action to support renters by banning evictions for six months, preventing people from getting into financial hardship and helping businesses to pay salaries. We have boosted the welfare safety net and increased the local housing allowance rates to cover the lowest 30% of market rents. We have made available £180 million for the discretionary housing payments this year, for local councils to distribute to support those renters who require additional support. We have now introduced comprehensive measures to ensure that renters continue to be protected over the autumn and winter, following the resumption of possession proceedings on Monday.

However, we must strike a balance so that landlords are able to access justice alongside measures to protect the vulnerable. That is vital to the long-term health of the private rented sector. We have worked with the judiciary to put in place new court arrangements that seek to ensure appropriate support to all parties within the current statutory framework. The judiciary will look to prioritise the most serious cases, including anti-social behaviour, fraud and egregious rent arrears. New court rules also require landlords to reactivate any claim they have made before 3 August and to provide information to the court on the effect of the Covid-19 pandemic on the tenant and their dependants. A court would be likely to take a very dim view of any landlord who tried to circumvent this requirement or mislead the court by not disclosing relevant information where known.

To help to keep people in their homes over the winter, we have changed the law, increasing notice periods to six months in all but the most serious cases. Tenants now served notice will not be required to move over winter, while landlords will be empowered to take action where necessary—for example, where a tenant’s anti-social behaviour severely affects their neighbours’ quality of life. To further support renters, guidance has been issued to bailiffs by my right honourable and learned friend the Lord Chancellor to ensure that possession orders are not enforced in areas where lockdown restrictions are in place or over the Christmas period, except in the most serious circumstances.

Our package strikes a fair balance, supporting landlords to act in the most serious cases while keeping the public, including renters, safe. Comprehensive guidance has been published for landlords and tenants to explain these new arrangements and the possession process in courts. The Government are clear that all these measures are to protect renters over this period. They are kept under constant review in the light of evidence on public health, and we are prepared to take further measures as they are needed to protect landlords and tenants alike.”

1.01 pm

Baroness Wilcox of Newport (Lab) [V]: In March, the Secretary of State promised in the other place that no renter who had lost income due to coronavirus would be forced out of their home. However, while the Welsh Labour Government have a plan to prevent evictions and homelessness, the Westminster Government seem determined to do the exact opposite. Yesterday, this House agreed the Motion in the name of my noble friend Lord Ponsonby of Shulbrede that regulations laid before this Government will not continue to protect tenants from eviction—contrary to their promise. Therefore, can the Minister please confirm when further regulations will now be introduced to provide such protection?

The Minister of State, Home Office and Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (Lord Greenhalgh) (Con): My Lords, I first declare my interests as set down in the register. I would not characterise the situation in Wales as being radically different from that in England. There is the same six-month notice period in place for evictions and we operate under the same court system and guidance that provides protections to renters. Admittedly, the Welsh Government have announced a loan scheme, without providing any timings or details of the extent of the loan. We will look at that in due course. But I point out that there have been a considerable number of measures to support tenants at this time.

Baroness Greener (LD): My Lords, yesterday, in both Houses, Ministers emphasised the urgent need for private landlords to be able to evict in cases of domestic abuse. Does the Minister accept that there are currently no legal grounds on which a private landlord can evict a perpetrator of domestic abuse? Indeed, for social landlords, who can use ground 14A, this is restricted to use only after the survivor has left and does not intend to return. Will the Minister undertake to correct the record and ensure that the Government refrain, at all levels, from pursuing this damaging and misleading argument?

Lord Greenhalgh (Con): My Lords, I point out that the domestic abuse ground applies exclusively to the social sector. I will write to the noble Baroness providing clarification. This prioritisation of cases does not extend just to domestic abuse; it covers illegal occupation, fraud, egregious rent arrears, abandonment and anti-social behaviour. That is why we want to strike a fair balance between protecting the rights of landlords and of tenants.

Lord Young of Cookham (Con): Noble Lords will recall that in March, under the Everyone In campaign, some 15,000 rough sleepers were successfully housed

in emergency accommodation. Many of them will now have moved on into privately rented accommodation. Given the Government's commitment to end rough sleeping, what assurances can my noble friend give that those rough sleepers can rebuild their lives and that, now tenancies can be terminated, they will not be evicted and return to the streets?

Lord Greenhalgh (Con): My Lords, my noble friend is right that it is a great achievement that 15,000 rough sleepers have been successfully placed in emergency accommodation. On 18 July we launched the Next Steps accommodation programme, under the leadership of Dame Louise Casey, and we are putting in two sources of funding: £161 million to deliver 3,300 units of longer-term, move-on accommodation in this financial year and £105 million of additional funding to pay for immediate support to ensure that people do not return to the streets. This Government have put in around £0.5 billion to date to ensure that we end rough sleeping and homelessness.

Lord Bilimoria (CB) [V]: My Lords, the hospitality and restaurant sector has suffered hugely during this pandemic. Can the Minister confirm that the Government have extended the moratorium on the eviction of commercial tenants until the end of the year, which will be of great help? Can he confirm that the help could be extended beyond that? Many restaurateurs are really struggling to be able to pay rent when their businesses have been closed for such large periods of this pandemic.

Lord Greenhalgh (Con): My Lords, I recognise the stress and strains on the hospitality industry and I will write to the noble Lord on the specifics around evictions of those with commercial premises.

Baroness Whitaker (Lab): My Lords, the Gypsy, Traveller and Roma communities were very grateful to be included explicitly in the Minister's guidance to local authorities about their safety in relation to eviction, which was well implemented on the whole. Their situation, particularly in encampments—the noble Lord knows that there are not enough authorised sites—remains precarious, and they have suffered disproportionately from the coronavirus. How will the Government enable their continued protection after the end of the moratorium?

Lord Greenhalgh (Con): My Lords, the noble Baroness raises the issue of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities and how we can protect them specifically. The Government are developing a Gypsy, Roma and Traveller strategy. It will include measures on how we can support those who are rough sleeping in the Roma community. I point out that the same rules that have been issued to the courts will also apply to that community, namely that there will be no enforcement of evictions in areas of local lockdown and over the Christmas period.

Baroness Altmann (Con): My Lords, I declare my interests as set out in the register. Not all private landlords are unreasonable and around half have only one property. Equally, not all tenants behave reasonably.

Of course, homelessness is a tragedy. However, does my noble friend agree that it is only right, especially after such a long time with courts not operating, to give private landlords the ability to recover their property in cases where they need to and tenants are not behaving in ways that are fair to landlords?

Lord Greenhalgh (Con): My Lords, I completely agree with my noble friend. In fact, it was the Master of the Rolls, Sir Terence Etherton, and Mr Justice Knowles who made it clear that they want to see access to justice and the courts for both landlords and tenants. We need to strike a fair balance so that landlords are able to access justice, alongside measures to protect the most vulnerable. I think we strike that balance with these measures.

Lord Bird (CB) [V]: Can the Government accept the fact that, if anybody slips into homelessness, the cost to society and to those individuals of keeping them in homelessness doubles? Can the Government allocate funds so that we keep people in their homes and do not allow them to fall into the miasma of homelessness, which is very bad for everybody concerned? At the same time, can we look at making sure that the judges in eviction cases will never throw anybody out because of Covid-related poverty and unemployment?

Lord Greenhalgh (Con): My Lords, I thank the noble Lord for his passionate campaign on behalf of people at risk of being made homeless and rough sleepers. I want to be clear that the new court rules and arrangements require landlords to set out any information they are aware of in relation to how their tenant, or any dependant of their tenant, has been affected by coronavirus. They have to do that, because if they do not they risk being put to the back of the queue. As I pointed out on previous questions, there have been a number of support measures, both in the welfare system and in direct payments to local authorities, to avoid homelessness.

Baroness Kennedy of Cradley (Non-Aff) [V]: My Lords, I declare an interest as the director of Generation Rent. Last week, I spoke to Peter, who lives alone and has lost his job. He received a one-off discretionary housing payment and while he gets universal credit, it covers only half of his rent. He received a Section 21 notice in May, so he has three months' notice, and his rent debt means that he cannot get another landlord to take him on. Can the noble Lord advise Peter and other renters like him which element of the Government's support package will stop them being evicted and made homeless?

Lord Greenhalgh (Con): My Lords, it is hard for me to get into the specifics of that case, but I would point out that the increase in the local housing allowance rate to the 30th percentile of local market rents has provided on average an extra £600 per household—£1 billion for 1 million extra households in this country. The noble Baroness mentioned that Peter has received the discretionary housing payment. Some £180 million has been sent to local authorities and the welfare net has been increased by some £9.3 billion. The overall measures also include £35 billion for the furlough scheme.

Baroness Andrews (Lab) [V]: My Lords, I return to the question put by my noble friend Lady Wilcox. If the Minister looks at the Welsh situation more closely, he will find that the Welsh Government have indeed extended tenure to prevent evictions. He said that the Government might look at loan arrangements that help people keep out of debt. Can he set out exactly what the Government are looking at and when we might expect a similar response in England to that in Wales?

Lord Greenhalgh (Con): My Lords, what I said was that we would look at and consider the loan arrangement but that we are not making a commitment to it—indeed, it is based only on an announcement—so that we can see what the Welsh Government intend to do. I pointed out that there are great similarities between the situation in Wales and in this country regarding the court system and the six-month notice period.

The Deputy Speaker (Lord Faulkner of Worcester) (Lab): My Lords, the time allowed for this Question has elapsed and I apologise to the noble Lord, Lord Balfé, who was the only Member who was not able to get in.

1.11 pm

Sitting suspended.

EU Exit: End of Transition Period

Statement

The following Statement was made in the House of Commons on Wednesday 23 September.

“With permission, I would like to make a Statement on preparations for the end of the transition period.

There are now just 100 days to go until the United Kingdom leaves the single market and the customs union, and that will be a moment of great opportunity, but also of significant change and challenge. It is vital that we all take the steps required to grasp those opportunities, and to meet and master those challenges. The Government are of course committed to negotiating a new free trade agreement with the EU before the end of the transition period, and those talks are progressing; but whatever the outcome of those negotiations, things will change for businesses and individuals as they trade with and travel to the EU. It is important that we, as parliamentarians, all understand that, and that we all take action to prepare.

Whether we secure a good FTA before January or not, whether we get a Canada-style deal or exit on Australian terms, we will have left the single market and the customs union, and that fact means adjustments for businesses trading with the EU; changes for citizens travelling to the EU; and, of course, new responsibilities for Government in both scenarios.

The superb civil servants at Her Majesty’s Revenue & Customs and their colleagues across government are working with business to ensure that exporters and importers are ready for new rules. Every business trading with Europe will need to thoroughly familiarise itself with new customs procedures and, whether

they develop their capacity in-house or work with a customs intermediary, enhanced preparation is vital. The Government have invested in increasing customs agent capacity and supported growth in the sector, and of course we stand ready to do more. HMRC is also able to support businesses to secure authorised economic operator, consignor and consignee status, which will ease the flow of goods.

Businesses that are fully ready for life outside the customs union will also be better prepared for the growing number of export opportunities outside Europe, as the UK establishes new trade relationships with partners across the globe following the highly successful conclusion of our new trade deal with Japan. Because preparing for customs procedures will be required with or without a free trade agreement, these adjustments cannot be left until the last minute. More and more businesses are becoming fully prepared, but there are still many that have not quite taken the steps they need to take. Our survey evidence indicates that while 78% of businesses have taken steps, just 24% believed that they are fully ready. Indeed, 43% of businesses believe that the transition period will be extended, even though the deadline for any extension is now long past and the date on which we leave the single market and the customs union is fixed in law and supported across the House.

The Government are taking action to prepare for that date, with the XO Committee—the EU Exit Operations Committee, the Cabinet committee charged with preparations for the end of the transition period—now meeting almost daily and taking decisions on trader and haulier readiness, border infrastructure and fisheries protection. The committee has met 136 times since it was established and it will continue to meet to ensure that we have taken all the steps required to prepare, but we also need businesses to prepare. The consequences of a lack of business preparedness will be not just missed economic opportunities for those companies that do not prepare but potentially much wider disruption.

That is why today we are publishing our reasonable worst-case scenario planning assumptions, indicating what could happen if we do not all secure improved preparedness. I should stress that this is not a prediction or a forecast; it is just a prudent exercise in setting out what could, in the worst circumstances, occur if we do not improve preparedness and, of course, if our neighbours decline to be pragmatic. The scenario builds on an estimate that only 50% to 70% of large businesses and just 20% to 40% of small and medium-sized enterprises will be ready for the strict application of new EU requirements. In those circumstances, that could mean that only between 30% and 60% of laden heavy goods vehicles would arrive at the border with the necessary formalities completed for the goods on board. They would therefore be turned back by the French border authorities, clogging the Dover to Calais crossing. In that scenario, flows across the critical short-strait crossings could be reduced by up to 60% to 80%, compared with the normal rate, and such circumstances could lead to queues of up to 7,000 HGVs in Kent. Those queues and the associated disruption and delay would of course subside, as unready businesses that had had their goods turned back at the French border would not want to repeat the experience, but it

is clearly far better for everyone to be aware now of what is needed to prepare, rather than face additional disruption next year. This is why we are publishing our reasonable worst-case scenario today: not just because any prudent Government will always prepare contingency plans for the worst, but to illustrate the costs of a lack of preparedness while there is still plenty of time to prepare.

The Government are committed to doing whatever it takes to help business, and we have brought in a comprehensive series of measures to help businesses and individuals to adapt to the changes ahead. We are helping businesses that import by introducing new border controls on imports in stages, and full controls will be imposed only from July of next year. We have produced a comprehensive border operating model, which provides a simplified guide, complemented by the work of GOV.UK for business, and we will be publishing an updated version with more granular detail in the coming weeks. We have invested £705 million in new technology, infrastructure and jobs at the border, and we are ensuring extra personnel: Border Force has recruited more than 1,000 additional staff, with hundreds more being recruited now. We have also made available over £80 million in grants for organisations to recruit and train new customs agents to support an expanded customs intermediary sector.

A new network of information and advice sites will help to ensure that hauliers are up to speed with their new requirements and the correct paperwork. They will be able to check that their documentation is export-ready using the new Smart Freight web portal. We have complemented all this activity with a public information campaign to help businesses to prepare. The campaign communicates the actions that all businesses need to take before the end of the transition period, and there is a user-friendly checker tool on the gov.uk/transition page, which details exactly what businesses need to do.

The Government are taking all these steps to help businesses to prepare, because change requires preparation. But change is what the British people voted for because, outside the single market and the customs union, the UK can exercise all the freedoms and flexibilities of a truly sovereign state. Outside the common agricultural policy, we can support our farmers better and enhance our natural environment. Outside the common fisheries policy, we can revive our coastal communities and improve our marine environment.

We can strike new trade deals, which help developing nations to grow faster and lower prices for consumers. We can develop tailored policies to better support new technologies and level up our economy. We can invest the money that we currently send to Brussels in the NHS, in our science base and in improving productivity in all the nations of the United Kingdom. We can develop freeports, which bring investment to overlooked communities. We can regulate more smartly, legislate more accountably and strengthen our democracy.

These are great prizes, and the British people voted in the 2016 referendum and the 2019 general election to make sure they were delivered. This Government are committed to honouring those democratic choices, and I commend this Statement to the House.”

1.16 pm

Baroness Hayter of Kentish Town (Lab): My Lords, I thank the Minister for the opportunity to question the Statement, despite it dealing with only one, albeit a visible, part of the preparations needed for 1 January: the physical movement of goods. On finances, accounting, the mutual recognition of qualifications, equivalence, citizens’ rights, consumer protection and pet passports, there is nothing. I was asked recently about what would happen to a UK national working and living abroad who, for example, retires back to the UK in 10 years’ time, after the cut-off for the temporary measures, with his or her EU spouse and children. Will that family be able to return with the British national? The fact that these questions are still being asked is testimony to the amount of uncertainty remaining.

The Statement is very UK-focused, with no mention of the challenges to the Crown dependencies, nor indeed to Gibraltar, which has had to issue a technical notice warning that while EU goods will hopefully still be imported with the same processes, anything from Britain will have to be checked into the EU through a border post and checked back out again. While I welcome the chance to ask about the challenges our exporters, importers, ports and customs face, we should not pretend that this covers everything, nor that everything is done and dusted.

From the Statement, we have learned of the risk of 7,000 lorries in Kent. In order to help visualise this, my honourable friend Kevin Brennan helpfully pictured it as a single line from Dover to Westminster. Clearly, the Government do not want them all in Kent, so they are introducing a “Kent access permit”, which I guess is today’s equivalent of a “Passport to Pimlico”—presumably with Michael Gove as today’s Stanley Holloway. It is unclear how these access permits will be policed, because there can hardly be a “ring of steel” around the county. Can the Minister therefore tell the House how many roads go into Kent, how many police will be needed to carry out the checks and where he envisages finding the extra police, as I presume that others will not have the authority to halt or turn back an otherwise legal lorry? Can he also outline how these measures will prioritise perishable goods and key degradable items such as radioisotopes and medical products, and just-in-time supply chains?

Given that much of the documentation required will be electronic, it could easily continue within lorries en route, so it may not be complete when they enter Kent but would be finalised by Dover. How is that going to be policed? Once in Kent, the lorries may still have to go to the yet-to-be-built lorry parks the Government are planning in 29 local authority areas, without bothering to consult residents. What are the costs of the lorry parks and their staffing? Are those included in the costs noted for “the border” because they will be inland?

Mr Gove has said that

“we have invested in the sites in Ebbsfleet and North Weald, Ashford, Warrington and the west midlands ... we are working with the Welsh Assembly Government to invest in a facility near Holyhead in Anglesey.”—[*Official Report*, Commons, 23/9/20; col. 969.]

When will these sites be ready and what are the costs?

[BARONESS HAYTER OF KENTISH TOWN]

It is no good telling businesses to act now without information or systems in place. They are pleading for the details to which they need to work. The Statement says:

“Every business trading with Europe will need to ... familiarise itself with the new customs procedures”.

Quite so, but they do not know what those new procedures are. The food and drink industry would love to be ready for Brexit but there is no guidance about what labels businesses will need to use to sell their goods legally into the EU and Northern Ireland next year. As I mentioned in Grand Committee yesterday, this applies particularly to the organic sector.

The Government need to explain why on earth all the essential prerequisites for a smooth transition are not already here. The Statement talks of £700 million for infrastructure and new technology, 1,000 extra staff, £80 million to help businesses, plus a new information campaign; all on top of what has already been spent—more than £4 billion, according to the NAO—including on staff, external advice and advertising. In addition, we still have the cost of Mr Grayling’s non-existent ferries and other no-deal preparations. The Minister may not have the answer today but will he write to me with the full, total costs of government expenditure needed for the change to our trading arrangements?

The Government also acknowledge that there will be some £7 billion worth of additional bureaucracy for businesses. Can the Minister also write with the full cost to the Government and to business of all the changes that will be needed? It would also be interesting to see alongside those costs an estimate of how many years before those “great prizes” and export opportunities mentioned in the Statement pay off all the investment of the change before we are able to reap the real benefit.

I have a specific question for the Minister. The Statement says that our new trade deals will “help developing nations to grow faster”

and provide “lower prices for consumers”. Can he explain how that will happen and why only now it becomes possible? We would love to see both outcomes—developing nations growing faster and lower prices for consumers—but I fear that it might simply mean less being done, lower standards and less protection for the environment. To reassure me that that is not the case, perhaps the Minister could explain how that is achievable in a less harmful way. If he has time, he might like to put on record the Government’s response to the latest LSE/UK in a Changing Europe view, published today, that the economic cost of no-deal could be two or three times as bad as the impact of Covid.

Lord Wallace of Saltaire (LD) [V]: My Lords, I am not sure whether to sympathise with the Minister for having to defend a Statement with which he cannot entirely agree, to admire his loyalty in following each step the Government take towards a harder break with the EU than was ever hinted at by the Vote Leave campaign in the referendum, or to be appalled by his willingness to swallow the shifty rationalisations of the Johnson-Cummings-Gove cabal.

Yesterday in Grand Committee, the noble Lord, Lord True, attacked the European Union for challenging “the United Kingdom’s well-established position on state aid”.—*[Official Report, 23/9/20; col. GC 506.]*

True or false? I asked two friends in the City if they knew what the Government’s established policy on state aid was and they burst out laughing at the idea that there is any clear policy. The interview that Lynton Crosby gave the *Financial Times* on Monday helped me to understand the Government’s current position. He said that

“in negotiations like this you need a little bit of crazy to keep your opponents guessing”.

I thought, “Ah, this is the art of the deal. The Donald Trump approach to negotiation—monster your opponents, talk tough, insist that they act reasonably, and either they will compromise further than they intended to or you can walk away and blame them for the failure. It is the Johnson-Trump playbook.” If the Statement is an attempt to bluff the EU into believing that we are well prepared for a no-deal outcome, it is clearly a failure. It shows that we are woefully unprepared and is an attempt to shift the blame on to business and potentially on to the French and Belgian Governments.

It has been clear to almost everyone concerned with the UK’s external trade since Theresa May’s Government decided to leave the single market that the channel ports would pose problems, except that Dominic Raab did not realise that and Boris Johnson did not bother to think about it. It was also clear that it would take well over a year to create the new infrastructure needed and to recruit and train the additional staff. Yet, here we are, 100 days short of 2021, and the Statement deplores a “lack of business preparedness”. The rest of us deplore the lack of government preparedness. The same mixture of incompetence, ideology and negligence that has marked the Government’s approach to Covid-19 marks their approach to the channel ports.

The same sweeping aside of inconvenient facts marks Ministers’ handling of the Irish border. The British Academy held its first seminar on the problem of the Irish border if the UK were to leave the EU in March 2016, attended by officials, among others. Yet the Prime Minister now claims that in October 2019, three years later, he still did not understand the complexity of the issue. The Statement refers to hundreds more Border Force staff “being recruited now”. Why were they not recruited months ago? How many of the additional Border Force and customs personnel required will be fully trained and in post by 1 January, and how many are still being recruited or trained?

The Statement refers to new technology being important. Is this now being fully tested and will it be in working order on 1 January? The Statement refers to “queues” and “associated disruption and delay” in Dover, at least for the first six months. What arrangements have been made to ensure that fresh food, vegetables and fish are not delayed beyond the point where they are spoiled, which would lead to shortages in British supermarkets? Can the Minister explain what is meant by the warning that

“if our neighbours decline to be pragmatic”

we will face the worst circumstances? Do we demand that the French and Belgians decline to enforce their own border checks because we are not ready to enforce our own? Is this the Trump-Johnson playbook again: “We are unreasonable but will pin the blame for chaos on you, unless you help get us out of the mess”?

The noble Lord, Lord True, will now defend Michael Gove's extraordinary Statement with his weasel words about an "exit on Australian terms" and his fantasies about how a "truly sovereign state" may behave. I hope that there will come a point where the noble Lord will consider that his self-respect as a Conservative requires him not to follow Johnson and Cummings's efforts further down the road to alternative reality and fake facts, be true to his best instincts instead and follow the principled example of the noble and learned Lord, Lord Keen.

The Minister of State, Cabinet Office (Lord True) (Con): My Lords, there were a number of observations there, some of which could be characterised as a little wide of the Statement and perhaps a little behind the game—the game being that the British people have decided to leave the European Union. We are leaving the single market and the customs union and are preparing for that. Frankly, continually railing about this situation—as the noble Lord, Lord Wallace of Saltaire, did with some colourful language in parts of his intervention—does not help us address some of the specific issues in this Statement. For the avoidance of doubt, I am very content with the direction of travel of the United Kingdom and this Government. Unfortunately, I cannot ease the angst of the Liberal Democrat party in that respect, but I note it. Since the noble Lord offered sympathy to me, I reciprocate.

So far as the specific questions I was asked are concerned, I hope I have made a note of most of them. If I have not, I will follow them up. The overall stance of both interventions was, "Why haven't we done more sooner? Why are there still some uncertainties?" Obviously, there are still some uncertainties; that is the nature of a broad negotiation. The noble Baroness, Lady Hayter, went wide of the specifics in the Statement, as she fairly acknowledged, but much of the central, core stuff that this Statement is concerned with flows from the fact—which is not affected by whether we get a free trade agreement—that we are leaving the customs union and have to address that situation. We have already adjusted our own phasing of border controls up until July 2021 specifically to help. I note what was said about our friends and counterparties in other member states. Obviously, their policy decisions are for them, but we hope to have fruitful and helpful exchanges with them up to and through this process's conclusion.

I was asked about Gibraltar. I assure the noble Baroness that the Foreign Office is working closely with Gibraltar and that its interests will very much be taken into account in the transition process. Next Monday there is a meeting of the withdrawal agreement joint committee, which will deal with a number of aspects.

Comment was made about the reports in newspapers about what was called the Kent access pass. It was said in newspapers that this was a border in Kent. The noble Baroness asked how this would operate. It is an approach related to road use, and it is not intended that every vehicle will be stopped. As the noble Baroness says, that would be difficult to do. The reality is that disruption will occur if vehicles without the right documentation arrive at the point of departure. The Government's whole strategy—our conversations with

the road haulage industry, the publicity campaigns we have been running and the process of "Check an HGV" and smart freight—is designed to make sure that the maximum number of haulage vehicles will have the appropriate documentation. If they enter Kent and do not have that documentation, it will be possible for that to be picked up by ANPR and other resources.

The concentration will be on the M2 and M20. The Kent Resilience Forum is looking at all aspects of movement in Kent, but it is a roads-based approach intended to reinforce the advice with an element of deterrent. The cost of the port and inland infrastructure is up to £470 million; some of that is in place. Conversations are ongoing with local authorities and local Members of Parliament about the specifics. Some of this has already been put in the public domain; more will come into the public domain shortly.

On standards, there is not a direct correlation between price and standards. Some very high-quality goods can be cheaper. One of the purposes of free trade deals, which the Statement quite rightly says will help many countries around the world, is that—this is in the history of free trade deals—they tend to lower prices. That is to the benefit of the underprivileged as well as the privileged.

Border Force recruitment is going on. I do not have the exact figures, but £10 million has been put aside to recruit around 500 more Border Force personnel and training is in progress. I will pick up the other points in the two statements after I sit down, when I see *Hansard*. There are various estimates of elements of the cost. I will try to help as far as I can.

This is a practical programme. There are many thousands of excellent civil servants working on it, and the Government have great confidence that Britain will be ready and able to trade from the end of the year.

The Deputy Speaker (Lord Faulkner of Worcester) (Lab): My Lords, we now come to the 20 minutes allocated for Back-Bench questions. I ask that questions and answers be brief, so that I can call the maximum number of speakers.

1.36 pm

Lord Mackay of Clashfern (Con) [V]: My Lords, the detail of the ultimate agreement, if any, is not known. What difference will it make whether we have a free trade agreement or no deal in respect of the preparations that are the subject of this Statement?

Lord True (Con): That is a very important question, and it is important that it is understood. Whether we have a free trade deal must not be confused with the question of tariffs, and the question of tariffs will differ. Whether or not we get a Canada arrangement or another arrangement, my noble and learned friend is quite right that we will have left the single market and the customs union. That fact means that adjustments for businesses trading with the European Union will have to be made, and they are the subject of this Statement and the ongoing discussions. It is important that all businesses and people moving to and from the European Union understand the point lying behind my noble and learned friend's question.

Lord Kerr of Kinlochard (CB) [V]: I am not shocked by Kent access permits; the Dutch have done the same already. Serious border friction and supply chain disruption are inevitable as the barriers Lord Cockfield tore down 40 years ago are rebuilt. Yes, it is absurd to have a ring-fence around Kent, but it is just a particular facet of a general absurdity. I would like to ask the Minister about businesses' shock at Mr Gove blaming them for being unready. Ready for what? The Government have not produced the documents or the IT, so if the 50,000 new customs brokers had been recruited—I am sorry the Minister cannot tell us how many have been; perhaps he would write to us—they would be twiddling their thumbs with nothing to practise on. Will he say when the new IT systems will be tested and available for practice?

Lord True (Con): My Lords, I did not hear that I was asked about customs agents originally, and I apologise to the House; £80 million was set aside for that. Not all that has been drawn down, but a good deal has. As for the specific IT we are talking about—the “Check an HGV” and the smart freight—next month detailed contacts and practice in that system will begin in concert with the road haulage industry. The target is to have that fully operational by December and the Government are confident it will be.

Baroness Donaghy (Lab) [V]: My Lords, the Government are urging businesses to prepare, even though many are in survival mode because of the pandemic. It might be wishful thinking that 43% of businesses think the transition period will be extended. They want the Government to do their job and negotiate a deal. We know we are leaving the EU, but we did not know we were leaving Kent. Instead of lecturing business, when will the Government make available the granular information promised? When will real help arrive?

Lord True (Con): My Lords, there are a number of questions wrapped up there, and I did not answer the noble Lord, Lord Kerr, on one question. The Government are not blaming anybody. We are certainly not blaming the haulage industry or any other industry. We are pleading for everybody to work together to achieve the best outcome. I have said to the House that the specific freight IT which we have been talking about will be being tested next month and be operational by April. We have already published an iteration of the border operating model. There will be a new iteration of that published very shortly.

Baroness Kramer (LD) [V]: My Lords, small manufacturing exporters have been put in an impossible position, with no clarity on an FTA, high costs to adapt to borders and blows from Covid-19, and they have no capacity to prepare for multiple outcomes. Will the Government at the very least provide a beefed-up advice service, and will they use these last days of negotiation to focus on a simplified export regime for the little guys—something that does not seem to have been on the table at all—less onerous rules of origin, no duplication of conformity assessments and a pared-back AEO scheme? Frankly, without immediate action, many small guys will lose the willingness to engage properly in the Christmas trading season. That would be very bad news and mean that many go out of business.

Lord True (Con): My Lords, I very much hope that this is not the case. I share the concerns of the noble Baroness for traders of all sizes, obviously, and assure her that the Government are reaching out to all those who are involved in trade across the channel and with the European Union. I repeat that we are extremely hopeful that this system will operate.

Lord Davies of Gower (Con) [V]: My Lords, I am grateful for this Statement and fully support Her Majesty's Government on their efforts to reach a deal with the European Union. However, given the somewhat fragile nature of the negotiations and the knock-on effect that this will have should we end up leaving without a negotiated deal, what steps are Her Majesty's Government taking to ensure that the devolved Government in Wales and other UK institutions are fully cognisant of any preparedness projects?

Lord True (Con): My Lords, I thank my noble friend for his support for what the Government are doing. I am grateful for that. So far as the interests of Wales are concerned, obviously the ports of Holyhead and Fishguard are extremely important. We are in contact with the ports concerned and I expect there will be further announcements on that, but the conversations are ongoing. The Government have been engaging colleagues in the Welsh Government closely, including on further iterations of the border operating model which, as I told the House, will come shortly, so they will have a chance to comment. Officials from the UK Government and the Welsh Government have also been working closely to ensure that the right decisions are made on new infrastructure, as I have just stated.

Viscount Waverley (CB) [V]: My Lords, would the Government consider self-help for stakeholders by publishing a more regular flow of selective summaries of decisions made by the XO Committee of the Cabinet Office, which to date has had 136 meetings? Given that travelling to Kazakhstan may soon become easier than travelling to the markets of the European Union, that reportedly 70% of UK SMEs are still unprepared and that 30% of mid-sized businesses—the UK's engine room of trade—are foreign-owned, do plans exist for assisting those that for whatever reason are not ready for the off and for working with foreign Governments to the extent that they will be equally concerned?

Lord True (Con): My Lords, we negotiate with foreign Governments as appropriate. So far as information is concerned, obviously the noble Viscount will know that minutes of Cabinet Committees are not published. The Government are involved in a major publicity campaign. The “new start” campaign has already spent some £20 million of the £69 million that was put aside. The GOV.UK transition landing page that was launched in July has already had 2.4 million visits and there have been some 17.5 million page views of transition content. We have also built a transition checker with tailored actions that users must take for post-transition. So far, that has been completed 422,000 times.

Lord Dubs (Lab) [V]: Will the Minister confirm that the Government's port infrastructure plan, which has been set at £200 million, will be increased if there is major demand for more money?

Lord True (Con): My Lords, I cannot comment on the specific financial point, but further details of the port infrastructure fund will be published very shortly.

Lord Taylor of Goss Moor (LD) [V]: My Lords, the Minister makes the border around Kent sound very simple, with automatic number plate recognition. Once a lorry is recognised as not having the right export documentation, who will stop it, having decided whether it is going abroad without the documentation or just making a local delivery?

Lord True (Con): My Lords, as far as local deliveries are concerned, the Kent Resilience Forum is putting material in place. I sought to explain that an effort will not be made to stop every vehicle. The expectation is that before they move to ports, vehicles should have the proper documentation. That is good for hauliers, traders and the country. The system being put in place will enable the interception of certain vehicles, which will be required to comply and be subject to a fine if they arrive at port having not complied. It is an exemplary system which we hope will encourage all to comply, as most traders will want to.

Baroness Noakes (Con): My Lords, I congratulate the Government on the progress that they have made in being ready for 1 January and on the support that is being given to businesses. The former EU Internal Market Sub-Committee of the EU Committee, of which I was a member, issued a report in 2019 on Brexit and the implications for transport. It reported that the majority of the UK's exports and imports of goods was handled by overseas hauliers, primarily in vehicles registered in Poland, Romania and Ireland. I know that the Government have been working very closely with the UK haulage industry. What has been done with foreign hauliers to ensure that they are ready, especially in view of their limited language skills?

Lord True (Con): My Lords, the Government are certainly reaching out to all hauliers. I will provide my noble friend with details on those specific countries as soon as I can.

Lord Singh of Wimbledon (CB) [V]: My Lords, the Statement gives a sombre picture of what could happen on our exit from the EU, with only 24% of businesses believing that they are ready. We are reminded that the consequences could be destructive not only economically, but more widely, especially if the EU unreasonably continues to put its interests before ours. Does the Minister agree that our jingoistic and somewhat superior attitude to our former partners inhibits successful negotiations?

Lord True (Con): My Lords, I do not believe that this Government have a jingoistic attitude or one of superiority towards our French partners or any others. My belief, and that of most people who know both nations and the member states on either end of the

main transport routes, is that no one would see an interest in unnecessary disruption. What is before your Lordships is a reasonable worst-case scenario. It should not be taken as a prediction. I hope that over the next few months, people reflecting on these matters ensure that we come nowhere near such a scenario.

Lord Whitty (Lab) [V]: My Lords, the Minister said that this was a reasonable worst case. But, given the statements by the Freight Transport Association and the Road Haulage Association, neither of which believe that this system will be in place by January, is it not in fact closer to the most likely outcome, and do the Government not need to find a contingency arrangement that avoids the worst of this scenario?

Lord True (Con): No, my Lords. We believe that the systems we are putting in place provide the best guarantee that we will avoid the worst case. I cannot promise that there will be no friction, but I do not accept the characterisation of the recent meetings between the Government and the Road Haulage Association. I believe that those meetings have been constructive. As I said, we have provided more than £80 million in funding to support customs intermediaries, and the measures that I have spoken of today will assist more road hauliers to become ready. The Government are not criticising anybody; they seek partnership, and I do not believe that throwing stones on either side of this constructive discussion helps.

Lord Roberts of Llandudno (LD) [V]: My Lords, on 15 July I asked the Minister what the intentions were regarding construction in the three Welsh ports. I was told that new facilities would be built because of the necessity for more checks and so on, and the trucks slowing down. On that date in July, I phoned Holyhead to ask what was happening and was told, "Nothing's happening". This morning, months later, I phoned again and the answer was, "Nothing has happened". So when will these new facilities be provided? Also, is it the Government's intention to invest in these ports or do they possibly intend to let the ships that now come through Holyhead, Fishguard and Pembroke Dock to go directly to the European mainland, avoiding those ports? If that happens, what will be the effect on the Welsh economy and on the jobless situation? Not very long ago, Holyhead had one of the highest rates of unemployment in the whole of the UK. What is the intention for Holyhead, Pembroke Dock and Fishguard?

Lord True (Con): My Lords, I did mention the Welsh ports in an earlier answer. I assure the noble Lord that the interests of those ports are well in mind. I am surprised by what he said he was told. Of course, I absolutely accept what he says, but an additional multifunctional inland site is being progressed to serve Holyhead. As I also told the House, there will be a statement very shortly on the Port Infrastructure Fund as a whole—I mentioned Holyhead because the noble Lord did. I will check the claim that there have been no contacts with Holyhead and report back to him.

Baroness McIntosh of Pickering (Con) [V]: My Lords, the situation on the Irish border is desperately unclear. The EU Environment Sub-Committee concluded in

[BARONESS McINTOSH OF PICKERING]

July that the matter of qualifying status for Northern Ireland goods and businesses that will benefit from unfettered access to the rest of the UK market, taking into account all-island supply chains, is still unclear. What message does my noble friend have today for the agri-food producers, farmers and freight operators in Northern Ireland about what the status will be on 31 December this year?

Lord True (Con): My Lords, as my noble friend knows, there are continuing discussions in relation to Northern Ireland, but we are taking all available steps to support trade readiness in Northern Ireland, including establishing a new and unprecedented trader support service. That is backed by funding of up to £200 million and will provide end-to-end support for businesses engaged in new processes. The importance of the state of Northern Ireland within our union and customs territory is undoubted.

Baroness Wheatcroft (Non-Aff) [V]: My Lords, transport and trade depend on GPS. Yesterday, I asked the Minister what preparations were being made for our continuing involvement in Galileo, given that the country has now abandoned its hare-brained scheme to try to create its own system. His response was that “the EU’s offer on Galileo did not meet the UK’s defence and industrial requirements.”—[*Official Report*, 23/9/20; GC 554.] Therefore, can he tell us what will meet those requirements and whether it will be in place at the end of the transition period?

Lord True (Con): My Lords, I can only repeat the answer that I gave yesterday, which the noble Baroness very kindly read out. The Government believe that the infrastructure and IT systems that are put in place will meet the needs of this nation.

Lord Bilimoria (CB) [V]: My Lords, the coronavirus pandemic has consumed businesses’ attention over the last few months, and business preparations for the end of the transition period have not only stalled but gone backwards. This has left businesses with very little capacity to prepare for a chaotic exit from the EU. Does the Minister agree that the priority for business still has to be a negotiated outcome and that zero tariffs, zero quotas and formalised customs opinions will be to our benefit, generating £5.7 billion in benefits for exports and also for professional services? This is not just about the moving of physical goods. Firms have always been clear that the UK internal market must work in lock-step with the Northern Ireland protocol. Surely a deal will make sure that this is resolved and is an absolute priority.

Lord True (Con): My Lords, again, of course I agree. I have always made it clear from this Dispatch Box that the Government hope very much that we will have a deal—a Canada-style deal—which I think will be in everybody’s interest. However, we have to deal with the situation in terms of leaving the customs union, whatever the outcome, as I said in my first Answer. The Government are investing £235 million—for example, in staffing and IT systems—including £100 million to improve and develop HMRC systems to reduce trader

burdens, and £15 million to build new data infrastructure to enhance border management. The Government are working extraordinarily hard to keep this country open, prosperous, thriving and capable of taking the great opportunities that leaving the European Union will allow us.

The Deputy Speaker (Lord Faulkner of Worcester) (Lab): My Lords, the time for questions to the Minister is up, and I apologise to the noble and learned Lord, Lord Morris of Aberavon, for not being able to call him.

1.58 pm

Sitting suspended.

Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (Leicester) (No. 2) Regulations 2020

Motion to Approve

2.16 pm

Moved by Lord Bethell

That the Regulations laid before the House on 3 August be approved.

Relevant document: 25th Report from the Secondary Legislation Scrutiny Committee

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department of Health and Social Care (Lord Bethell) (Con): My Lords, the regulations that we are debating today came into force on 3 August and 19 August respectively, but the story of these regulations began a month earlier, on 3 July, when the Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (Leicester) Regulations 2020 imposed the first interventions in Leicester and neighbouring boroughs. Those original regulations required the closure of all non-essential businesses and restricted indoor gatherings, overnight visits and visitors. We reviewed the regulations every 14 days, working closely with local leaders.

Aware of the distress caused by local lockdowns to the people of Leicester, we have relaxed restrictions whenever that appeared safe to do so. Thus, on Saturday 18 July we removed the borough of Blaby and Charnwood from the protected area. Then on 24 July we amended the regulations to allow specified businesses, out-of-school childcare and educational establishments to reopen in Leicester. The amendments that came into force on 1 August removed Oadby and Wigston from the protected area.

The regulations that we are debating today repealed the three previous Leicester regulations. That is why we are not debating Statutory Instruments 2020/754, 787 or 823, which have been revoked. The (No. 2) (Leicester) regulations are what we are debating today. They came into force on 3 August. They allowed more businesses to reopen across the city, fine-tuned restrictions on residents and applied the learning of our work in the city. For example, residents were allowed overnight visits, and the restrictions on gatherings were replaced by restrictions preventing different households meeting up with each other inside homes and their gardens.

Then on 19 August the (No. 2) (Leicester) regulations were amended. With a more stable incidence rate of the virus of 70 per 100,000, my right honourable friend agreed that it was safe to allow more businesses to reopen, in accordance with Covid-secure guidance, but not to relax the restriction on households meeting one another in another home. We also published guidance for people living in Leicester to help them to understand what they could and could not do under the restrictions, which was updated each time there was a change.

I am acutely aware that your Lordships are familiar with the detail of these regulations after several debates on local interventions. Rather than rehearsing the detail, I would like to share with the House some of what we have learned from this process, learnings that we have applied to other lockdowns. I reiterate that this has been a partnership between national and local government. National government was required to apply the right legal restrictions. It provided extra analytical insight from the data that was beginning to come on stream from our test and trace operations and other operational resources. NHS Test and Trace provided mobile testing units and supported the development of a local contact tracing service, which achieved a success rate of over 91% in tracing those not reached by the national service, so that was a successful model for other areas. However, that success would have been impossible without the herculean efforts of local leaders and the local community, and I am sure that all noble Lords will wish to join me in paying tribute to them. I give particular thanks to Public Health England's experienced regional director of public health, Dr Sue Ibbotson, and her team, who have provided invaluable advice and expertise to complement the work of the two excellent local directors of public health, Ivan Browne and Mike Sandys.

From early in July, Leicester City Council, Leicestershire County Council and the local resilience forum co-ordinated testing and tracing, instigated communications and brought about community and business engagement as well as managing education and adult and social care. In doing so, they have used their profound local knowledge to reach all parts of the community. For example, they have translated messages into multiple languages spoken locally and ensured that they have been delivered by trusted local leaders. This has helped to build support for the restrictions across the area. They have engaged with local businesses in the wards with the highest incidence rates to provide advice on Covid-secure practices.

This excellent work was recognised by Dame Ney in her report *Rapid Stocktake of Lessons Learnt and Good Practice in the Management of Local Covid-19 Outbreaks*, published in August. She noted that there was a

“commitment by all agencies and their staff to work together and tackle the situation.”

She commented on their

“openness and flexibility in seeking solutions”.

She also recognised the ongoing “continuous learning” that was developing both local and national ways of working.

The effective collaboration in Leicester—of central resources and expertise working with local knowledge and implementation on the ground—took a huge effort

to get right. There was some grinding of gears, but the lessons learned have informed our response in other areas, and I pay tribute and give thanks to all involved.

We always knew that the path out of the lockdown would not be entirely smooth. It was always likely that infections would rise in particular areas or workplaces and that we would need to be able to respond quickly and flexibly to these outbreaks. This has been the story in Leicester. The protected area covered by these regulations was extended on 22 September so that, once again, it included the Borough of Oadby and Wigston. Unfortunately, following a drop in the incidence rate in that area earlier this summer, rates have now risen to an unacceptably high level: 102 per 100,000 people for the seven days from 9 September to 15 September.

The Leicester regulations have demonstrated our willingness and ability to take action where we need to. We will, of course, use the experience of these measures in Leicester to inform and help us to develop our responses to this and other local outbreaks in the future. As I said earlier, there have been ongoing reviews of the Leicester regulations, and the next review is due tomorrow. We will, of course, make the outcome of this next review public in due course.

I am grateful to your Lordships for your continued engagement in this challenging process and the scrutiny of these regulations. In particular, I thank the people of the protected area in Leicestershire, who have responded so well to the measures put in place. It is thanks to their continued efforts that we are able to reopen non-essential retail, childcare and educational establishments. I reassure the Chamber that we will make further relaxations as soon as the epidemiology permits. I beg to move.

2.23 pm

Lord Hunt of Kings Heath (Lab) [V]: My Lords, I am very glad to be able to take part in this debate, and I thank the Minister for his introductory remarks. Of course, these two regulations were laid some weeks ago, and I make no apologies for returning to a major theme of the debate on Covid regulations last Friday. Of course, we are faced with a huge backlog of regulations, some more of which we are debating later today, with a whole set more to be debated tomorrow. All of these are retrospective and highly restrictive of the way we live our lives.

In responding on Friday, the Minister pointed to the rapid nature of decision-making in the crises and stated that parliamentary scrutiny is valued by the Government, with regulation debates being taken seriously. I do not think there is any question about the Minister's own commitment to this House, but the Government's record is one of consistently riding roughshod over Parliament, with major announcements made elsewhere, a Prime Minister who has consistently tried to take Parliament out of decision-making and special advisers in Downing Street instructing Ministers on what they can and cannot do, often with little notice.

This may be a small point, but the Minister may be aware that, once again, the House of Lords Secondary Legislation Scrutiny Committee has criticised his department for the quality of the Explanatory Memoranda that are laid in relation to these kinds of regulations. Specifically, it notes that there is not enough

[LORD HUNT OF KINGS HEATH]

detail and that they are too vague. In particular, the amending regulations simply do not give Members enough clarity about what is entailed. The Select Committee says:

“When law is imposed with immediate effect in this way it is even more important that the explanatory material provided is clear and fit for purpose.”

I accept that, at the beginning of the crisis, extraordinary measures had to be taken, but we are now six months in, with many more months to come. Surely, we have to find a better way of doing things? Ideally, we should be debating regulations before they come into force. If that is not possible, then they should be taken soon after they have been laid, not weeks and, sometimes, months later.

We should also have the ability to see and question the leaders of the local authorities involved. Neither of the SIs before us seems to include the details of consultations with the appropriate local government leaders. I know that, today, the Minister mentioned the important partnership between the Government and local authorities, and I certainly echo his tribute to the local directors of public health and, indeed, the staff of Public Health England. However, I refer him to the comments of Sir Peter Soulsby, the elected Mayor of Leicester, who said that he had been kept in the dark with regard to what it would take to get the restrictions lifted. He still has not received an answer and has also compared Leicester to other areas with higher rates and no restrictions, asking why the city was being treated differently.

Therefore, I hope that, today, the Minister might be able to say what Leicester has to do to get the restrictions lifted. Secondly, when regulations are laid in the future, can we have an explicit statement by the leader of the appropriate local authority as to his or her views on the regulations?

2.27 pm

Baroness Bowles of Berkhamsted (LD) [V]: My Lords, I thank the Minister for introducing this statutory instrument. These coronavirus instruments are now becoming familiar on the Order Paper; each tells a story about people’s lives and gives lessons that are, perhaps, not yet all learned. As the Minister has said, Leicester was the first local area lockdown, and it is somewhat poignant that we are debating two regulations that are not all that old and include stepwise easing of local lockdowns at a time when we have just had to return to stronger measures for everyone.

Before getting to today’s statutory instruments, I will note that Leicester had its first statutory instrument before the summer break, followed by progressive lifting of measures and reductions in the area covered by the local measures. The paper trail from then—which is continuing—does show the regularity of fortnightly reviews and accompanying changes. I live some 85 miles from Leicester, so I am not local, but I did see news coverage and hear grumbling because local lockdowns always bring hard comparisons with freedoms just along, or just over, the road.

However, there were success stories too, especially with Leicester councils, for example, being early movers in using local tracing when the national system could

not contact people. The lessons there have been followed elsewhere, but, sometimes, there still seems to be a centralising bias and a lack of information.

The first of the (No. 2) regulations that are the subject of this debate was actually the fifth set of changes, so a complete new regulation was made for clarity. Therefore, although it looks like it is imposing closures, those are mainly retaining previous measures, and it is actually allowing the opening up of bars, cafes and so on. It was subject to further review, resulting in the second of today’s Leicester SIs, opening up more businesses. There is then another amending SI on 15 September, which opens up the remaining businesses, as in the rest of England—although, overall, there are still more restrictions on personal socialising in Leicester than there are in England generally. The next review is tomorrow, I believe.

I do not want to guess or estimate whether Leicester is still worse off for infections than anywhere else, but I would not lay a bet against everywhere soon having more restrictions on household mixing. The ability to mingle with lots of different households in groups of six manages to be at the same time too restricting for family circles yet too permissive when used gregariously.

Others will make the future choices, but if the Government are to keep as much of the economy going as they can, it means ensuring that working parents with young children have sufficient childcare help, whether they work at home or go out. There has been a move in the right direction with linked childcare households but, in the face of another six months of restrictions and the season of illnesses, the provision that if you dissolve a linked childcare arrangement you cannot replace it with another is unrealistic. What about emergencies or illness? What if one arrangement can no longer function but another long-term substitute is available? Why not regularise what will have to happen in practice for both the individual and the national economy to survive?

2.31 pm

Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth (Con) [V]: My Lords, it is a pleasure to follow the noble Baroness, Lady Bowles. I thank my noble friend for presenting these regulations for consideration.

As has been noted by the noble Lord, Lord Hunt, there is a retrospective flavour to this debate, which is all too familiar with the regulations that we have been considering on coronavirus. I accept the need for regulations, but surely we can overcome this retrospective nature and debate these things in a more timely way.

The great danger is that, when these regulations were brought in, the infection rate was falling, fatalities were falling and there was a very different flavour to the atmosphere then, compared with now. Against that background, can my noble friend tell us what the infection rate is currently in Leicester, Oadby and Wigston, and indeed in Blaby and Charnwood, which were initially subject to some of these restrictions too? It would be good to note whether the numbers are still falling; I rather doubt it myself.

The Minister stressed the local nature of the approach, which is something that many of us believe in very strongly. We have currently a rather overcentralised

system of controls and should be aiming for a much more local approach. I would welcome the Minister saying something about the attitude of Her Majesty's Government to the implementation of policy. I accept that there has to be a national framework, but I think that we would all welcome more local input and use of local expertise.

The Minister referred to some difficulties in Leicester. I accept that this was the first area of the country to go into local lockdown, so some grind of gears was, as the Minister said, perhaps inevitable—although the gear-grinding was much more reminiscent of when I was learning to drive. There were far more problems of communication than perhaps the Minister has outlined. What lessons have been learned about the experience in Leicester? I accept and welcome the multilingual nature of communications, and I have no doubt that that is being replicated in other parts of the country that are now subject to lockdown, but I would welcome the Minister saying something on that too.

Of course, Leicester is an area with a large black and Asian minority ethnic population—a long-established and very well integrated population from those communities on the whole. Can the Minister say whether any lessons are being learned about the challenge and fact that these parts of the community are affected disproportionately, and what action is being taken as a consequence of lessons learned in communities such as Leicester?

Being the first, in a local sense, to be in more of a lockdown than the rest of the country, Leicester has suffered more economic impact. I welcome the bold Job Support Scheme that has been announced by my right honourable friend the Chancellor in another place; many of us have been pushing for that for some time. Above all, I ask the Minister to give more strategic thought to what we should be doing as a country in relation to the split between the centralised approach—indeed, overcentralised at the moment, I would argue—and a more locally focused approach that I think we should be aiming for.

2.35 pm

Lord Bhatia (Non-Afl) [V]: My Lords, I spoke in your Lordships' House about the Leicester lockdown on 29 July 2020. Since then, there have been some changes in the rules owing to fewer cases of coronavirus, but there have been small flare-ups in Leicester recently. It seems that, in bringing in new regulations, local authorities and police have not been consulted properly. Sir Peter Soulsby has objected to these new restrictions.

In these difficult times, there has to be proper consultation and discussions before bringing in new regulations. Leicester has many restaurants which cater for the Asian communities. Many people are employed in these restaurants and visitors regularly travel from London to Leicester to enjoy the Indian cuisine, but there is a danger of bringing the virus from London as Londoners travel to Leicester.

On one side, public health is most important but, on the other side, businesses suffer a great deal in these lockdowns. Schools also have to be closed down at the same time. The scientific data has shown that there are more people in Leicester who have tested positive and the Government had to act swiftly to lock down the

city, or part of the city. There are also many manufacturing companies in textiles and other fashion items. Some factories have very congested spaces and social distancing can be difficult for workers.

As this is a public health issue, the Government must be able to act swiftly and have taken powers to do so. Many more lives could be lost if the Government had not taken such powers. Can the Minister say whether any research has been done as to why Leicester has had these repeated flare-ups?

2.37 pm

Baroness Uddin (Non-Afl) [V]: Leicester is a vibrant city that I have loved for decades—from the moment I took a government delegation there 22 years ago to examine its outstanding record on community integration and its community leadership from women.

I echo the many concerns raised by the noble Lord, Lord Hunt of Kings Heath, particularly with regard to the lack of evident constructive dialogue with the local mayor. I hope that the Minister will remedy this at the earliest opportunity.

With the knowledge that this disease has taken too many lives, and disproportionately so the lives of minority populations, including significant numbers of those on the front line of the NHS and other critical services, what analysis is under way by our Government to prevent an equally adverse impact as we embark on new challenges and restrictions? Are there lessons applicable to other similar areas?

I raise the particular concerns drawn to my attention by a number of professionals in the field, including Barnardo's, on the mental health of young people. Already, one in eight of those aged five to 19 have been diagnosed with mental health conditions, including those who are struggling with grief, loss and bereavement. Among them are those from disadvantaged areas and children of minority heritage who are negotiating additional challenges and barriers of prejudice, racism and religious discrimination. I know that the Government are already committed to programmes to address some of these difficulties, but the Minister will also be aware that CAMHS services are struggling to meet demands and referrals have become cumbersome and delayed.

Can the Minister say whether he is considering, or will consider, working closely with Barnardo's and other reputable, long-standing NGOs to meet the excess demand, address the needs of minority heritage children, in particular, and engage with professions that are suitably qualified from these communities? I am happy, given I have the luxury of four minutes, to offer my services as a former child protection officer. But he does not have to take that up; just stick to the professionals if that is what he is comfortable with.

Is the Minister aware of the new Barnardo's advert highlighting the impact of losing loved ones? Will he consider adding to these campaigns the Government's voice and initiatives and mitigate future harms to children, not only in Leicester but elsewhere?

2.40 pm

Baroness Altmann (Con): My Lords, I thank my noble friend for his work on these regulations and for presenting them today. I am happy to join him in

[BARONESS ALTMANN]

congratulating the leaders, public workers and residents of Leicester on their efforts to cope with the chopping and changing of restrictions on daily and family life.

As other noble Lords have commented, I am seriously concerned about the ongoing undermining of parliamentary scrutiny and accountability for measures that have such a devastating effect on areas of our country and its citizens. The seemingly arbitrary rules are having a detrimental effect on public confidence, and even though we are debating measures that have been superseded several times, we still have no information before us that explains the rationale in any detail and no information on the cost-benefit analyses of these measures, on the impact on other health concerns and the problems they cause for family life or on the potential number of deaths from Covid-19 that may be avoided, versus the number of deaths from other causes.

Could my noble friend please explain to us—if not today, then in writing—the Government’s overall assessment of the impact of local lockdown measures on public health? For example, a study published in the *Lancet Public Health* reports that detection rates for type 2 diabetes, cardiovascular and circulatory diseases, mental illness and cancer have plunged, citing a diagnosis rate around 50% lower than the average of the last decade. Lockdowns may suppress Covid-19 infection rates, but that is not the same as saving lives. There will be many people in Leicester who will not have received life-saving treatment and would like to know what assessment the Government have made of the number of deaths that have been caused by other illnesses during lockdown.

Lockdowns should be a last-ditch, life-saving measure after carefully balanced consideration of all other risks, rather than a sledgehammer to beat just one illness regardless of serious side-effects. Parliament needs this information and so do the public.

2.43 pm

Lord Greaves (LD): My Lords, I too thank the Minister for yet again coming to explain another sheaf of affirmative instruments about faraway places that most noble Lords probably do not know much about. However, some do.

I shall comment on one or two points that have been made. First, the Minister said that in Leicester, local people, local authorities and other agencies had made herculean efforts. That is true of other areas, but people are now being threatened with another six months, and it feels like a threat, though I understand it is not meant as such. Their energies and resilience are being severely tested, and more practical support, including money from the Government, would be very helpful.

The noble Lord, Lord Hunt of Kings Heath, and the noble Baroness, Lady Altmann, both referred to the fact that the process we are using to deal with the regulations in this House is not satisfactory. It is not. I will have more to say on that later today.

The noble Lord, Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth, mentioned black and minority ethnic involvement. I come from an area with a substantial ethnic minority population, and I wonder if the Minister will have more to say about that in this discussion.

Neither Leicester nor Blackburn, nor even Bradford, which shares a border with Pendle on the moors, are part of Pendle. Nevertheless, I should declare an interest as a Pendle councillor; I may refer to it from time to time in this debate and the next.

The other points the noble Baroness, Lady Altmann, made—although I suspect we come from a different ideological starting point—are very important and will become more important. We should discuss them.

The Leicester regulations demonstrate the extraordinary complexity of this whole thing. This is the sixth set of regulations, as my noble friend Lady Bowles mentioned. The three amendments to the original regulations were a complete rewrite, and now there are new amendments. One gets the impression that, with the best will in the world, much of the Government’s decision-making on this, which affects local areas, is being done—I will not say on the back of fag packets, because they are out of fashion nowadays—on whatever they use nowadays. Week by week, people who live in areas that have the highest rate of Covid-19, which include east Lancashire, are on tenterhooks to see what is going to happen next. Sometimes, it is what the local people have put forward, as the Minister suggested. In other cases, things seem to come out of the blue. Although the situations have been changing a lot, more stability would be welcomed by all the people who are doing their best to deal with this on a local level. Working out the interrelationship between new national rules and local rules, as they come and change week by week, is extraordinarily difficult, although people do their best to explain it. I wonder whether, sooner or later, some national rules will come which will be more restrictive than local rules and will then apply in a particular area.

Testing is crucial. We all know that testing is crucial. The comments from the Prime Minister two days ago were not helpful, and they have been more or less rowed back on. But it is not just how many tests are done or how many testing kits are sent out, it is the speed of the results and the follow-up of the contacts—at the local level—which is often so important. This still needs a great deal of work. The Minister said yesterday that things were getting a lot better in this respect, but it is not always obvious on the ground.

Finally, yesterday I asked the Minister a couple of questions about the new regulations which provide people with £500, under certain circumstances, if they are isolating, and also about the evidence of enforcement. What the Minister told me was that this would be done by the normal processes by which public benefits are handed out, and that the enforcement would be by local agencies and the local police. What he said was very vague and general, and I wonder if he has some specific ideas on exactly how this is going to be carried out.

2.50 pm

Baroness Thornton (Lab): My Lords, I thank the Minister for explaining the very complex statutory instruments that we have before us—although actually, we are quite clear what is before us today—which constitute the end of a long series of revocations. I was reflecting on whether I could remember if we have actually discussed any of these, but frankly, I cannot.

I start by thanking the Secondary Legislation Scrutiny Committee for all its hard work in keeping Parliament up to speed with scrutinising these regulations. It is worth reflecting on the summary of the 27th report, which arrived with us today, on the regulations in this batch and the ones we are discussing next and tomorrow. Noble Lords on that committee must be sitting in almost permanent session at the moment, and they deserve our gratitude.

In that report, the committee quoted from the Explanatory Memorandum:

“The number of positive Covid-19 cases has continued to decline in Leicester”—

and, indeed, in Blackburn, Darwen and the north of England, with the exception of Bolton.

“As a result, this instrument will apply easements made elsewhere in England on 25 July to the areas covered by the Blackburn and Bradford Regulations and Leicester Regulations. In addition, the instrument will apply the easements made elsewhere in England on 15 August to the areas covered by the Blackburn and Bradford Regulations and North of England Regulations, apart from the area of Bolton Metropolitan Borough Council.”

The point about this is that no clear reference is given to which instruments of 25 July and 15 August are intended or to what business may now operate, as different restrictions are eased in each area. The Committee said that it found the original Explanatory Memorandum vague and inadequate, and requested the Department of Health and Social Care to revise it to include a much more specific explanation of the changes to the law that it made. It went on:

“When law is imposed with immediate effect in this way it is even more important that the explanatory material provided is clear and fit for purpose.”

I hope that the Minister and his colleagues have taken that on board.

The Government were criticised for the way they introduced and subsequently made changes to the local lockdown in Leicester. During a debate in the House of Lords on the original lockdown regulations—I know that we have discussed this at least once, on 29 July, just before the recess—I pointed out that the media knew about the lockdown before the council, the local police or the NHS. I hope that is one of the lessons the Government have learned in this process.

We need to recognise that the people of Leicester have not experienced being out of lockdown since the initial measures were imposed in March. That has been taking its toll on all the communities in Leicester. It is true that the mayor, Sir Peter Soulsby, suggested that government data should have been shared much sooner. Again, I hope that is a lesson learned. Jonathan Ashworth MP, one of the local MPs, said that the lack of clarity from the Government had left the people of Leicester feeling really anxious, especially those who had been shielding. Local Leicester businesses are campaigning for judicial review of the Government’s handling of the local lockdown. The Chancellor said that he would do “whatever it takes” when the lockdown was announced, and they believe that specific economic relief should have been provided in the areas affected by local lockdown.

In recent weeks, some restrictions have been lifted, particularly those relating to the commercial sector. In spite of figures improving as a result of the local

lockdown, repeated calls for the restrictions to be lifted in line with the rest of the country seem not to have been considered. Will the Minister tell us whether that is the case? My understanding is that Leicester is now 24th on the list of local authorities of interest, so unless there has been a spike that I do not know about in the last week or so, some consideration should be given to that.

We need to place on record credit for the pioneering approach in response to the local lockdown as part of the review recently carried out by Dame Mary Ney. Local interventions around targeting and testing, community engagement, the work in engaging businesses and carrying out enforcement, as well as local contact tracing, are key to the fact that, although cases in Leicester have started to rise, it has not been at the exponential rate seen elsewhere. If anything, they have stabilised around the current level.

As winter approaches, it will become more difficult for people in Leicester, as elsewhere, to meet their relatives and friends outdoors, which will impact in particular on the elderly. There is no doubt that people’s mental health will suffer—particularly that of young people, especially young women—and months will pass with grandparents being unable to play with their grandchildren in their gardens, while households in places with similar infection rates will have been able to mix. Some, of course, have had a summer in which they could mix with their families, as I did myself with my family in Bradford. I know that I can no longer see them, of course, but we will be talking about Bradford next.

The mayor has said that it does not feel fair. Does the Minister believe that Leicester is being treated fairly? I know that money has been given to the council to commission its own contact tracing, and that the local authority will have the insights, cultural connections and sensitivities for that kind of work.

I have two final questions for the Minister, about testing in care homes and schools. The Government promised weekly testing in care homes. In Leicester, where this is an absolute priority because it is a high-risk area, there are real problems about getting test results back, with some people having to wait seven days. That means that the next test happens before the previous test result is returned. Schools in Leicester are reporting serious issues with testing, particularly of children. The Minister is aware that there are no available appointments to book; pupils must remain at home in self-isolation, missing out on yet more time in the classroom. This is despite all the talk of prioritising these local areas during Covid spikes.

These are serious issues that need airing. They are probably not confined to Leicester, but because Leicester was the first, it is the most important.

2.57 pm

Lord Bethell (Con): My Lords, I thank noble Lords for their thoughtful questions. I will try to get through as many of them as I can. I start with the points made by the noble Lord, Lord Hunt, echoed by the noble Baroness, Lady Thornton, about the speed with which the regulations before us were presented. In defence of the work of those who draft the Explanatory

[LORD BETHELL]

Memorandums, there has been a huge amount of legislation going through Parliament because of Covid. The team that draft it has been augmented; we have brought in more parliamentary training in order to bring more people on to that team. I pay tribute to their very hard work, but I completely and utterly recognise the points made by the noble Lord and the noble Baroness. Complex regulations brought into this place at speed rightly deserve a clear Explanatory Memorandum. We will endeavour to ensure that that happens with all the material we bring to Parliament in the future. The noble Baroness rightly praised the work of the Secondary Legislation Scrutiny Committee. I echo that: the work it has done is unsung and deserves our praise.

The noble Lord, Lord Hunt, asked how we judge whether an area should come out of lockdown. This is now done by an extremely thoughtful team run by the joint biosecurity team. They look at a very large number of measures. They look at the connectivity of a given place. A high street in the centre of a busy town with strong community relations up and down the country is inevitably going to be of higher focus than, say, a rural, self-contained area. They look at on-the-ground intelligence from the local infection control teams, who will have their own assessment as to how well the restrictions are being applied and followed by people on the ground. They look at the direction of travel of the infection rate, both locally and nationally, and within the groups in a given area. They look at acceleration—whether something is holding at a given level, or moving in one direction or the other at speed. We are learning all the time from both British and international comparisons, and we look at the response of the people on the ground and the resources of the local authorities for implementing local measures. These are some of the factors that play into the assessment and, as noble Lords can see, an extremely complex but thoughtful process is now in place.

The noble Lord, Lord Hunt, rightly asked about the involvement of local authorities and whether the leader of the local authority should make a statement. The frustrating truth is that the virus does not respect political boundaries in the way we would like it to; it tends to flood over them. One of the challenges we face is trying to build political alliances across boundaries, where people may have different priorities and alliances. Therefore, building those cross-boundary alliances is a key part of what we do.

The noble Baroness, Lady Bowles, talked about family links. She is entirely right—one aspect of the disease is our understanding now of how far people travel to pursue their family and community connections. We can trace, through genetic detective work, who has what disease and from where, and it is astounding how far and how quickly the disease moves through the corridors of family and community links up and down the country. The noble Baroness also mentioned the challenges of working parents and childcare. We completely recognise those challenges: they are intimate, personal and profound. We have already moved a long way, particularly in the north-east with recent changes, to try to accommodate these important challenges, in particular those of women, who are suffering in a particularly tough way during this disease.

My noble friend Lord Bourne talked about the retrospective flavour of these regulations. I am afraid to say that that is simply an aspect of how quickly we are moving. He also asked about the infection rate in Leicester, as did the noble Baroness, Lady Thornton, and the noble Lord, Lord Bhatia. It is currently 103.9 and rising. That is an extremely frustrating statistic because, as you will remember, it was only just over 100 when these regulations were brought in. In other words, it has gone down and then back up again. The positivity rate is 8%—that is quite high, and it speaks of there being an infection challenge in Leicester.

We acknowledge that, across the country, there is a particular problem with young people. They do not get hit by the symptoms of this disease themselves, but they are vectors of infection. One of the challenges we have in Leicester, as we do in many towns, is that young people are, quite understandably, frustrated about the restrictions placed upon them and are not necessarily abiding by the social distancing restrictions. That is one reason why we have had to bring in new measures beyond the rule of six in the Prime Minister's recent announcement.

The noble Lords, Lord Bourne and Lord Bhatia, both asked about lessons learned. There are dozens of lessons learned, but I can indicate two that are particularly striking. First, we have learned it is better that plans for local restrictions originate locally, rather than coming from the centre and being passed down. Secondly, no one likes to see added restrictions imposed on their area, or to see this happen because an adjacent geographic area has an infection rate issue. That is one of the things we have had to do, and it is a really big challenge for those concerned.

The noble Lord, Lord Bourne, also asked about Asian communities and what we have learnt about them. Government marketing and communications into hard-to-reach communities, such as the Asian community in Leicester, but also the seasonal agricultural working community in places like Hereford, are not what they should be. We have come a long way in learning how to use languages and community media, and we now have a strong partnership with local radio and TV directed at those communities. We have learnt a lot and come a long way.

The noble Baroness, Lady Uddin, rightly cited mental health as a key issue. It is one that we discussed earlier today, and about which we are particularly concerned, investing £8 million in the Wellbeing for Education Return fund. I welcome the noble Baroness's suggestion that we work with Barnardo's, an organisation that has enormous respect and trust in government, and I would be glad to work with her on that.

My noble friend Lady Altmann asked about assessments. May I direct her to the review by Dame Mary Ney, which is a stocktake of local lockdowns? My noble friend questioned the whole principle of lockdowns—but may I reassure her that the principle of local lockdowns is to try to avoid national lockdowns? We have them because the virus largely plays a local role. We seek to impose local restrictions to avoid national restrictions. That is international best practice. But I completely acknowledge the damage done to local health outcomes, and we work hard to avoid it.

The noble Lord, Lord Greaves, rightly cited the importance of investment in local business. I remind him that we have invested £70 million in businesses in Leicester. He also asked about local authorities' implementation of the £500 bonus. I assure him that it will be in place by 12 October, and that those who have not been paid by then will get retrospective payments.

The noble Baroness, Lady Thornton, asked about whether things had been fair in Leicester. This virus just is not fair, and the way in which we handled it in Leicester represented the very best endeavours possible. Yes, of course there will be people in Leicester who feel hard done by—but we could not have tried harder, and we continue to do our best to crack down on this horrible virus.

Motion agreed.

Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (Leicester) (No. 2) (Amendment) Regulations 2020

Motion to Approve

3.07 pm

Moved by Lord Bethell

That the Regulations laid before the House on 18 August be approved.

Relevant document: 25th Report from the Secondary Legislation Scrutiny Committee

Motion agreed.

3.08 pm

Sitting suspended.

Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (Blackburn with Darwen and Bradford) Regulations 2020

Motion to Approve

3.15 pm

Moved by Lord Bethell

That the Regulations laid before the House on 31 July be approved.

Relevant document: 25th Report from the Secondary Legislation Scrutiny Committee

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department of Health and Social Care (Lord Bethell) (Con): My Lords, it has always been clear that, once the country emerged from a national lockdown, there would be local outbreaks. Our strategy was to bear down heavily on these outbreaks, in line with best practice from around the world. The complex challenge for government has been to tackle these in a proportionate, locally engaged, evidence-based manner, recognising the impact of the virus on the vulnerable and the NHS while being sensitive to the impact of restrictions on local communities and the economy. An added complication in this instance was that we were looking at increasing infection rates in areas with substantial Muslim populations at the

same time as the festival of Eid. This is not something we did lightly, and we were reluctant to disrupt this important moment—but action was imperative.

There were regulations predating these that imposed restrictions in Blackburn with Darwen—as well as Luton—that came into force on 24 July. These regulations restricted certain businesses in Blackburn with Darwen and large gatherings in both local authorities. The regulations we are discussing today replaced Luton with Bradford Metropolitan District Council. These regulations were reviewed regularly and came into force on 26 August, 2 September and 3 September. Essentially, each amendment reduced the protected area to focus our restrictions to the smallest reasonable area, which in practice meant specified wards only in Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council and the City of Bradford Metropolitan District Council, releasing wards where incidence rates were lower from local restrictions.

I should stress that the judgment about when to remove restrictions is driven by the evidence, but no single piece of data determines that decision. The infection rate per 100,000 of the population is important, but so is the test positivity rate, acceleration rates, intelligence from local infection teams, hospital data, international comparisons, the national picture, and the robustness of local plans to tackle outbreaks. So, for example, the infection rate in Blackburn with Darwen as of 1 August was over 70 per 100,000 people. By 26 August the rate had fallen to 52, and it fell again to 48 by 2 September. Similarly, at 1 August, the rates in Bradford were around 47 per 100,000, falling to 44 by 26 August and remaining at that level for the following week.

This was important data. But it is also important to understand the local context, particularly an assessment of how well the local communities were prepared to bear down on the outbreak, so we could judge where restrictions could be safely lifted. This is where the partnership between national and local government comes in. From the centre comes a range of support, including extra testing capacity and mobile testing teams, financial support for businesses and communities, and postcode-level data on cases enabling a more granular understanding of the progress of the virus.

Funding is essential to effective infection management to support the right behaviours. In Bradford, for example, central government funding was invested in supporting community-level assets, such as the Council for Mosques, voluntary and community networks that already engaged with a wide range of diverse groups, community wardens, youth ambassadors, and in services that already supported hard-to-reach groups in the community. The Council for Mosques led on development and communication of an Eid management plan.

Similarly, Blackburn with Darwen, responding to rising numbers of cases in July, developed a social movement of guidance, including face coverings in all public spaces and no hugs or handshakes. The local public health team, along with colleagues across Lancashire, has worked with local community leaders and faith networks to spread public health messages.

These examples demonstrate that successfully tackling Covid requires that partnership of central and local government. The Government have therefore consistently

[LORD BETHELL]

adopted the important principle that, wherever possible, decisions affecting local populations should be reached on a consensual basis and have put in the necessary bridge building to create that consensus. During this period, we began to have access to detailed data on infection rates down to ward level—data which we share with local teams. I note that the process of familiarisation with the new data sources, category terms and trends sometimes has a steep learning curve for all concerned.

In summary, I reassure noble Lords that the national teams at test and trace and Public Health England have worked incredibly energetically and swiftly to put in the decision-making connections, the financial resources and the data exchange necessary to implement a joint national-local approach. This has been a learning experience for all parties and agendas are not always perfectly aligned, but, during interventions such as this, there has been tremendous good will and lessons have been learned that inform our current system, which works much better. The Government are deeply grateful for the constructive way in which local leaders have engaged in this process, and I am sure the whole House will join me in paying tribute to the huge efforts of local leaders in the affected populations.

Since these regulations and their amendments have been implemented, the Government have continued to monitor and review the ongoing situation. The incidence rates in both local authority areas have, in fact, risen across most wards. The incidence rate for the seven days from 2 to 8 September in Blackburn with Darwen rose to 110.8 per 100,000 people, and during the same period it rose in Bradford to over 100. While we are only debating these four statutory instruments today, there have been regular reviews since they were made, considering the position in each local authority's area, and we remain concerned by the continued high levels of the virus in both, driven primarily by community transmission.

In terms of next steps, we continue to learn from the local outbreaks and we will use the experience of these restrictions in Blackburn with Darwen and Bradford to inform and help us develop our responses to any future outbreaks. Furthermore, we will continue to offer transparency in our future reviews.

I am grateful to your Lordships for your continued engagement in this challenging process and for the scrutiny of these detailed regulations. I completely recognise that it is a frustrating process to be considering regulations such as these weeks or months after their implementation. I reassure the Chamber that this approach has given us a valuable legislative framework to react promptly to the fast-changing and sometimes unexpected twists and turns of this horrible disease, and that the scrutiny of sessions such as these, even if it is necessarily post hoc, has informed our decision-making on issues such as data sharing and engagement with local authorities.

Lastly, I thank the people in the protected areas in Blackburn with Darwen and Bradford who continue to respond to the measures put in place. It is unfortunate that the restrictions cannot be lifted at present, but, thanks to their continued efforts, it has not been necessary to impose further restrictions. I beg to move.

3.23 pm

Lord Hunt of Kings Heath (Lab) [V]: My Lords, I am very grateful to the Minister for introducing these regulations. He mentioned at the end the rise in the number of cases in some of the local authority areas affected. I wonder whether he would respond to the comments of Paul Hunter of the University of East Anglia, who recently said that, if the idea was to suppress the infections in Blackburn and other areas, then it had failed. He cited a graph shown by Chris Whitty, which showed cases rebounding in many areas where those restrictions were in place. He argued that the failure of some local lockdowns was probably in part because of problems with the test and trace programme, which was failing to reach about half of all close contacts of infected people in the worst-hit areas. He said that the measures in place were light touch, so their impact would be minor, with compliance likely to be lower than it was during the full lockdown. I would be grateful if the Minister could comment.

I shall also respond to a point the Minister made in the last winding-up about the work of his officials in preparing these statutory instruments. I do not criticise his officials because I know that they are working under huge strain, and I am glad to learn that more officials are to be brought in to do this work. The importance of the Explanatory Memorandum is key here. Way back about 16 or 17 years ago, I was the first chair of the Secondary Legislation Scrutiny Committee when the Government agreed that EMs would be produced for every statutory instrument. Before that, we mostly relied on short explanatory notes. Without EMs, individual Members of the House find it very difficult indeed to understand the implications of these statutory instruments. We have so many to consider at the moment that EMs have become extremely important. I welcome the Minister's assurance that this has been recognised and that as more officials are brought in, EM standards will improve. I do not make any criticism of the individual officials concerned.

I shall follow up the point the Minister made about local authority leaders. I echo his tribute to local leaders. He talked about the problem that political boundaries do not always cover infections. While I of course understand that, but when it comes to Bradford, Blackburn or Leicester, for instance, we should be able to have a written comment from each of those leaders stating their view on the regulations.

I shall end by asking the Minister about financial support for the affected communities. He will be aware that there has been concern that this is having an additional impact on many businesses and individuals. One of the Blackburn MPs, Kate Hollern, recently raised concerns that small businesses have been particularly badly impacted, which has left many families struggling, especially those who are excluded from the furlough schemes. She asked the Government for additional financial support for the worst-affected areas. My understanding is that Bradford Council has similarly lobbied for additional funding for businesses which have been forced to close as the result of local restrictions. Can the Minister say a little more about whether the Government will acknowledge some of these issues and

are ready to give more resources when local authorities have to support businesses in these very difficult circumstances?

3.27 pm

Baroness Wheatcroft (Non-Affl) [V]: My Lords, I absolutely understand the need for stricter regulation in these badly hit areas, but as the noble Lord, Lord Hunt, has just pointed out, they do not appear to be working. That may be because of failings with test and trace—I am sure that the Minister will respond to that suggestion—but perhaps he will explain why it makes sense to keep the hospitality industry going during these tougher restrictions. I have looked at the instructions to those in that sector. They are told to take steps to ensure that people do not socialise outside of their households, either inside or outside their premises. I cannot see how they can do that and I would be grateful if he could explain.

3.28 pm

Lord Greaves (LD): My Lords, we have come to Blackburn and Bradford, and tomorrow we will go on to where I live which is situated between the two, in the middle of the Pennines, in the north of England. It is the same thing everywhere really. We have talked about the complications in these orders. If and when there is a general sorting out of them, it would be helpful if places such as Blackburn and Bradford could be put where they belong in the north of England so that we have them all together so that if we look at the regulations, we can see what is going on. Whether it is Yorkshire or Lancashire is neither here nor there—the noble Baroness, Lady Thornton, is a Bradfordian like me and I can see her muttering. However, that would be helpful.

I will say one or two things about local testing. Where I am, we have spent three or four weeks really trying to get to grips with local testing on the ground, including chasing up individuals in their houses, and it is not easy. In recent times, resistance to testing has grown. The Government need to realise that and understand that if the answer in hotspot areas is trying to get as many people tested as possible, whether or not they have symptoms, it is not easy.

The first problem was when the Government changed their mind last week and said that everywhere people without symptoms should not go to be tested because of the pressure on the testing system. That did not help, and I believe it has caused an increase in the incidence of the virus in east Lancashire. The second is that a general view was put around social media in a big way among people who do not really approve of testing at all that the more you test, the more cases you will get. It was not explained that what matters is the positivity of the people being tested, rather than the absolute numbers. By concentrating on absolute numbers, it was almost impossible to defeat that argument.

Then there was all the stuff on television about people on beaches, at raves and so on, which did not help, whatever the rights and wrongs of it. The single event that has done most harm was Mr Cummings's trip to Durham. There is absolutely no doubt that it really hit home that if he can get away with it, why should we bother with testing or with all the rules and regulations?

Yesterday my noble friend Lady Barker mentioned confused messages and the careless use of statistics. She is absolutely right. In these circumstances it is important that the messages are clear, that people at local and national level are putting forward the same messages and that, at national level, people in the same party, Government and Cabinet are putting forward the same messages.

We have had a specific problem in east Lancashire that the willingness of people in the Muslim community to co-operate and be tested has become less than it was at the beginning. Whether it was right or wrong, the coincidence of the first lockdown with Eid caused a great deal of anger and resentment. In my experience it was largely held to, but it did not help. Subsequently, the testing that took place, at least in the two districts of east Lancashire I know best, showed that the wards with a high Asian population had the highest number of positives. That resulted in testing being concentrated on those areas, quite rightly, but it also resulted in a belief, combined with “the more you test, the more cases you get”, that the Muslim and Asian community is being targeted and victimised, particularly younger men. It is very easy indeed to get that response. It will be difficult to overcome that and to do all the necessary testing in those areas.

I said I would say something about Lords procedures, and I will. I do not believe that the present system under which we are here today is satisfactory. It is serendipitous that there are not many people taking part today. Debates, including the debate we are having on Monday, are just a series of short statements by people, not proper scrutiny or investigation, as noble Lords have said. I do not go quite as far as the noble Lord, Lord Forsyth, who said parliamentary democracy was being closed down, but it feels a bit like that. We are running to catch up.

I suggest that the time has come when the Government and the people who run procedure in this place need to look hard at what can be done to improve things. I have two suggestions. First, I suggest that the Merits Committee, which looks at these measures, sets up a special sub-committee that deals with them very quickly as they arrive, almost day by day, rather than waiting for the whole committee. Secondly, I suggest that it would be sensible for the business managers here to timetable a period each week for us to deal with these measures at much shorter notice than we normally do. I accept what the Minister said—that the normal procedures of the House are being followed and so on—but these are not normal times.

I want to add to what the noble Baroness, Lady Altmann, said in the previous debate and refer particularly to households. The Government and the scientists believe that household transmission is a major part of the growing transmission of this virus. That may be the case, but it may be that household transmission is more of a secondary transmission than a primary one and that the real places where transmission is now beginning to take place are commercial premises, entertainment premises and, unfortunately, schools. I follow what the noble Baroness, Lady Thornton, said this afternoon: we really need to see the Government's technical evidence on this rather than simply taking what they say as gospel.

[LORD GREAVES]

It is the impact on families that is causing most of the mental and emotional damage to health that the noble Baroness, Lady Altmann, referred to earlier. My noble friend Lady Walmsley said yesterday that people are fearful, anxious and depressed. When I heard her say that, it reminded me of John Keats' words:

"The weariness, the fever, and the fret."

This is a major problem now, and it is growing. In the early days, people thought, "It'll only be three months or whatever; we'll batten down the hatches and see it through", but when the restrictions on grandparents seeing grandchildren, on sisters seeing each other, on families helping each other out and so on seem to be going on and on in the more restricted areas, people are not just getting weary and fretful; they are getting angry. This means that getting these measures adhered to is going to become more difficult as time goes on, so we need clear messaging, explanation and understanding.

The Government need to realise that the lockdowns on families that existed previously simply cannot be brought back again. The Government have business and education at the top of their priorities, but families have to be at the top of their priorities too.

3.38 pm

Baroness Thornton (Lab): There are a couple of things that I need to say right at the beginning. First, I declare an interest as a native of Bradford, where I grew up, with a brother who is a long-standing Bradford councillor. I feel that I need to say to the Minister, who is probably from the south, that Blackburn is in Lancashire and Bradford is in Yorkshire. I have to tell him that these things are quite important up there. As we move forward, it would probably be politic to put all those councils in Yorkshire in Yorkshire and all the councils in Lancashire and the north-west in Lancashire and the north-west. It is a presentational issue, I suppose.

The Minister is aware of my views on the retrospective nature of these statutory instruments. In particular, I hope that we will be able to discuss easing of the restrictions in a normal, non-urgent and timely fashion. The noble Lord, Lord Greaves, mentioned families. I have a large family in Bradford, Kirkstall and Calderdale, and my husband's family are all from Huddersfield and Holmfirth. We are not seeing them. We managed a short break in order to see people when things were easier in the summer, but we are not sure that we will see them again until the new year. That brings its own heartbreak and distress—it really does—and the noble Lord is right to say that the Government need to think carefully about that, as I am sure they are. Everyone is affected by this.

The Minister should know that my remarks are also about what local people are saying. He and I received a comprehensive brief from Bradford City Council on what it thinks. It is helpful and definitely a model that I should like to be repeated among the other councils that we are discussing. The council is saying that it must have better test and tracing, and proper funding to do it. In a good example of community co-operation, the council leader tells us that the University of Bradford, for which I declare I am a council member, has been allowing its site to be used for testing throughout. However, although it needs the site back, now that

term has started, it will nevertheless continue to use the university site as part of the national programme. That is good news because the site is well established and people know its location.

Business owners have sent a letter to the council, as previous support schemes have come to an end, asking for businesses to be kept afloat. I do not know what the Chancellor has been explaining to the world while we have been here in the Chamber, but I hope that his announcement will include measures to support businesses in Bradford and those other areas.

In Blackburn, Kate Hollern MP has raised concerns that small businesses have been particularly badly impacted, which has left many families struggling who were excluded from the furlough scheme. She has asked the Government for additional financial support for those worst affected. Blackburn Council has been advising people with and without coronavirus symptoms to book appointments for tests but expressed concern about the way in which the national system has failed. That system must not fail in the areas that are under such stress with the infection rates.

I sat in on the Minister's phone call with all the MPs in the Bradford area on the day before Eid, and heard some of their indignation. It was divided into two parts. There were those who were very upset because they were going to participate in the Eid celebrations and had even spent large amounts on food for celebrations in their gardens, including Bradford MP Naz Shah. There were also those such as Philip Davies MP who strongly objected that Shipley had been included in the restrictions at all because he could not believe that the infection rate merited them. However, Shipley, with Bradford, is back in from Tuesday. I hope that he has revised his view expressed in the local paper that Covid-19 is no worse than flu and that people should just have to live with it.

It is worth saying what the challenges facing Bradford are, because I do not think that they are all unique to Bradford. As I said, the report that the Minister and I received from Bradford Council was very helpful. It says that there is communication fatigue and unclear messaging, which leads to non-compliance. We know that. It says that there is a real problem with conspiracy theories about 5G masts and about the fact that the Government are tracking people, and that the lower death rate is leading to some complacency. It says that deprivation is a key challenge and that, to quote the president of Bradford Council for Mosques,

"years of underlying issues have been surfaced by Covid-19."

It says that large families, multigenerational living, poor health, and crowded and poor-quality housing all contribute to a real challenge over adherence to Covid-19 guidance and regulation. It also says—this is very Bradford specific—that Bradford is the Asian wedding capital of the north and that there is a specific problem with large wedding venues, typically hosting 1,000 guests for a wedding, not being able to function at present. Of course, they would not be able to. There are immediate problems of financial support for those venues and businesses, and there must be a question about whether they are likely to survive.

My brother-in-law and Bradford councillors are working very hard with local communities. Community cohesion is very strong in Bradford, but there is community

division and hate crime is a rising concern, not least due to the stigmatisation of Covid-19 cases along ethnic lines. Those things need to be considered when dealing with Bradford, Leicester and other places with large BME populations.

3.46 pm

Lord Bethell (Con): My Lords, I start by acknowledging the touching comments of the noble Baroness, Lady Thornton, about the pain of separation. These thoughts were absolutely on our mind when we brought in these regulations. They were done at a time when we were pleased to be lifting the national lockdown and when we all felt a huge sense of relief after everyone had spent long months cooped up. The relief was profound, and the idea of sending some households in some parts of the country back into lockdown was keenly felt. I completely acknowledge the fact that for some families this is extremely painful.

I also acknowledge the comments of the noble Lord, Lord Greaves, on expectations management. It is true that the disease has bounced around. At moments, there have been false dawns when we thought we might have seen the back of it, and there have been dark moments when it has all seemed to be going wrong. Perhaps I may share with the noble Lord and the Chamber the view of the CMO—that, as the Prime Minister made really clear in his broadcast on Monday, we have six difficult months ahead of us. There is no beating around the bush and no easy way out of it. We have six long months ahead of us—but, at the end of that, there is the prospect that a vaccine and better therapeutics will give us medical alternatives to the disease, and that the innovations that can lead to the kind of mass testing that we are desperate to put in place now and are moving mountains to try to achieve will also give us the security to socialise in the way that we all want to.

Those are two grim notes to start my response with, but they answer in part the challenge from the noble Lord, Lord Hunt: why are these things not working? Well, they have worked in some respects. Since lockdown was lifted, we have seen prevalence levels across the country largely under control and we have had months of freedom. As the CMO could not have made more plain in his presentation with the Chief Scientific Adviser, infection rates are beginning to creep up, but this local-lockdown approach has been effective in some respects.

However, the thing that undermines it and that, more than anything, spreads the disease is socialising—sharing tight-knit space with people from outside your household, face to face in closed environments. That produces the aerosol effect that spreads the disease from one person to another, and that is why these measures target socialising as specifically as they do.

Perhaps I may quickly answer a couple of points that were raised. The noble Lord, Lord Hunt, talked about the importance of getting local authority leaders in front of statements. I reassure him that we have brought MPs into the decision-making process. We have sought to use MPs, with their representative qualities in the other House, as the liaison between local restrictions and the parliamentary process.

The noble Lord, Lord Hunt, and the noble Baroness, Lady Thornton, rightly talked about the importance of business support. In Blackburn, business support has risen to £10 million, and in Bradford to £36 million. Those kinds of numbers across the country have put an enormous investment in business support, so that people can take on board the restrictions that we have put in place and we can continue to support businesses.

My noble friend Lady Wheatcroft asked about the hospitality industry and why it seems that practice differs between venues. She is entirely right. Some pubs and clubs have socially distanced tables, well organised contact tracing on entry, table service and “bookings only”, but some have not, and they are the problem. The app which launched today will have a much easier to use QR code component, and the curfew will see the closure of pubs at 10 pm. Therefore drinking-up time will need to begin at around 9.30 pm. This will help address that disparity, but we will keep the situation under control.

The noble Lord, Lord Greaves, asked whether we had enough tests to go around and whether the testing system was under control. He is right that we are challenged, but we make no apology for the prioritisation we have put in place: clinical need, including for key workers, then social care, then surveillance and research, then the public. We are putting more and more resources into providing the tests that the public need and we are catching up with demand each day. There is a lot of commentary about whether the messaging around the epidemic is right—“This is said one day, this is said another day.” We all have views on whether every single message has been right, but it comes down to this very simple point. The message from day one has been clear: the way to beat this disease is through social distancing, hygiene and isolation. That has been our strategy from the beginning, and it remains our strategy. They are uncomfortable protocols which none of us like following, but there is no point in blaming the messaging. The country must stick with the basic protocols.

The noble Lord, Lord Greaves, and the noble Baroness, Lady Thornton, spoke very movingly about the impact of these regulations on the Muslim community. As I said in my introductory comments, these regulations were brought in just before Eid. It was a tough decision. They were brought in at the last minute, partly because we were trying to avoid causing disruption. As part of their introduction, I had round-table conversations. Although I was not on the notorious Bradford telephone call, I was on similar engagements, and I have no illusions about the depth of feeling on this. I know all about the concerns about conspiracies—that some of these recommendations were brought in on ethnic lines.

I know all about the challenges of housing and poverty in some of these communities, and the noble Baroness is entirely right that this disease tracks down people in poverty, people who live in multigenerational households and people who live cheek-by-jowl with each other. It is one of the unfortunate facts of this disease that it goes after those in deprivation and who have the least advantage. We are extremely conscious of that. It is one of the reasons why we bear down on this disease in such a tough way in the very communities that are most vulnerable to it.

[LORD BETHELL]

However, I reassure the Chamber that we are working extremely hard to build that trust. There is a phenomenal amount of engagement and we are thoughtful about how we engage with these key communities. We work our hardest to provide all the testing facilities via the kinds of people who will engage with the communities involved. We seek to be sensitive, we have put in the media partnerships and the community engagement proportionate and necessary to win over trust, and I believe that we are making progress.

The message has been received loud and clear that this is an uncomfortable and unhappy way to be regulating on lockdowns. The noble Lord, Lord Greaves, talked about whether there might be some way of formalising a weekly update, or some kind of weekly process. That is an extremely good idea, which I will take note of and take back home. We are seeking to develop a more thoughtful and predictable way of working through these regulations, and I look forward to updating the House on our progress on that. I also reassure the Chamber that the Coronavirus Act debate on Monday has been extended to four and a half hours, which will give us an excellent platform to discuss some of these themes in more detail. I commend these regulations to the House.

Motion agreed.

Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (Blackburn with Darwen and Bradford) (Amendment) Regulations 2020

Motion to Approve

3.55 pm

Moved by Lord Bethell

That the Regulations laid before the House on 25 August be approved.

Relevant document: 25th Report from the Secondary Legislation Scrutiny Committee

Motion agreed.

Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (Blackburn with Darwen and Bradford) (Amendment) (No. 2) Regulations 2020

Motion to Approve

3.56 pm

Moved by Lord Bethell

That the Regulations laid before the House on 2 September be approved.

Relevant document: 26th Report from the Secondary Legislation Scrutiny Committee

Motion agreed.

Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (Blackburn with Darwen and Bradford) (Amendment) (No. 3) Regulations 2020

Motion to Approve

3.56 pm

Moved by Lord Bethell

That the Regulations laid before the House on 3 September be approved.

Relevant document: 26th Report from the Secondary Legislation Scrutiny Committee

Motion agreed.

House adjourned at 3.56 pm.

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