

2013 / 2014

ENVIRONMENT EDITION

# *The Parliamentary Review*

A YEAR IN PERSPECTIVE

## ■ FOREWORDS

The Rt Hon David Cameron MP  
Dan Rogerson MP

## ■ REPRESENTATIVES

Carlsberg  
Centrica  
KLH Sustainability  
d+b facades  
Polyflor

## ■ FEATURES

Review of the Year  
Review of Parliament





## The Rt Hon David Cameron MP Prime Minister

Four years ago our economy was in the danger zone. We now have one of the fastest growing economies in the developed world, and a better and brighter future for Britain is within reach. This hasn't happened by accident – it is thanks to the ongoing sacrifices and determination of the British people, and because of the long-term economic plan the government is working through.

The deficit is down by more than a third, safeguarding the economy for the long term and keeping mortgage rates low. 25 million hard-working people have had their taxes cut, helping families be more financially secure. There are 1.8 million more people in work – that's 1.8 million more people with the sense of security and dignity that comes with a job. Immigration is down and benefits have been capped, ensuring our economy delivers for people who want to work hard and play by the rules. And 800,000 more children are now taught in good or outstanding schools, as we give the next generation a decent education, with the skills necessary to succeed in the global race.

44,000 people have received the life-saving cancer treatment they deserve, thanks to our Cancer Drugs Fund. Our Help to Buy schemes are enabling people to access an affordable mortgage and buy their own home, with nearly 40,000 people already on the property ladder as a result. And with crime down to its lowest level since records began, people up and down the country can feel safer in their own homes and communities.

Those jobs that used to be sent overseas – they're returning to these shores. The production lines that ground to a halt – they're cranking into action. Businesses from all over the world are asking how they can invest in our country.

But it's not just what we are doing that matters, it's why. Our ambitions are not only measured in percentage points on a graph but in the families who have the hope of a better, more secure future; the father who gets back into work after years unemployed; the moment when someone gets the keys to their first home, starts their first business, or receives their first pay cheque.

Our recovery is real, but it has not been easy – as the articles in this year's *The Parliamentary Review* demonstrate, it is thanks to the ongoing resolve of the British people that our country is starting to recover after such tough economic times. That is why it is so important that we stick to the plan.

We must continue to take the difficult decisions to help us build a better Britain; one that rewards those who have put in, who contribute and who play by the rules. This way we can deliver a brighter future for our country – with Britain standing tall in the world again and its people more secure at home.

“We now have one of the fastest growing economies in the developed world, and a better and brighter future for Britain is within reach”

## Dan Rogerson MP

Parliamentary Under Secretary of State  
for water, forestry, rural affairs and  
resource management



The flooding that devastated whole communities and left thousands of acres of farmland under water was a stark indicator of the relationship between our weather, environment and food systems, and the importance of reducing the risk of flooding for future generations.

Despite having to leave their homes and treasured belongings behind, the inspirational resilience and community spirit of people and families in the worst affected areas illustrated the remarkable way in which people pull together in times of adversity.

As a government, we have to do everything we can to help those who face the highest risk of personal and financial loss from extreme weather events. So the passing of the Water Act onto the statute books was a landmark moment, and I am proud that this legislation ensures that hundreds of thousands of households in the highest flood risk areas will be able to access affordable flood insurance for the first time from 2015.

For the farmers that lost winter crops and pastureland to the series of floods that swept across many regions, the government made £10 million of funding available to help the many that would otherwise face financial ruin.

Agriculture contributed £9.2 billion to the UK economy in 2013. It is in all our interests to see those farmers affected by flooding get back to business as soon as possible.

The weather in the UK that led to last winter's floods was the worst our country has faced for 250 years. However, it was not only the UK that bore the brunt of extreme weather events. Those responsible for putting food on tables around the globe faced challenges of their own.

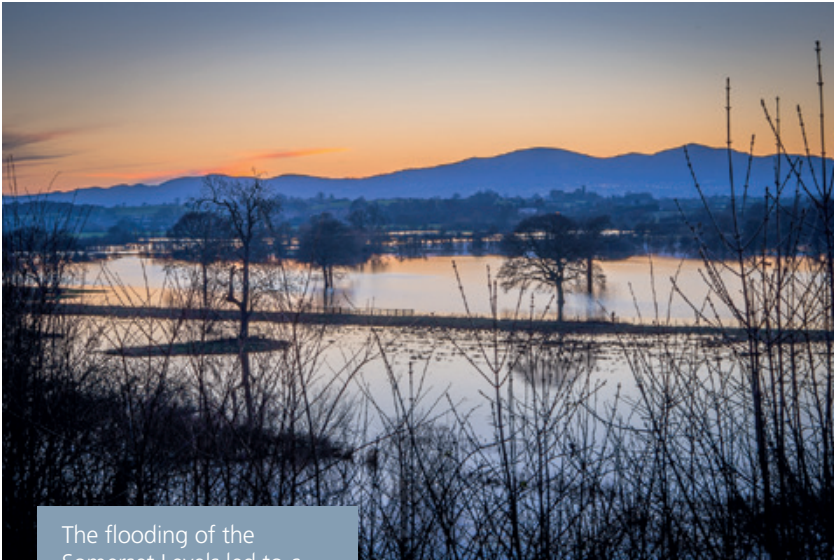
These events highlighted the importance of ensuring food security, and alleviating the growing pressures facing the global food system – including an increasing human population, which is set to peak at nine billion mouths to feed within our children's lifetimes. We need to act today to ensure that future decision-makers have all the tools available to them to tackle one of the most pressing problems facing the planet.

So it is important to embrace research and technology and the improvements they are capable of making to food production around the world. We must continue to work with international partners to ensure that a responsible, evidence-based policy is pursued as we develop the crop-cultivating technologies of the future.

“It is important to embrace research and technology and the improvements they are capable of making to food production around the world”



## Winter storms



The flooding of the Somerset Levels led to a political storm

The 2013–2014 winter saw many areas of the UK battered by an unprecedented series of storms. January was the wettest on record, the South West was battered by huge waves, and London's Thames Barrier was raised 50 times – a quarter of the entire number of times it has been raised since it came into operation 30 years ago.

Thousands of homes and businesses were battered by waves or were underwater as rivers burst their banks. Thousands of acres of farmland on the Somerset Levels were submerged under floodwater for a month or longer, destroying crops and ruining grazing land. Key transport links were also affected. The mainline railway in Dawlish, Devon, was left floating in the air after the town's seawall was washed away in a storm at the beginning of February.

The whole episode highlighted how vulnerable communities are to extreme weather events, and how dependent

we are on the flood defences designed to protect lives and home. Whitehall found itself in the eye of the storm as angry residents and farmers demanded action and answers.

As the flooding dominated the political and news headlines, the residents of the Somerset Levels found themselves playing host to a stream of dignitaries. The wader-clad VIPs included Prince Charles, David Cameron, Ed Miliband, Owen Paterson and Environment Agency chairman Lord Smith. The political storm that followed focused around two fronts: dredging and funding.

The dredging row focused on the Somerset Levels. Local farmers' ire was directed towards the Environment Agency and its decision to scale back the amount of silt that had been removed from rivers running through the Levels. The agency said that dredging was not only an expensive operation but it did not help increase the flow in river channels enough to prevent flooding in the first place, and there was evidence that it could do more environmental harm than good.

This position was backed up by the findings of a report published by the Chartered Institution of Water and Environmental Management in February, which suggested that widespread dredging could actually exacerbate flooding risks in some communities. This was not a view shared by Ian Liddell-Grainger, Conservative MP for Bridgwater and West Somerset. During a Westminster Hall debate, he was scathing in his criticism of the Environment Agency, saying it was not providing value for

money. Referring to the widespread flooding in his constituency, he stated: 'That is not a freak act of nature; it is unforgivable negligence.'

Owen Paterson, who was environment secretary at the time, was admitted to hospital for urgent surgery at the beginning of February, and communities secretary Eric Pickles stepped in to cover the ministerial brief. Mr Pickles, rather than playing a political straight bat, used an interview on the BBC's *The Andrew Marr Show* to apologise on behalf of the government, saying that it was a 'mistake' not to dredge the rivers on the Somerset Levels. He added that ministers 'perhaps relied too much on the Environment Agency's advice', and went on to say: 'I am really sorry that we took the advice of what we thought [were] experts.'



The destruction of the railway line in Dawlish, Devon, was one of the events that highlighted how vulnerable communities are to extreme weather events

Environment Agency chairman Lord Smith was quick to defend his staff, and used an article in the *Guardian* to say that the agency could only operate within the spending constraints imposed by the government.

## Shale gas

David Cameron acknowledged that shale gas extraction, through the process of 'fracking', had become a national debate. On one side, people said it would help curb rising fuel prices and boost the nation's global competitiveness. On the other side, people voiced fears that the process of fracking was not safe, the cost to the environment was too high and it would jeopardise UK targets to cut greenhouse gas emissions.

The main reason the subject climbed up the public agenda was when it came to light that plans to explore for shale gas were more widespread than previously perceived. Rather than being confined to a few sites along Lancashire's coastline, plans spread across England – including the Home Counties.

Exploration sites were not the only thing spreading: so too were the anti-fracking protests. The sleepy

Sussex village of Balcombe became the focus of national debate as months of protests over fracking led to dozens of arrests, including Green MP Caroline Lucas (who was later found not guilty of public order offences).

In order to shed light on many of the polemic arguments, the government commissioned a report by consultancy

People voiced fears that the process of fracking was not safe and the cost to the environment was too high





Supporters of the technology see it as a solution to the nation's energy security

Amec. Published in December 2013, the report's findings included:

- » as many as 2880 wells could be drilled, and create up to 32,000 jobs
- » every county in England except Cornwall could have shale gas exploration
- » affected communities could experience a large increase in traffic
- » the handling of waste water generated by the fracking process could prove problematic.

While the coalition agreement between the Conservatives and the Liberal Democrats made no direct reference to fracking, Prime Minister David Cameron has come out firmly in favour of the technology. Writing in *The Telegraph* in August 2013, he said that it was a debate he was 'determined to win'. The UK has been a net importer of gas since 2004, and the North Sea gas reserves – which have formed the backbone of the nation's energy security for decades – are in decline. The Prime Minister sees shale gas as a solution: 'If we don't back this technology we will miss a massive opportunity to help families with their bills and make our country more competitive,' he said.

Another enthusiastic supporter of the technology is chancellor George Osborne. He used the 2013 Autumn

Statement to outline plans to offer a 50% tax break on shale gas profits in order to help kick-start UK industry. In his 2014 Budget speech in March, Mr Osborne said a 'shale gas revolution' would play a major role in reducing energy costs – another political hot potato. Appearing before the Lords' Economic Affairs Select Committee, the chancellor also stated: 'I am a huge supporter of shale gas, and I think it has the potential to transform the energy debate in the western world.' He added: 'I am putting a huge effort into trying to push it across Whitehall.'

On the face of it, it appeared as if the strong public support from the two residents of Downing Street was designed effectively to gag any dissenting voices within government under the convention of collective responsibility. However, the Liberal Democrat energy and climate change secretary Ed Davey used a speech to the Royal Society to outline a position that did not bring him into conflict with the Tories, but ensured that the environmental concerns surrounding the technology were not drowned out of the debate. Mr Davey said: 'UK shale gas can be developed sensibly and safely, protecting the local environment, with the right regulation.' He added: 'We can meet our wider climate change targets at the same time, with the right policies in place.'

Shadow energy secretary Caroline Flint outlined Labour's precautionary wait-and-see position: 'Labour has always said that fracking should only go ahead if it is shown to be safe and environmentally sound. If the government believes that this is the case then we will look carefully at their proposals.'

To date, shale gas drilling is currently only at the exploratory stage, but observers say that this could change in the first half of 2015, making it likely that fracking will become an election issue in the affected areas, if not nationally.



## Badger cull

Whether or not to cull badgers was one of the most controversial topics facing the Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs ministerial team in this parliament. There was conflicting scientific advice on the most effective way to tackle the growing prevalence of bovine tuberculosis (TB) in wildlife, primarily badgers.

Following the 2010 election, the coalition government said that no option was off limits when it came to tackling the problem, which was having a devastating impact on the livelihoods of affected farmers. From the government's position, the cost of removing infected animals from the national herd was rising, and concerns about cattle welfare were growing.

Former environment secretary Owen Paterson said the infection needed to be dealt with in both badgers and cattle. 'We have to use every tool in the box because TB is so difficult to eradicate and it is spreading rapidly,' he explained.

Opponents to the culling option said removing infected badgers would be ineffective and would, ultimately, cost taxpayer more rather than save money. Labour's shadow environment secretary, Mary Creagh, said the cull was 'not the answer', continuing: 'The government's own figures show it will cost more than it saves and it will spread bovine TB in the short term as the badgers are disturbed and spread infection to neighbouring herds.'

The previous government had decided not to introduce a badger cull. This decision was based on the findings of the UK Randomised Badger Culling Trial (RBCT), which concluded that a reactive cull led to significant increases in bovine TB, while a proactive cull controlled the disease in the cull area



The six-week trial culls were extended when marksmen failed to reach the cull target

but resulted in increased bovine TB in surrounding areas.

However, the coalition government indicated that a badger cull would be introduced as part of TB control measures. Following a period of public consultation, ministers announced that they would go ahead with a trial in two areas: West Gloucestershire and West Somerset. Initially planned for autumn 2012, the trial culls were postponed after farming representatives voiced concerns.

In August 2013, the culling began. The six-week cull period was extended after marksmen failed to meet the 70% target. Despite this, both cull areas still failed to kill enough badgers to achieve the targets.

After the results of the trial culls were published, Mr Paterson said that the 'badgers moved the goalposts' when asked why marksmen had failed to reach a cull target. His comments were widely reported and seized upon by both opponents to the cull and satirists.

The pilot culls were criticised in the House of Lords. Crossbench peer Lord



Brian May branded the cull an 'utter failure'

Robert May, former president of the Royal Society, observed: 'This cull went ahead against the balance of advice, from the scientific community in particular, that a limited experiment such as this was unlikely to yield much in the way of useful information.'

Queen guitarist Brian May, a leading opponent of the cull, branded the

approach an 'utter failure', and described the application for an extension as a 'farce'.

Despite the setbacks in the first year of pilot culls, Mr Paterson used a Commons speech in April 2014 to say that the pilot culls would continue, as doing nothing was 'not an option'. He told MPs: 'The four-year culls in Gloucestershire and Somerset are pilots, and we always said we would learn lessons from them. It is crucial we get this right.' He added that he was keen to develop new techniques to support the strategy of making England free of bovine TB. 'Our scientists are leading the world in the development of a deployable cattle vaccine. We are designing the large-scale field trials necessary to take this forward. I am committed to meeting the earliest deadline for its implementation, but the need for the field trials and required legislative changes means that a usable cattle vaccine is still many years away.'

## Neonicotinoids and pollinators

The sharp decline in pollinator populations are sounding alarm bells for food production



With an ever-increasing number of mouths to feed, scientific and policy

experts on a global and national scale have been seized by the issue of food and nutrition security – ensuring people have enough of the right food to eat to allow them to go about their daily lives.

As most of the world's commercial food crops depend on pollination by insects, the sharp declines in pollinator populations recorded across many parts of the world – including Europe, South Asia and North America – are sounding alarm bells, which are ringing loudly in the corridors of power.

Although it is recognised that a number of factors are likely to be behind the insects' demise – such as habitat loss, changes in farming practices and climate change – a group of pesticides known as neonicotinoids



was identified as a prime suspect. A report published by the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) identified a 'high acute risk' to bees from three commercially available neonicotinoid pesticides. This was enough scientific evidence for the European Commission (EC) to propose a two-year ban on the use of the chemicals.

However, not all member states agreed. The UK government published findings that, on the face of it, suggested that there was not a clearly proven link between the pesticides and pollinator declines, challenging the EFSA conclusions. During a Commons debate in June 2013, Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs minister David Heath observed: 'From laboratory tests we are clear that neonicotinoids have a toxicity for bees.' But, he added, 'We do not know, however, what the exposure is in a natural environment, and the two things go together. Many things are toxic but do not create a deleterious effect in the field simply because the exposure is too low.'

Pesticide manufacturers said that farmers would still have to treat their crops and would have to revert to older generations of chemicals. However, UK-based groups – such as Friends of the Earth, the British Beekeepers Association and Buglife – were supportive of the EC's proposed ban, arguing that the role pollinators played was worth £500 million to the UK economy.

After two rounds of voting, neither side of the argument had a qualified majority. However, under EU rules, the EC was able to adopt its proposal, and the EU-wide ban came into effect in December 2013. Following the EC's decision to go ahead with the ban, the UK government announced that it would convene a group of experts to assess existing evidence on pollinator declines.



UK groups supported the EC's ban of neonicotinoid pesticides

As background for MPs and lords, the Parliamentary Office of Science and Technology published a 'POSTnote' on the issue. It explained: 'Neonicotinoids are a class of insecticide that kills insect pests by disrupting neurological function.'

'They are also toxic to non-target insects and aquatic invertebrates but are far less toxic to vertebrates. They can be applied as a spray, but are mostly applied as a seed coating that is absorbed into the growing plant, providing protection against insect pests throughout its life. Pollinating insects may be exposed to the active ingredients when they feed on the nectar and pollen of treated plants.'

The advice from the experts formed the basis of the government's draft National Pollinators Strategy, which was opened for public consultation in the later part of the parliamentary session. It listed research plans to establish a more scientifically robust understanding of the role and value of pollinators, as well as the effects of neonicotinoid pesticides, in order to have a clearer understanding on the threats facing pollinating insects. The government is expected to publish the final strategy in autumn 2014.

## Biosecurity



Environment Minister Lord de Mauley

While it may not feature in an election manifesto, the headline-grabbing arrival of ash dieback on these shores pushed the issue of plant biosecurity up the list of priorities for the environment secretary.

As the previous parliamentary session drew to a close, the final report from the independent Tree Health and Plant Biosecurity Expert Taskforce was published. Among its recommendations was the establishment of a Plant Health Risk Register. This publicly available document, listing 700 potential threats to the UK's trees and plants, was designed to be a tool for 'government, industry and stakeholders to prioritise action against pests and diseases which threaten our crops, trees, gardens and countryside'.

The register, coordinated by the Food and Environment Research Agency, was published in January 2014 and was widely considered to be the centrepiece of the revised plant strategy. Speaking at a plant health summit, environment minister Lord de Mauley said: 'It is vital for us to work with those outside of government to

get this plant health strategy right and successfully protect our environment from biosecurity threats. The register is an essential step forwards in helping us to identify all potential threats and plan against them.' He added: 'Safeguarding the future of our trees and plants is enormously important. On more than one occasion we have seen the dreadful trail of destruction such diseases can leave behind. And it's not just the environment that suffers, but the economy too.'

In a strategy document published jointly by the Westminster environment secretary and his counterparts in the Welsh Assembly and the Scottish government, the politicians highlighted the importance of protecting plant species for food security, economic reasons and for maintaining biodiversity.

Other measures included:

- » introducing tighter controls on the import of oak, ash, plane and sweet chestnut trees
- » allocating £8 million for research into diseases that could affect our trees
- » planting 250,000 ash saplings to monitor for genetic resistance to the ash dieback fungus *Chalara*.

In its review of government action, the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Select Committee welcomed the progress being made, but said it was concerned that, despite plant health being listed as one of the department's priorities, it was difficult for researchers to secure necessary funding. It observed: 'Resource constraints have led to a short-term fire-fighting approach to deal with existing disease outbreaks.' The MPs added: 'It is essential that ring-fenced funding is provided for long-term research and development



work that focuses on preparation for future plant health threat.'

It was a view shared by the Horticultural Trades Association (HTA), which argued that an emphasis on food security in research funding had created a 'significant gap' in plant science, such as in the ornamentals sector (street and park trees, etc.).

'The *Chalara* outbreak will cost the UK nurseries alone an estimated £2.5 million through redundant stock,' the HTA said. It continued: 'The wider socio-economic impacts are still being evaluated, but it is safe to assume that the total cost will be significantly higher. With the ever-increasing emergence of new tree and plant health pests and pathogens, we would argue that additional research resources are required to manage future threats.'

In response to the final report by the expert taskforce, the government in March 2014 announced the



The arrival of ash dieback in the UK pushed the issue of plant biosecurity up the political agenda

appointment of a chief plant health officer. Professor Nicola Spence, a former chief scientist at the Food and Environment Research Agency, was tasked with advising 'ministers, industry and others about the risks posed by plant pests and diseases and ensuring that measures are in place to manage those risks and minimise their impact'.

## Energy subsidies

It was not a good year for green energy campaigners. After years of slow, steady progress bringing low-carbon technologies into the national energy mix to achieve meaningful levels of supply, public anger over rising fuel bills led to an apparent change of attitude towards renewables in Whitehall.

In his 2013 Autumn Statement, chancellor George Osborne offered large tax breaks on shale gas profits, angering climate and green energy groups. And energy analysts said that even if it was possible to tap into the UK shale gas reserves economically, they didn't think it would help reduce energy bills for another couple of



Chancellor George Osborne offered large tax breaks on shale gas profits

decades. Concerns were also voiced that pursuing a shale gas boom could



The government planned to 'roll back' the cost of green energy levies, which account for about 9% of the average household bill

mean a sharp increase in UK emissions, jeopardising legally binding targets.

The chancellor also said that he planned to reduce the cost of levies, cutting about £50 off the average household bill. In his statement, Mr Osborne said 'going green doesn't have to cost the Earth', but observers suggested the announcements seemed to prioritise short-term cost reductions over the government's longer term climate commitments.

Signs of tension within the coalition government on the issue surfaced when energy secretary Ed Davey used a speech to accuse critics of government policy. Mr Davey said: 'I fear that on climate change and energy policy,

Mr Miliband promised a 20-month price freeze if Labour won the next general election



political consensus is in danger of breaking down.'

In its assessment of UK energy subsidies, the Environmental Audit Committee said that the UK government collected £12 billion a year in energy levies. 'The government uses energy subsidies to support some new technologies, but also some long-established and high-carbon ones,' the committee's MPs observed. 'Subsidies for renewables are an essential lever to provide certainty to industry and drive investment in those technologies.' They added that green levies would not add to fuel bill costs in the longer term, as the 'biggest proportion of such charges is currently already directed at supporting the poorest bill-payers', and 'the imperative for energy efficiency measures must remain the priority because of the underlying need to tackle climate change by reducing our emissions'.

At the height of the political row over fuel bills, Prime Minister David Cameron said the government planned to 'roll back' the cost of green energy levies, which accounted for about 9% of the average household bill. Labour leader Ed Miliband said that more than half of the levies had been introduced or raised since the coalition government had come to power in 2010.

Mr Cameron, during a particularly heated Prime Minister's Questions in the Commons, dismissed Mr Miliband as a 'con man' for promising a 20-month price freeze if Labour won the next general election. The Prime Minister's comments were criticised by the speaker of the House of Commons, John Bercow, who described them as unparliamentary language.

In April, the Conservative Party confirmed that it would no longer subsidise onshore wind farms if it won the next election. Newspapers reported that the Deputy Prime Minister and Lib



Dem leader Nick Clegg had blocked a proposal by David Cameron to restrict the construction of onshore wind farms. The measure would have put an overall cap on the number of turbines built in the countryside.

With the main parties placing early signposts on the political map, it is clear that party strategists see energy security, power generation, and – most importantly – fuel bills, as a key target in the election battleground.

## HS2

HS2 will be one of the biggest capital projects in the UK since Victorian times, establishing a new high-speed rail link between London and Manchester and Leeds via Birmingham. The project, estimated to cost in excess of £32 billion, is aimed – in the words of chancellor George Osborne – at creating a northern economic ‘powerhouse’. However, a number of observers are asking: at what cost? Will the project – designed to increase train numbers and cut journey times – actually deliver the promised jobs and economic prosperity?

In April 2014, MPs on the Environmental Audit Select Committee published a report on the environmental cost of building 330 miles of new track across England. The sheer scale of the engineering task of HS2 means that many local areas, important to communities and wildlife alike, are likely to be affected, from ancient woodlands to Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) to Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs).

The report said that the government needed to ‘aim higher than the objective of no net biodiversity loss’. It went on to say that the project’s environmental statement provided ‘a degree of environmental protection by specifying minimum requirements and standards’ and ‘only if a separate budget is provided to meet the cost of environmental protection’. The MPs also called for the establishment of an independent body to monitor the environmental protection process.



The HS2 project will affect on many local areas, including environmentally valuable sites

The MPs said that reducing emissions, by switching freight journeys from road to rail, was becoming less of an issue because it was widely accepted that any savings would be small, and the issue was not a deal-maker or deal-breaker. But they did say that the potential carbon savings that could be made from ‘decarbonising’ the generation of the rail link’s electricity was a bigger issue, and one that needed to be examined more closely.

HS2 Ltd – the government-owned company that is responsible for developing the project – published its final Environmental Statement for the first phase of the project (London to Birmingham) in November 2013. It said that the project would embrace the best practice developed during the construction of projects like HS1 (London to the Channel Tunnel), adding that HS2 could be part of a low-carbon transport system that would help the UK meet its legally



Transport Secretary Patrick McLoughlin

binding targets outlined in the Climate Change Act.

One of the most controversial sections of the first phase of the project is the plan to pass through the Chilterns AONB. A study commissioned by Chiltern District Council to look at how to avoid damage to the area's natural heritage concluded that a £1.85 billion 15-mile tunnel was the best option. Leader of Chiltern District Council Nick Rose said: 'HS2 would create a huge and ugly scar. Our proposal represents a huge improvement over the existing government-proposed scheme and avoids the reckless damage that the rail line would cause.' The Department for Transport had proposed a much shorter

tunnel (8.4 miles) to pass underneath a section of the Chiltern Hills.

The Woodland Trust is one of the conservation bodies to have voiced concerns about the potential environmental impact of HS2. It said that 27 ancient woods would be directly affected in Phase One of the project, with a further 22 at risk of secondary effects such as disturbance, noise and pollution. Phase Two – from Birmingham to Manchester and Leeds – would directly affect 14 ancient woodlands, it added.

Speaking in the Commons, transport secretary Patrick McLoughlin told MPs that his department was sensitive to affected constituents' concerns but the need for a new north-south rail link was greater. 'The West Coast mainline can take no more. It is increasingly full,' he said. 'But more than that: London and the South East are also increasingly full. They are caught in a circle of rising house prices, some of the most expensive commercial rents in the world and transport congestion. While cities in the north want to grow. It is time to help break that cycle.'

Construction on Phase One of HS2 is scheduled to begin in 2017, with the line between London and Birmingham set for completion in 2025.

## Common agricultural policy

It is hardly surprising that the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) – the centrepiece of the EU's food production policy – is a fixture in the ministerial portfolio. With an annual budget in the region of £50 billion, it accounts for about 40% of the entire EU funding.

In recent sessions, the Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs has found it occupying a sizeable slice of its time as the 50-year-old

policy was redesigned. A major component of the reforms focused on shifting CAP towards environmental stewardship and away from arbitrary food production. One of the most controversial measures was the change in the amount that national governments are able to move from Pillar One funds (direct payments to farmers) into Pillar Two funds (rural developments schemes), a process known as 'modulation'.



At the start of the parliamentary session, the then environment secretary Owen Paterson was reported as favouring imposing a 15% transfer from England's Pillar One to Pillar Two funds – the maximum permitted under the reforms. This angered many farmers, who said it would place them at a disadvantage compared with foreign competitors, and leave them struggling to make ends meet.

But Mr Paterson surprised farmers just before Christmas by announcing that the amount transferred from farmers' direct payments would be 12%; however, this would be reviewed in 2016, and was likely to increase to 15% from 2018.

The National Farmers Union welcomed the decision, calling it 'sensible and pragmatic'. The union's deputy president Meurig Raymond said: 'I appreciate this was not any easy decision for the Secretary of State to make but we are pleased that he has listened to our arguments. The reduced rate of transfer to the Rural Development budget will mean that £224 million will be retained in the farming sector over the next four years.'

Shortly before Mr Paterson made his announcement, the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Efra) Select Committee published its report on the CAP reforms. MPs on the committee said that there was 'much to like in the government's proposals'. However, they cautioned: 'English farmers lag behind their main European competitors in levels of direct payment leaving them less able to invest and innovate. We therefore recommend that the government maintains the current 9% rate of transfer from the Pillar One budget to Pillar Two, and only move to 15% in 2017 if it can demonstrate that additional funds are required and there is a clear benefit from the projects proposed.'



The Soil Association said UK organic farmers are at a disadvantage to their counterparts in other EU states because they receive the lowest organic support payments

In written evidence to the Efra Select Committee's enquiry, the Soil Association – which oversees the UK organic certification scheme – said UK organic farmers were at a 'serious disadvantage' to their counterparts in other EU states because they received the lowest organic support payments. 'The now growing organic market means that more organic produce is likely to have to be imported in the near future,' the Association wrote. 'We are urging the UK government to ensure that English farmers receive payments for the multiple environmental and social benefits delivered by organic farming systems which at least match the average of those paid to organic farmers in all other member states.'

The National Farmers Union welcomed the decision to reduce the transfer of payments to the rural development budget



Other environmental groups voiced concern about the reformed CAP, saying that many of the environmental

dimensions in the original proposals outlined by the European Commission in October 2011 had been diluted.

## Plastic bags

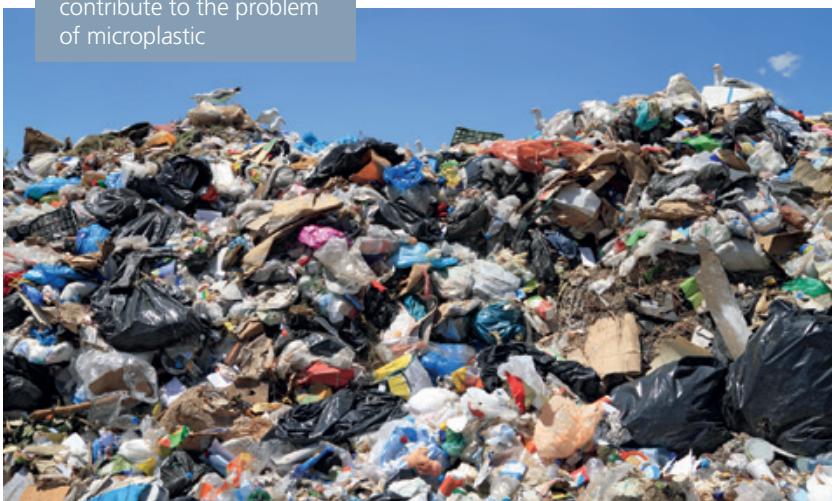


Nick Clegg announced that the government would introduce a mandatory charge for single-use plastic bags

The single-use plastic bag has taken on an almost iconic status as an environmental villain. The sheer number of bags produced each year is mind-blowing. In England alone, seven billion bags are handed out by retailers every year – enough bags to give one to every woman, man and child on the planet.

As landfill, the bags take decades to decompose, and there is growing evidence that the bags contribute to the problem of microplastic

The bags themselves are fairly benign, but their disposal is at the heart of environmentalists' concern. As landfill,



the bags take decades to decompose. As unsightly litter, they block drains and linger alongside road verges and hedges. If eaten by wildlife, they choke and kill. And there is growing evidence that the bags are part of the problem of microplastic, which is making its way into the food chain.

The need to reduce the use and disposal of plastic bags has been long acknowledged, and steps have been taken to tackle the problem. Back in May 2007, the 43 shops in the town of Modbury, South Devon, began a trial ban on the use of plastic bags. It was so successful that retailers permanently turned their back on the bags. The move made headlines, and the town was held up as a model that others could follow.

On a national scale, countries like Ireland, Wales and Switzerland introduced charges on plastic bags, and saw consumption fall by up to 80%. After ongoing discussions and agreements with the supermarkets on voluntary measures to curb the distribution of the bags, the UK government in September 2013 finally announced that it would introduce a mandatory 5 pence charge per bag for large retailers' single-use plastic bags from autumn 2015.

Announcing the measure, Deputy Prime Minister Nick Clegg said: 'Plastic carrier bags blight our towns and countryside. This is not a new problem. We've waited too long for action. That's why I am drawing a line under the issue now. The charge will be implemented sensibly – small businesses will be exempt.'



However, when MPs on the Environmental Audit Committee reviewed the government's plan, they described the proposals as a 'complete mess' and 'unnecessarily complicated'. They took issue with the planned exemptions.

The proposals – drawn up by the Department for the Environment, Food & Rural Affairs – mean that most small shops and takeaway outlets will not have to impose the 5 pence levy on the plastic bags they provide for customers. As well as this exemption, Defra does not want the charge to apply to biodegradable bags. Paper bags and reusable 'bags for life' will also avoid the levy.

The Environmental Audit Committee chairwoman Joan Walley said: 'Carrier bags litter our streets and harm wildlife, and the government is right to want to reduce their use. But Defra seems to have made decisions about the design of this scheme that were



Defra does not want the 5 pence levy to apply to small shops or to biodegradable or reusable bags

based more on wishful thinking than hard evidence.'

The MPs' report said many trade bodies representing small retailers were opposed to the exemption as it was confusing for consumers. For example, the Association of Convenience Stores said the best way of tackling the issue was to ensure that every shop charged for plastic bags.

## Biodiversity offsetting

Environmental policy is awash with jargon, which can make it intimidating and impenetrable to the uninitiated, yet vague and nebulous to those wanting answers and action: during this parliament, one term came to the fore, the concept of 'biodiversity offsetting'. It refers to market-based schemes designed to compensate for losses of biodiversity as a result of development projects.

The Department for the Environment, Food & Rural Affairs – which developed the concept – is working in partnership with Natural England and councils in six areas in England to pilot the new approach to conservation. Although the two-year pilots were launched in April 2012, there is very

little information on examples of the schemes in action on the ground.

Critics question whether the rich and complex ecology of an ancient

Two-year pilots were launched in 2012 to test the new approach to conservation







Friends of the Earth described the plans for biodiversity offsetting as a licence to 'trash nature'

woodland could be simply transferred to another location by planting a load of new trees. Environmental campaign group Friends of the Earth described the plans as a licence to 'trash nature'. The group's nature campaigner Sandra Bell said nature was 'not something that can be bulldozed in one place and recreated in another at the whim of a developer'.

In its final report to the government, the Ecosystems Markets Taskforce backed the idea of biodiversity offsetting, saying that there were 'weaknesses and inefficiencies in the current system which slow down necessary development, yet still lead to deterioration and fragmentation of nature'.

In his foreword to the government's 2013 green paper on biodiversity offsetting, the then environment secretary Owen Paterson said: 'England faces the twin challenges of growing its economy and improving its natural environment. We must be open to new thinking about how our planning system deals with biodiversity if we are going to achieve these goals.'

The green paper explained that the concept of offsetting would ensure that there was 'no net loss of biodiversity',

and the 'mitigation hierarchy' of avoid, mitigate and compensate would provide the necessary framework. It added that it would make planning permission processes more effective and efficient when it came to environmental protection.

In its review of the government's plans, the Environmental Audit Committee observed: 'Arguably, offsetting is an admission of failure in that it should only arise after alternative development sites or means of mitigating the environmental loss have been considered.' The MPs added that the government's plans were too simplistic and needed improving in a number of ways. They observed: 'A proper metric needs to reflect the full complexity of habitats, including particular species and "ecosystem networks", and recognise the special status of ancient woodlands and sites of special scientific interest.'

The MPs acknowledged that it was too soon to reach a firm conclusion about the government's proposals because results from the six pilot areas had not been assessed by independent experts. However, they did voice concerns over the apparent weight that ministers seemed to be placing on the experience of biodiversity offsetting in other nations, such as Australia, which had 'little in common with the environmental landscape and development pressures in England'.

Responding to the MPs' report, the government said it would follow the Environmental Audit Committee's recommendation and wait until the pilots have been assessed before making any policy decisions on biodiversity offsetting. It added that the policy decisions would take into account the MPs' recommendations, as well as feedback from the public consultation and the results from the pilot schemes.

# Carlsberg



At Carlsberg our drive is to do the right thing

## ABOUT US

### **Carlsberg**

Carlsberg Group is one of the top four brewing companies in the world, with operations in more than 150 countries together producing over 300 different brands.

In the UK, we have a CSR strategy and communications programme, which we call 'Engaged with Society' – to us it means all the ways that we are striving to improve our impact by creating safer workplaces and reducing our environmental impact, to supporting charities and local communities and being a responsible supplier to the marketplace.

In recent years our relationship with corporate social responsibility (CSR) has changed rapidly. Where once it was seen as an optional 'bolt on', it is now fast becoming integral to company strategies.

Within Carlsberg our drive to do the right thing is fundamental to the way we do business. Carlsberg has a long history of social responsibility. Our founder JC Jacobsen established the Carlsberg Foundation in 1876 to promote science and the arts. The foundation still thrives today, recently supporting research into matter and anti-matter at the CERN laboratory in Switzerland, and social responsibility or, in Carlsberg terms, being 'engaged with society', has remained a core value of our business for over 100 years.

Until recently, this philanthropic approach was still evident in our attitude to CSR. Activities, while valued, were seen as separate and additional to our core business. They helped to define us as a company in terms of our values, but they did not necessarily permeate the day-to-day business of brewing, packaging and delivering beer.

My joint role as head of Corporate Social Responsibility and Safety, Health and the Environment gave me the opportunity to look at all the ways we were seeking to improve our impact, and to create a strategy that aimed to move what were traditionally considered peripheral issues to centre stage.

Like many of my generation of professionals in this field, my initial aim was to demonstrate the business value of CSR, rather than the established 'aren't we a nice company' PR value, although this should not be underestimated. Just look at the way Marks & Spencer has changed organisational and consumer culture through the Plan A initiative and its hugely successful accompanying PR campaign. I wanted to emulate this and prove the 'bottom line' benefits too.

At Carlsberg UK we began with accurate measurement and clear and compelling communication, both of which still make up important features of our strategy. In 2010 we identified our baseline measures for the environmental impact of our products throughout their life cycle, which led us to a realistic, although challenging, vision for improvement, with our pledge to reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by 40% by 2020. We set our safety target of zero accidents in the same timeframe. While we set targets in all CSR areas, our internal communications campaign focused on these two, which we believed would help us demonstrate the business case for improvement and, importantly, engage people and empower them to make a difference in working towards the vision.

In common with many other organisations on a comparable journey, the business case was not hard to prove. In fact it is now such an established 'truth' that in 2014 it seems hard to imagine that the link between reducing your environmental impact and saving money was ever an equation that needed testing. Similarly, the logic that safer workplaces mean less time lost and reduced insurance costs seems self-evident, and something well worth the investment, from a financial as well as the obvious ethical standpoint.

Our efforts in these areas across all our sites are constant and ongoing, and we continue to work hard to meet our 2020 targets. At the same time, our experiences and learning along the way are informing work that I think of as belonging to the next phase of CSR. Two of the defining features of this next phase are collaboration and communication.

The essential role of collaboration was brought home to us back in 2010 when measuring the environmental impact of our products through their life cycle. This showed that the majority

of impact happens outside our direct field of control – either upstream with our suppliers, or downstream with our customers and consumers. So, while it was important to continue to improve the environmental impact of our own processes, it became clear that we also needed to engage beyond the limits of our own organisation if we wanted to genuinely make a difference.

It is not just about influencing and engaging with our customers and consumers, a lot of behind the scenes work has gone on to engage with our suppliers. Our initial steps were to create a forum for collaborative projects with a small number of suppliers to target resource efficiency and waste minimisation. We called this network the Carlsberg Environmental Community (CEC), and through it we were able to strengthen relationships with key suppliers in order to better understand each other's issues and processes, and make time for innovation. In the first year we ran a number of successful projects, from reducing the weight of cans and bottles to saving fuel through reducing the distance that transport travelled. Again, alongside the environmental benefits, these projects brought the attendant positive publicity, engaged teams and financial benefits. It was clear that together we had achieved more, both for our organisations and for the environment, than any of us could have on our own.

Now, in 2014, the collaboration platform is informing innovative business practice at a global level, as original CEC partners including Owens Illinois and Rexam have joined forces with Carlsberg Group in an initiative that will see all new packaging undergo a complete assessment to identify means of maximising its reuse and recycling potential. This initiative, called the Carlsberg Circular Community, is based on the cradle-to-cradle model. It seeks to go beyond minimising negative



Carlsberg Circular Community seeks to consider every aspect of the life cycle of packaging

**Matt Winterburn is Carlsberg UK's Head of Corporate Social Responsibility and Safety, Health and Environment**

Essentially, this means he is in charge of helping to safeguard the health and wellbeing of Carlsberg UK's 1800 employees while at work, as well as making sure Carlsberg UK continues to be a force for good in the environment and communities in which it operates. Matt currently chairs the BBPA environmental committee.



“Working together to improve our impact could help us all keep doing what we are doing into the future”

impact, by considering every aspect of the life cycle of packaging in the context of its own market, and the aim is to create an optimal solution in each case, which has a net positive impact.

Leaving collaboration for a moment, telling our story and generating interest in all the areas in which we are seeking to improve our impact has been important from the start. We believe that sharing real success, and sharing it well, is a powerful tool for motivation and engagement – and engaging people is the key to sustainable change. For us this has meant regularly producing a comprehensive and accessible CSR report. This is now supported by quarterly updates and a dedicated website featuring stories increasingly told directly by our employees, suppliers and customers. We also have a rolling safety and environment communication and training campaign, in addition to our regular training programme, which is delivered by a network of workplace champions who also share success and good practice across all our sites. We believe the effort we have put into engaging communication has played no small part in driving success, both internally and externally, in helping us to start conversations with our customers, our suppliers and the wider industry – this

year helping us to pick up unprecedented recognition in the form of nominations, commendations and awards.

Although it is now widely agreed that ‘doing the right thing’ can help boost an organisation’s competitive edge, our next move is not to increase competition when it comes to sustainability or safety or those big CSR agendas. Rather, it is to put systems in place to share our knowledge and collaborate, working together across our industry, whether within our own value chain or with our business rivals, to find solutions to the serious challenges – social and environmental – that face us all.

Government and industry bodies already exist to facilitate this type of collaboration, and Carlsberg UK is active in supporting them, but there is a long way further we could go, and there is increasing interest in the CSR community in closer collaboration on industry-wide initiatives.

That is not to say, of course, that as businesses we should be less competitive with each other. After all, one of the most positive impacts any business has is on the people it keeps in employment and on the economy, local and national, that it supports, and market share is an important part of success. It is more a recognition that working together to improve our impact could help us all keep doing what we are doing into the future.

It is early days for this type of thinking but I hope that, just as we have come round to the idea that sustainability equals business sense, a few years from now broad, open collaboration on CSR issues might be ‘just the way we do things round here’.

Our safety target is zero accidents by 2020



# Centrica



Our Global Action Plan provides sustainability training and employment to NEETs



Midlands Together CIC provides jobs and skills to ex-offenders to refurbish houses in the Midlands

In 2012 Centrica started to think about how it could support the public sector and civil society in tackling some of the big issues we face in society. We wondered how we could make a bigger and more active contribution to society, beyond the near £400 million we invest in community schemes, or the near £600 million of tax we contribute to the UK exchequer.

We were motivated to act because, despite the best of intentions, the public sector's ability to tackle these problems is obviously limited, with government spending highly constrained due to the coalition's objective to reduce UK debt. In 2008, the UK entered its deepest recession since World War II. It has taken six years of hard work to get the economy back to its pre-crash level. While, overall, unemployment is now falling, youth unemployment is high, and one in five 16–24-year-olds is struggling to find work; in addition to this, there are pressures within all public-sector areas.

Centrica is not claiming that it can solve society's problems on its own. But we believe that we can make a positive difference. We want to play our part by helping to focus corporate resource on the biggest issues that individuals and countries face across the developed world. So we came up with our Social Innovation Idea. What follows is an explanation of what this is, what we have achieved to date, what we have learnt and where we hope to go next.

## Our Social Innovation Idea

In 2012, we asked the 35,000 people who work across the Centrica group of businesses to think about what our purpose is in society and what they want to

### ABOUT US

#### **Centrica**

- » Centrica Plc (owner of British Gas) is a top 30 FTSE 100 company
- » A leading integrated energy company, operating predominantly in the UK and North America
- » We are active at every stage in the energy chain, from sourcing energy to saving it
- » Our aim is to meet our customers' energy needs and deliver long-term value to our shareholders
- » 35,000 employees worldwide
- » 30 million customer accounts
- » Largest installer of energy-efficiency products in the UK

“ Why give away money when you could invest and recycle multiple times so that the money goes further ”

**Nick O'Donohoe, CEO of Big Society Capital, in the *Huffington Post* earlier this year:**

'Centrica have set an important precedent in the UK by becoming the first non-financial company to set up a dedicated social investment program. It invests in social enterprise and social purpose companies. It sits in a separate subsidiary but is intimately connected with the mother company ... there are opportunities for many more companies both in the UK and abroad to follow their example.'

contribute. Some 12,000 people responded to our challenge and began to engage in that dialogue. As we explored what our employees thought, we found that people across Centrica felt that, as one of the UK's largest companies, we should help address some of the biggest issues the UK faces. Our employees also felt that we cannot solve the challenges we face in society in isolation, just as one single organisation cannot by itself solve the huge challenges the energy industry faces. Our employees concluded that, through working with cross-sector partnerships, government and social enterprises, we could work towards delivering our purpose – helping people today and securing energy for the future.

So we came up with an idea to achieve this objective. Our Social Innovation Idea is to invest money, which otherwise

would have been donated to charity, in businesses that are solving social issues in the UK. To provide an idea of the scale of the opportunity, if the reserve cash of all the world corporations were pooled, \$3 trillion of forecast capital could be invested in tackling the biggest challenges, with the money being recycled for greater impact.

As a result of this idea, we began working with the Social Business Trust (SBT) in 2012, and in 2013 we created Ignite Social Enterprise, a social impact fund to drive innovation in the energy sectors and to help tackle social issues.

### What we have achieved to date

- » Invested £1 million capital in the SBT and provided it with *pro bono* employee time to support their investees.
- » Agreed to invest £10 million capital over 10 years into energy-related businesses solving social issues in the UK, via an impact investment fund, Ignite Social Enterprise.

Through Ignite we have, to date, committed investment in five projects of £3.5 million, which will:

- » provide jobs, training and rehabilitation to 150 ex-offenders
- » provide jobs and training for 150 young people not in education, employment or training
- » provide solar energy to 50 schools, which will also provide income to the local community

E-Car Club provides electric fleet vehicles to 'cornerstone' clients





- » bring electric-vehicle transport to low-income households
- » reduce reliance on waste created from plastic water bottles.

To date, 140 of our people, networks of suppliers, customers and contacts have already been involved, adding value to support the social businesses we invest in.

## What we have learnt

We have learnt how to engage senior stakeholders across an organisation, set up the right structure for impact investing, recruit an investment committee, set up a measurement framework and build a pipeline of businesses to invest in.

Through this process we have learnt how to use the scale, reach and depth of Centrica, and draw upon our 35,000 employees' skills to help fast-track businesses, open doors to networks and, most importantly, help them learn from our experiences.

Through Ignite's investments we have been able to work with ten organisations on investment readiness, and, using the professional skills of our people, we are trying to help businesses that have an impact on society. This work has given Centrica employees a sense of renewed purpose and pride in the work that they do.

The Social Innovation Idea has helped us in Centrica learn about how best



The Big Energy Idea 2014 cohort

we can use our skills to help others, but it has also taught us about how we can employ capital explicitly to create positive social change. Working in the collaborative environment of social entrepreneurs has taught us about the importance of working together to address the challenges within the sector and drive innovation.

## What we will do next

We are looking to make at least another 15–20 investments over the coming year and to involve even more of our people in delivering those meaningful investments. We hope that Ignite can have a wider impact on how business thinks about merging philanthropy and community investment. Why give away money when you could invest and recycle multiple times so that the money goes further?

## » CASE STUDY

### Midlands Together

The first Ignite beneficiary, with an investment of £500,000, was Midlands Together CIC, which provides opportunities for ex-offenders to learn new skills and gain employment by refurbishing and improving the energy efficiency of empty homes. Properties they have purchased and renovated are then sold to fund getting more people into work. Our people also provide assistance to the board.

Profits from Ignite's investments will be reinvested to grow more social enterprises, and at the end of the 10-year term any surplus will be distributed to charity.



# KLH Sustainability



KLH Sustainability Founder and Director, Kirsten Henson



The relocated BMW showcase provides facilities for a local school and community gardens

## ABOUT US

### **KLH Sustainability**

- » Established August 2010, a legacy from the London Olympic construction
- » Multi-lingual specialists to support projects across the globe
- » Award winning sustainable construction consultancy
- » Major clients include Network Rail, BskyB, BAA Heathrow, Balfour Beatty, UNEP and the University of Cambridge

**K**LH Sustainability is a sustainable construction and regeneration specialist. We support clients, developers and contractors to take advantage of the opportunities that sustainability presents to business competitiveness in both the short and longer term.

Since our inception four years ago, when the construction industry was at its lowest ebb, our pragmatic, problem-solving approach has seen the business develop into a niche practice that adds value across a programme's life cycle, from strategy development through to implementation and legacy.

### Why should construction be sustainable?

The construction industry is one of the largest sectors of the UK economy. In 2013 the annual output was approximately £113 billion. The industry also directly employs some two million people in the UK, and employs many more through a global supply chain of construction product manufacture.

Sustainability within construction matters because the direct impacts of construction are significant: the industry is responsible for 32% of all landfilled waste, with over 13% of all products delivered to construction sites ending up in skips without being used. The indirect impacts of construction are perhaps even more critical. The built environment is responsible for 45% of total UK carbon emissions and contributes to the continuing loss of semi-natural habitats. In addition, water scarcity now impacts many areas of London and the South East.

More recently, a new subject has entered into construction: the impact of development and construction on the fabric of society. Ample green open space, a well-integrated

public transport network, housing dominated by low-rise blocks with private gardens and sports facilities, schools and health facilities are, of course, all essential elements of building a successful community. However, unless the financial investment in our communities is undertaken with input from the local residents and with investment in the skills and training necessary for residents to benefit from the jobs being created through development, poor health indices, low educational attainment, high unemployment and high rates of crime will continue.

### What is sustainability?

'Sustainability' is a word often used but little understood by the construction industry. With over 200 definitions of the word, who would be surprised at the confusion? KLH Sustainability aims to make sustainability simple and tangible by using language familiar to those involved in the development process. We shy away from relying on sustainability 'badges' and schemes. Instead we support business to deliver construction projects in a commercially smarter, technically efficient way that places community at the heart of the solution. We focus on developing bespoke strategies that respond to, and complement, a client's existing business approach, rather than rolling out generic programmes. It might take a little longer, but we have found it is the only way to engage an organisation in lasting change.

At KLH Sustainability we match and place our consultants within client organisations to ensure that sustainability becomes an integral part of the project development and delivery process. While we know that tools and processes are essential elements of delivering sustainable projects, ultimately success is about collaboration.

Our clients have often remarked that we are 'not really sustainability consultants'. Sustainability is still widely perceived as an expensive add-on within the industry. At KLH Sustainability we ask pragmatic questions that challenge the norm. We provide businesses with the knowledge they need to think differently and empower their people to champion a better built environment. This unique approach allows KLH Sustainability to influence the project processes and ethos, providing technical rigour that is grounded in extensive experience of delivering complex design and construction projects.

### What is our impact?

Over the last four years we have been involved in the design, development and delivery of:

- » 2000 m<sup>2</sup> gross internal floor area (GIFA) of temporary pavilions
- » 58,600 m<sup>2</sup> GIFA of offices
- » 3200 m<sup>2</sup> GIFA of retail
- » 8000 m<sup>2</sup> GIFA of education.

We estimate that our involvement with these projects has resulted in the following sustainability benefits:



### » WHO WE ARE

KLH Sustainability is a small business involved in big projects, which allows us to attract exceptional staff. Our project portfolio includes high-profile infrastructure and building projects ranging from the temporary to the permanent, from sporting venues to bespoke commercial properties. The services we offer include the definition and delivery of sustainable construction for businesses that want to embed their corporate sustainability agenda in the development or refurbishment of their facilities.

We also provide technical support on the construction site, side by side with the design team, contractor and supply chain.

We are working with the contractor on the Olympic Stadium transformation project to ensure sustainability is realised simply and efficiently

“ At KLH Sustainability we ask pragmatic questions that challenge the norm ”

- » 13,000 tonnes of recycled materials used in new construction
- » 5300 tonnes of construction materials and waste reused for direct community benefit
- » net zero water, which we define as an increase in building floor area without an increase in the total potable water consumption
- » sustainable timber and responsibly sourced key construction materials on all projects
- » 16,000 m<sup>2</sup> of biodiverse habitats and public open space through landscape improvements, green roofs and walls
- » 7000 tonnes of carbon savings through reduced embodied energy of design and construction, and a further annual carbon saving of 13,000 tonnes through operational efficiencies (equivalent to the annual carbon consumption of 1800 UK residents).

It is through the sharing of knowledge and best-practice results that we will deliver more intelligent development. At KLH Sustainability we apply the experience and raw data from each project and translate it into facts and quantities that our clients can understand. We are honest and open about the value of sustainable solutions, and ensure that a client invests its finances wisely.

We share our technical analysis and conclusions with universities and

industry forums to ensure that the whole industry can benefit from our clients' pioneering approach to sustainability.

Our thinking is led by our desire to awaken a consciousness and understanding within our client companies that results in greater awareness of the impacts of the built environment on their business, staff and local communities.

### What next for KLH Sustainability?

The next step for KLH Sustainability is to develop further our fully integrated service to ensure that clients can recognise and benefit from the social, cultural and economic opportunities that sustainable development has to offer. We have started on this journey but we and the wider industry still have a long way to go.

We are also looking at developing a unique training aspect to the business that will allow management teams within organisations to explore and understand how KLH Sustainability develops vision and embeds change within organisations. It is an approach that does not need to be limited to, or defined by, sustainability, but will focus on the importance of the individual, the team, communication and strategy.

The timber-framed Believe in Better building for BskyB will provide a permanent location for apprenticeships and training



### » RECOGNITION FOR OUR WORK

Members of our small team have been widely recognised for their contributions to a sustainable built environment. Our recent awards include:

- » 2014 Small Business of the Year shortlist (BusinessGreen Leaders)
- » 2013 Top 20 Women in Sustainable Architecture (*Architects' Journal*)
- » 2012 Sustainability Practitioner of the Year (EDIE Sustainability Leaders Awards)
- » 2012 Young Consultant of the Year Finalist (ACE/ICE)
- » 2012 Top 20 Rising Sustainability Star (*Building Magazine*)



# d+b facades



Overcladding – the economic, social and environmentally sound solution

The UK's stock of 1960s high-rise buildings is here to stay. We can no longer afford financially, socially or environmentally to leave them in their original poorly-insulated condition with deteriorating appearance or to demolish and rebuild in blind preference to regeneration. High-quality overcladding is the sustainable solution for these legacy buildings.

The buildings span residential, office, health and educational sectors. All have undergone some level of internal refurbishment. All have core structures (armatures) that are sound, that have stood for 50 years and that could last for a further 200 years or more if adequately protected. Over the last 20 years, a number have had their external skins (envelopes) replaced or overclad, with varying degrees of success. Replacement entails the complete removal and disposal of the existing skin, whereas, with overcladding, a new skin is applied to the existing one with minimal disruption to occupants.

There are 25-year-old examples of sustainable overcladding that still look as new today as when they were put in place, and are set to last for a further 30 years or more. Conversely, there are 10-year-old examples that have failed, and have been replaced or will need to be replaced well ahead of their anticipated life expectancies.

So, sustainable options for solving these problems are out there. They have been tried and tested. We have the empirical evidence to prove that regeneration is viable. But financial and environmental sustainability is only fully achieved using solutions that deliver proven, rather than predicted, performance. This means that any new building skin must be long-lived and must perform against its target measures, including looking good throughout its life.

## WHY D+B FACADES?

- » Design and build overcladding specialists
- » Specialists in refurbishment – no new build
- » Extensive, proven track record of success in:
  - occupied buildings without decant
  - delivery on time, within budget and with minimal disruption
- » Proven system performance and longevity
- » Single point responsibility from design through to completion
- » Industry-leading warranty

“Ours is a quality design delivering true sustainability”

## Our business

d+b facades, based near Salisbury, is the UK's leading specialist overcladding organisation, with a proven track record in high-quality regeneration projects. All our projects have been delivered on time, within budget and, crucially, continue to perform and retain visual appeal.

Overcladding is the design and installation of aluminium façades with integrated fenestration, specifically designed for refurbishment rather than new-build projects. This is all we do, and it is all we have done for 25 years.

At d+b we passionately believe in our product, and we are certain that ours is a quality design delivering true sustainability. The design has changed little in over two decades, and our guarantees are the strongest and longest in the business. We do it once and we do it properly. We always encourage our prospective clients to visit our oldest sites and to do likewise for other systems they are considering.

Our market is buildings that still have their original envelope and exhibit the following key characteristics:

- » Poor insulation – The buildings consume vast amounts of heating energy, giving rise to:

- hugely inflated heating bills, paid for by residential or business tenants, or passed on indirectly to taxpayers
- unacceptable levels of carbon emissions (this energy-inefficient stock is a major contributor to the 37% of total UK greenhouse gas emissions attributable to buildings).

- » Undesirable accommodation – The consequences of poor social and working environments have been widely researched and documented. As the UK's living standards increase, the demand for substandard accommodation decreases. Buildings are the physical representation of the UK brand, and we do not want it tarnished by these ageing eyesores.

## Our product

At our inception, we realised that a durable armature could carry a number of revitalised envelopes through its life. We coupled this requirement with the emerging global concerns about sustainability, and set about designing an overcladding system that would be:

- » **Environmentally sustainable:**
  - life-expectancy – true longevity, more than any alternative designs
  - recyclability – use of recycled material that is itself recyclable at end of life.
- » **Fit for high-rise performance** – the severe exposure and movement experienced by high-rise structures demand durable but flexible materials that can withstand our climate.
- » **Efficient in water management** – to prevent completely water ingress, thereby eradicating staining and system deterioration.
- » **Optimised for installation** – to avoid the need to relocate occupants and minimise disruption during the construction phase.
- » **Financially viable** – we understood that our product must pay its way, and we were aware that our emerging design requirements were

‘The majority of people think that we have built a new building.’  
(Nick Roalfe, Director of Facilities and Property Management, Imperial College London)



tending towards the higher end. To ensure we remained competitive, we identified the key elements of any business case:

- savings on heating costs
- eradication of external maintenance costs
- asset value to be significantly and demonstrably increased
- the greater longevity with the new skin, the lesser the whole-life cost of the building.

- » **Good looking** – we wanted finishes to match those of new state-of-the-art high-rise buildings.
- » **Choice** – our system must offer as many styles and finishes as possible (panels and windows).

Our resultant design has now stood the test of time, with a proven installed base. It has proved to be among the most sustainable of the solutions being deployed, and continues to achieve targeted savings. Crucially, our oldest projects look as good as they did when first installed more than 20 years ago, despite having never been maintained or cleaned.

## Our work in industry

d+b's journey has not just been about designing and installing building envelopes that perform financially, environmentally and socially. Our business is also about learning and, equally, sharing our knowledge with the various industry sectors.

We have enjoyed an extremely healthy relationship with the higher and further education sector. At a time when the UK's universities are seeking to compete as world brands, central funds for replacement buildings have diminished, yet some buildings still require attention. We have worked closely with members of these bodies to understand the new drivers and help produce the business cases for the right solutions.

*The Legacy of 1960s University Buildings* is a report commissioned by AUDE in 2008. This forward-thinking document was produced ahead of the well-publicised abolition of the Learning Skills Council (LSC) and the scrapping of its ill-founded college new-build policy. The policies of the LSC's replacement, the Skills Funding Agency, are much more in line with the findings of this report.

d+b is looking to work with the Health Estates & Facilities Management Association (HefmA) as it did with members of AUDE/HEFCE to accelerate the understanding of regeneration, and to drive the viability and specific benefits of overcladding of occupied hospitals.

We are making use of Scape Framework Agreements to work with a small number of main contractors to introduce the concepts, affordability and sustainability of overcladding to other large public-sector estates.

Establishing a common understanding and strategy in the residential sector will prove more difficult, as there is no comparable body to AUDE or HefmA for this sector and the stock is in private, local authority and housing association ownership.

d+b welcomes the government's and the Greater London Authority's Estates Regeneration Fund. This initiative recognises and leverages the intrinsic value in the existing stock and introduces fresh thinking into the old private finance initiative.

We would welcome further any government initiatives that encourage positive discrimination for regeneration, irrespective of the economy. Such policies should go beyond the Decent Homes programme, by taking a holistic view of whole-life cost and setting maximum sustainability as its goal.



Getting it wrong – 6 years after the installation of a board system



Hyde Park, Sheffield, 24 years after the installation of aluminium overcladding

## » KEY ASPECTS OF OUR DESIGN

- » **Materials** – our panels and frames are aluminium, which is inert, does not decay over time and is 100% recyclable.
- » **Aesthetics** – our buildings look good, some amazingly so, like a high-end new build.
- » **Performance** – empirical data show that our cladding performs as well as or above new-build regulations.
- » **Water channelling** – our unique design ensures that all water is channelled away with zero ingress.



# Polyflor



Polyflor's fleet of Euro 5 compliant HGVs



Polyflor flooring installed at St Gerard's Education Resource Centre, Belfast

## ABOUT US

### **Polyflor**

- » A subsidiary of James Halstead PLC
- » Manufacturing in the UK since 1915
- » Production sites in Manchester and Stockton-On-Tees; distribution centre in Oldham
- » UK market-leading manufacturer of vinyl sheet and tile floor coverings
- » Over 60% of UK production volumes are exported

**P**olyflor Ltd is a leading manufacturer and distributor of resilient flooring products in the UK and worldwide, with a distribution centre in Oldham and production sites in Manchester and Stockton-On-Tees. As a subsidiary of James Halstead PLC, Polyflor has been manufacturing in the UK since 1915, supplying a wide range of flooring sheet and tile solutions to key markets worldwide, including education, healthcare and retail. From its origins in the textile industry, the business has developed into the dominant UK market-leading manufacturer of vinyl floor coverings, with over 60% of UK production volumes being exported around the globe.

At Polyflor we believe that providing high-quality, commercially competitive, sustainable products is key, and at the heart of our operations is our sustainability strategy. For the past ten years we have led the introduction of sustainable working practices across the flooring industry, refining our product range and raw materials in accordance with our responsibilities as a major manufacturer in the UK. We also pride ourselves on the good that we can do as a corporate citizen in the communities of Radcliffe, Manchester and Stockton-on-Tees in the North East.

Our sustainable working practices have led to successes:

- » Since 2000, the amount of energy required to manufacture a square metre of Polyflor material has fallen year on year, down to 2.70 kWh per m<sup>2</sup>, representing a 46% drop in energy consumption per square metre of material produced.



- » Working with the Carbon Trust’s Energy Management Programme, our carbon emissions have reduced by 17,612 tonnes since 2000.
- » On-site rainwater is collected and stored in a designated area known as ‘lodge water’, and this is used to substitute mains supply in the production process. Of the water used in the process, 96% is internally recycled.
- » Even with a significant increase in production volumes there has been continual progress in reducing both wet and dry waste on site. Wet waste in 2012 was 167 tonnes, an impressive 75% reduction when compared with the figure for 2000.
- » Improvements in recycling initiatives have allowed us to reduce dry waste from 7.5% of production volume in 2002 to 1.4% in 2012, equating to a reduction in dry waste of 81% in 10 years.

Polyflor has also gone a step further, by actively seeking to recover and recycle waste vinyl flooring in order to minimise the flooring industry’s environmental impact and close the loop of our product’s life cycle. After initial funding from WRAP (Waste & Resources Action Plan), Polyflor and another UK manufacturer continued with the recycling scheme and formed Recofloor in 2009. As a founding and funding member of Recofloor, Polyflor has helped develop the scheme into the success it is today – enabling contractors efficiently to recycle waste vinyl flooring by arranging collections from construction sites and their own premises or by transporting it to one of the 65 drop-off sites nationally.

Recofloor’s achievements include:

- » 410 tonnes of waste vinyl flooring collected in 2013, equivalent to 150,000 m<sup>2</sup>
- » 510 collectors registered
- » winner of the Business Commitment to the Environment Premier Award

- » Gold Award winner in the International Green Apple Environment Awards 2013.

Third-party assessments of Polyflor’s environmental performance are integral to our sustainability strategy.

Underpinning our approach to sustainability is our licence to operate, and we remain committed to ensuring that our certifications to global standards relating to quality (ISO 9001:2008), the environment (ISO 14001:2004, BREEAM), health and safety (OHSAS 18001:2007) and responsible sourcing (BES 6001, SA 8000) remain in place and continue to support improvements in all aspects of our business.

At Polyflor we are proud of our record on sustainability and the environment. We have been reporting externally on our sustainable and environmental practices for more than a decade, and we work with independent authorities to benchmark not just against national targets but also against more stringent targets that we set ourselves. There is another area in which we can be regarded as leading



Polyflor flooring installed at the \$721 million Royal North Shore Hospital in Sydney, Australia

The Recofloor waste vinyl flooring recycling process



“ We are embedding sustainable thinking at the heart of everything we do ”

the agenda – having a transparent supply chain. In late 2013 Polyflor was the first flooring company in the world to be certified to the BREEAM BES 6001 Framework Standard for the Responsible Sourcing of Construction Products. We achieved a rating of Very Good for all our major ranges of luxury vinyl tiles, including Expona Design, Bevel Line, Camaro and Colonia. In 2014 this will be supplemented further by the assessment and accreditation for the ranges of products that are manufactured at our production facilities in the UK.

We have worked hard on responsible sourcing because we recognise that material provenance is increasingly important. Our customers do not expect just transparency of origin but to know that we understand carbon use from product origin to end-of-life replacement and/or recycling.

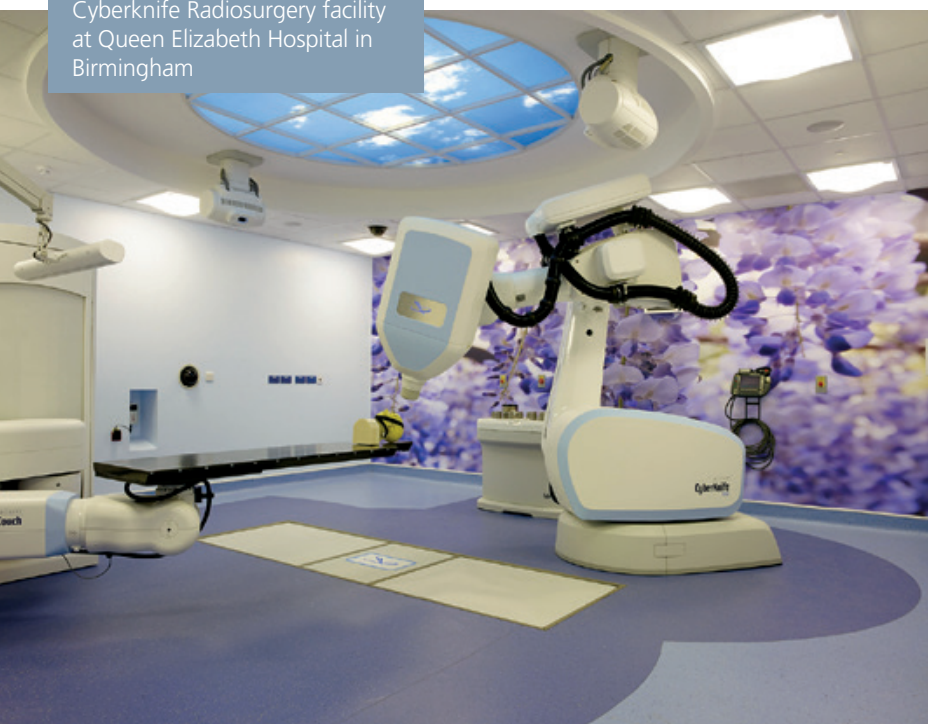
To support our life cycle thinking further we have also been working with the Institut Bauen und Umwelt (IBU) to produce product-specific and product-generic EN 15804 Environmental Product Declarations

(EPDs). These are fully transparent documents, or, as the IBU likes to call them, *Vorsprung durch Transparenz*, which denote the environmental impact of our resilient flooring throughout its lifetime. These EPD documents propose a standardised format for reporting across many construction sectors, to give manufacturers and customers a level playing field for environmental impact measurement and assessment. Why? Because a lifetime understanding of the most common construction materials underpins everything we know and can learn about sustainable building performance.

Our sustainability strategy, targets and objectives have evolved over recent years. Each objective and target is managed through an environmental steering committee, which meets a number of times throughout the year. At these meetings, strategic decisions are made, and progress on key sustainability projects is reviewed and measured. Projects are managed by specific teams within the business, and it is hoped that this approach will further embed sustainability thinking throughout the business and its day-to-day operations.

The challenging external economic environment poses a challenge to our industry to use resources efficiently, moving from construction costs to lifetime costs and design of materials for recycling and reuse. At Polyflor we have responded to that challenge with enthusiasm, working harder than ever to consider the environmental and social impacts of our business. We are embedding sustainable thinking at the heart of everything we do. Taken together, the separate elements of our sustainability approach constitute a programme of change that affects every one of our 600 employees across the UK.

Polyflor's Pearlazzo PUR smooth vinyl flooring installed in the Cyberknife Radiosurgery facility at Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Birmingham





## Europe controversy resurfaces yet again



Tory backbench discontent over Britain's relationship with the EU boiled over in the debate on the 2013 Queen's Speech

The intricate battle over Britain's relationship with the EU, which was to run through the whole parliamentary year, began in the debate on the 2013 Queen's Speech. Ever since 81 Conservative MPs defied a three-line whip to vote for a motion calling for a referendum on Britain's membership of the EU in October 2011, Tory backbench discontent had been simmering. But this was the moment when it boiled over and changed party policy.

Deputy Prime Minister Nick Clegg came under heavy fire from Eurosceptic Conservatives over an election leaflet quoting him as promising an in-out referendum



Backbenchers, led by John Baron, a rebel on a variety of issues, put down an amendment regretting the lack of a referendum Bill in the new legislative programme. This was the annual debate on the government's programme of new laws for the coming year; and an amendment regretting its contents is usually a matter for opposition rather than government MPs. The Baron amendment was made possible by a convention-stretching ruling by Speaker John Bercow, who decided that, in addition to the usual two amendments granted to the official opposition and the one allowed for the biggest minor party, he would also allow the backbench amendment.

The pro-EU Liberal Democrats were never going to permit a referendum Bill in the coalition government's programme, but the backbench uprising forced David Cameron to permit an unprecedented free vote, and promise to back a private members' Bill to hold a referendum in 2017.

John Baron said MPs on all sides believed the time had now come to give the British people a say – adding, during a fractious exchange with the shadow chancellor Ed Balls, that if the referendum was held tomorrow he would vote to leave. But that could change if the Prime Minister succeeded in negotiating a new relationship based 'on trade, not politics'.

The debate was prefaced by exchanges at Prime Minister's Question Time, where the Deputy Prime Minister Nick Clegg was standing in for David Cameron. Mr Clegg came under heavy





The government had already legislated to guarantee a referendum when the next major change in EU rules is proposed

fire from Eurosceptic Conservatives, including Edward Leigh, who produced a Lib Dem election leaflet quoting Mr Clegg promising an in–out referendum. Was the Nick Clegg quoted there an imposter or a hypocrite? Mr Clegg retorted that the government had already legislated to guarantee a referendum when the next major change in EU rules is proposed, which made it a question of when, not if, there would be a vote.

When the Queen’s Speech debate resumed, there were several exchanges of friendly fire between Conservative MPs. The chair of the Foreign Affairs Select Committee, Richard Ottaway, attacked the idea that Britain could withdraw and seek a new trade-only relationship with the EU, along the lines of Norway and Switzerland. ‘Norway and Switzerland do not call the shots,’ he said. ‘They pay billions every year for access to the single market, and Switzerland has been forced into renegotiation.’ A

Eurosceptic colleague, Bernard Jenkin, intervened: ‘I cannot imagine that the EU would want to cut itself off from the British market by getting into a trade war ... May I also point out that we export more to the rest of the world than to the EU?’

In the end, the Conservative leadership told their ministers to abstain, and allowed backbenchers a free vote. The results were striking: 116 Conservative MPs – the vast majority of non-ministers – backed the amendment. Along with a smattering of non-Tories, that produced 130 votes in favour – but Labour and the Lib Dems mustered 277 against. Technically, this was not a ‘rebellion’, but it is unprecedented for a government party to allow its MPs to abstain in a vote over its Queen’s Speech, let alone back an amendment.

The Prime Minister declared himself ‘relaxed’ about the outcome, and the following day James Wharton, the youngest MP, topped the annual

ballot – a sort of raffle – for the right to bring in a private members' Bill. Within the hour he announced he would

bring in a referendum Bill – and the EU issue reverberated through the rest of the year.

## Conservatives legislate for an EU referendum



Prime Minister David Cameron with James Wharton MP

The sequel to the unprecedented Queen's Speech amendment was the intricate battle over James Wharton's private members' Bill. Its immediate effect was to provide a strategy around which Conservative MPs could unify, which was popular with party members and provided a counter to UKIP. Its Achilles heel was that the Bill lacked the procedural protection enjoyed by government legislation. There was no guillotine on debate, and no time limits for speeches – making it vulnerable

to delaying tactics, which could use up the available debating time and so defeat the Bill without an open vote.

Until he topped the private members' Bill ballot, James Wharton had been a low-profile figure in the Commons, but he launched his Bill with aplomb: He said the EU was a very different institution from the Common Market Britain had joined: 'No one knows where it will be in a few years. It is the right approach that, rather than rush headlong now to make a decision, we should negotiate to get the right deal and to understand what future membership of the European Union would mean. Whatever the result of that process ... ultimately it must be put to the British people so that they can choose whether to renew their consent to membership or to withdraw it.'

A couple of interventions gave a flavour of events to come. Labour procedure expert Thomas Docherty asked whether citizens in Gibraltar would have a vote, but Mr Wharton sensed a trap, warning that the larger and more complex the Bill became, the greater were the opportunities for opponents to wreck it.

Another theme was the coalition's yawning Euro-divide. Many of the Conservative MPs wore badges showing a Lib Dem election leaflet featuring Nick Clegg promising an in-out referendum. When the senior Lib Dem Simon Hughes reminded MPs that the coalition has already legislated for a referendum on the next major treaty change, he was jeered.



Simon Hughes MP



Mr Wharton accused the Lib Dems of ‘changing their position as the wind blows’.

Shadow foreign secretary Douglas Alexander dismissed the Bill as a stunt prompted by the electoral threat of UKIP and an internal threat to David Cameron’s leadership. It would threaten jobs by raising a question about the UK’s EU membership. But he was mocked by the foreign secretary William Hague, who noted that Mr Alexander had spoken for half an

hour without saying how Labour would vote. ‘Rarely in this house has a speech accusing others of causing uncertainty been so totally shrouded in uncertainty itself,’ he added.

The Bill was given its second reading by 304 votes to none – and later survived two and a half gruelling days of report-stage debate unscathed. But its slow passage meant that the Bill was always likely to run out of time in the Lords, where a posse of determined pro-EU peers lay in wait.

## The referendum bill runs aground in the Lords

The final act of the referendum Bill drama came after two long Fridays of detailed debate in the House of Lords, conducted at a snail’s pace. It was not a direct vote against the Bill but an implicit one, in which peers voted to close down their committee-stage debate rather than continue it into the small hours of Saturday morning.

By the time the Labour peer Lord Lipsey moved his motion to end the day’s debate, it was clear that there was no prospect of peers dealing with all the amendments before them. There were 76 amendments in all, mostly from opponents of a referendum, on subjects varying from requiring a minimum percentage of the electorate – 25%, 40% or 50% – to vote in order to make the result binding, to allowing British expats in EU countries to vote, to requiring an all-postal ballot.

The Bill was being put through the Lords by the Conservative peer and thriller writer Michael Dobbs. His frustration with the orchestrated go-slow tactics deployed by opponents had become increasingly evident as the committee stage inched along:



In the end, the demise of the Bill came down to time

‘My Lords, another hour, another group of amendments. We have 15 groups of amendments to get through today if we are to reach the end of Committee stage.’





Conservative Peer Michael Dobbs

He said the failure to consult the British people about the UK's relationship with the EU was a failure by the entire political class, which he said had 'flipped and flopped like a hooked fish dragged out on to the riverbank'. Lord Lipsey intervened: 'Many of us are not against a referendum; I myself am strongly in favour of one. We are against this dog's dinner of a Bill, which requires improvement by every side of this house.'

Lord Dobbs' retort had a note of weariness: 'The noble Lord has made his point, again. I think that it is a point that he made last week in committee, and I suspect that we may hear more of it again today ... but there comes a point when all these nostrums about parliamentary sovereignty require a dose of carbolic and common sense, when we need to find a democratic balance.' He added that it would be most unwise of parliament to ignore the demands of the people.

In the end it came down to time. When Lord Lipsey rose to move the closure of the day's committee-stage debate, the government chief whip Lady Anelay retorted that if this debate was ended she would not allocate any further days for debate. 'The house itself will have collectively indicated that it no longer wishes to consider the committee stage. If the house disagrees the Motion, I will take that as a desirable, clear indication that we should complete the remainder of the committee stage today.'

In effect, she said, Lord Lipsey's motion would lead to a vote on whether or not peers wanted to kill the Bill altogether. And by 180 votes to 130, peers voted to close the committee stage. The Bill was run aground. It was the final scene of this particular drama – but the Bill has been revived in the 2014–2015 session of parliament. So there will be a sequel.

## HS2 – a band of rebels in the Commons

Europe was not the only divisive issue of the year. With its £21 billion price tag and its serious implications for constituencies and communities along the proposed route, the Bill to implement HS2, the high speed rail link between London and Birmingham, was always going to be controversial – but the government and the leaderships of all three main parties thought its wider economic benefits justified what ministers believed was a long-overdue upgrade to Britain’s creaking and overloaded rail infrastructure.

Unsurprisingly, the combined weight of the three front benches won the day, with a crushing majority – although a vocal group of rebels took their defiance into the division lobbies. The transport secretary Patrick McLoughlin opened the debate by reminding MPs of the 1833 Bill to create what is now the West Coast Mainline: ‘It is worth recalling that in 1832 parliament rejected the initial Bill because some people objected, arguing that canals

were all we would ever need for long-distance travel. Today, we ask far too much of the line. If we were talking about roads, it would be as if traffic still had to go up Watling Street, as if the M1 and M6 had never been built, and we tried to solve our transport needs by just patching up old roads ... Cities and towns in the North deserve better. Scotland deserves better. Britain deserves better.’ He was supported by his Labour shadow Mary Creagh, who said HS2 could transform the economic geography of the UK, and help rebalance the economy by creating new skilled jobs and apprenticeships.

The Bill’s arch opponent was the former Welsh secretary Cheryl Gillan, whose Chesham and Amersham constituency lies across the proposed route. She had put down an amendment to throw out the Bill, and criticised what she called ‘the cosy consensus’ over it. A Labour opponent of the scheme, Barry Sheerman, insisted the critics were not ‘flat-earthish’: ‘We know that our rail

HS2 has a £21 billion price tag and has serious implications for constituencies and communities along the proposed route







David Cameron with the HS2 declaration

infrastructure must be renewed and that there are real problems with capacity and much else, but this proposal is deeply flawed.'

The Labour former foreign secretary Jack Straw, who represents Blackburn in Lancashire, said most of his colleagues representing constituencies in the North backed HS2. And he suggested that the creation of the M40 was far more disruptive for people living in the Chilterns, adding: 'but

nobody would now suggest it should be abandoned or greened over'.

Another line of attack came from the Commons' only Green MP, Caroline Lucas, who warned of destroying 'irreplaceable' ancient woodlands along the route.

Containing the eventual rebellion to 35 Conservative MPs (some voting for the Gillan amendment, some voting against the second reading of the Bill) was a significant success for the government whips. Labour's well-telegraphed support meant the Bill was never in any danger of defeat, but that, paradoxically, made rebellion a free hit for any Conservatives under constituency pressure. The invisible factor was the number of Conservatives who voted with teeth gritted, but who still have serious doubts. Were Labour to change its line at some later stage – and the Bill will not have been passed by the 2015 general election – the votes needed to defeat HS2 might be there.

## The Commons rejects armed intervention in the civil war in Syria

MPs voted against a motion giving tentative approval for British forces to join an international response to events in Syria



In what may well prove to be the single most significant Commons vote of the

2014–2015 parliament, MPs delivered a shocking rebuff to the coalition government, and rejected a motion seen as giving tentative approval for British forces to join an international response to chemical weapons attacks in the civil war in Syria.

The result of that division caught even most MPs by surprise – a huge roar went up as they spotted which set of tellers (the members who count votes) were standing on the Speaker's left – signifying that the 'No' side had won by 285 votes to 272.

David Cameron was immediately challenged by the Labour leader Ed



Miliband, to confirm that he would not bypass the will of the Commons by using his powers as Prime Minister to commit UK forces without a further vote. Mr Cameron told him, flatly, 'I can give that assurance ... It is very clear tonight that, while the house has not passed a motion, the British parliament, reflecting the views of the British people, does not want to see British military action. I get that, and the government will act accordingly.'

The vote had been forced by a backbench debate in the Commons on 11 July, which ended with a 114 to 1 vote approving a resolution requiring that 'no lethal support should be provided to anti-government forces in Syria without the explicit prior consent of parliament'.

So, when evidence emerged that sarin gas was being used by the Assad regime against the rebels in Syria, David Cameron recalled parliament. In the eight hours of debate that followed, it was obvious that the bitter arguments over Iraq a decade ago still reverberated, with talk of brutal dictators and humanitarian disasters.

Mr Cameron recalled sitting in the chamber in 2003 as a young backbencher, listening to Tony Blair argue for Britain to take part in the invasion of Iraq – he was keen to draw a distinction. There was no doubt, he said, that the Assad regime had committed a terrible atrocity, and his voice cracked as he described the chemical attack near Damascus on 21 August: 'The video footage illustrates some of the most sickening human suffering imaginable. Expert video analysis can find no way that this wide array of footage could have been fabricated, particularly the behaviour of small children in those shocking videos.'

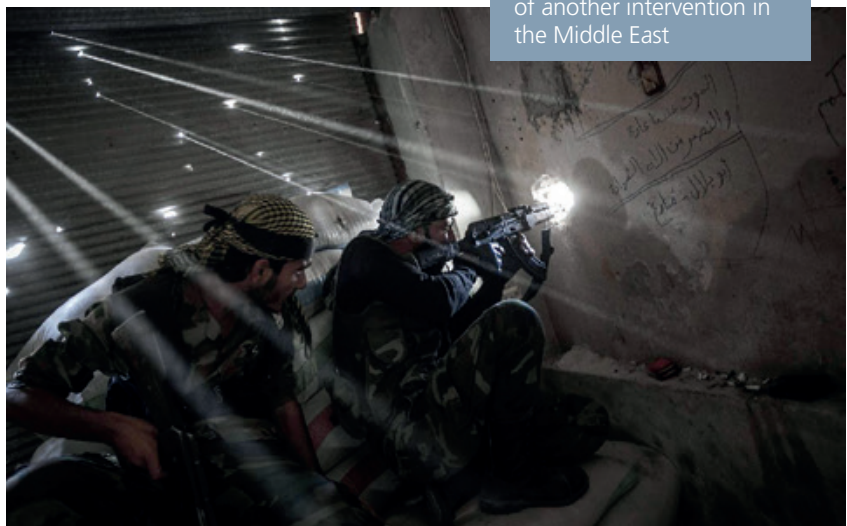
The government had worked hard to draw up a motion acceptable to

Labour, but in the end faced a Labour amendment calling for more evidence that the Syrian regime was responsible for the gas attack, and for what Ed Miliband called a 'legitimate road map' to a decision to be set out. Mr Miliband stressed: 'I am not with those who rule out action.' And he rejected accusations that he was playing the issue for party advantage.

When the debate moved to backbench MPs, Jack Straw, who was the foreign secretary when Tony Blair's government took Britain into Iraq, said the public was now much more sceptical. And he warned that the UK would inevitably be taking sides in the Syrian conflict.

Other backbenchers reflected the doubts and fears that surrounded the prospect of another intervention in the Middle East; the Conservative former defence secretary Liam Fox said that doing nothing would be appeasement. A Labour shadow minister, Jim Fitzpatrick, had resigned rather than support even the cautious amendment put down by his leader. The former Lib Dem leader Sir Menzies Campbell wondered what the West would do about atrocities committed using conventional weapons. The Green MP Caroline Lucas warned that intervention without a UN resolution would be a return to the law of the jungle.

Backbenchers reflected the doubts and fears that surrounded the prospect of another intervention in the Middle East





Senior Tory Sir Edward Leigh said MPs were speaking for a public that did not want war

Respect's George Galloway said the attack could have been the work of the Syrian rebels – and there was public unease over the prospect of supporting them. 'Take a look at the video of one of the commanders of the Syrian revolution cutting open the chest of a human being and eating his heart and liver. ... Take a look at the videos of Christian priests having their heads sawn off – not chopped off; sawn off with breadknives... Every religious minority in Syria – there are 23 of them – is petrified at the thought of a victory for the Syrian rebels.'

The war in Syria continues, along with a massive humanitarian catastrophe



The senior Tory Sir Edward Leigh said MPs were speaking for a public that did not want war: 'They are scarred by what went on in Iraq. We were lied to in parliament and we are not going to go down that route again. I voted against the Iraq war and I will vote against this one.'

The Deputy Prime Minister Nick Clegg wound up the debate, insisting the government motion was not an amber light for a military strike: 'Iraq casts a long shadow, but it would be a double tragedy if the memory of that war now caused us to retreat from the laws and conventions that govern our world, many of which the United Kingdom helped to author.'

But, a few moments later, MPs voted down Labour's amendment, and then, much more narrowly, the government's own motion. In the USA the unwillingness of their main military ally to join the intervention produced startled headlines: 'The British Aren't Coming!' noted one newspaper. The Commons' verdict undoubtedly contributed to a US decision not to launch any military action. The war in



The war in Syria continues, along with a massive humanitarian catastrophe. The vote was undoubtedly historic (you have

to search back for centuries to find even a vague precedent) but the verdict of history has yet to be delivered.

## Lord Pannick challenges the government over powers to deprive people of UK citizenship

The crossbench peer Lord Pannick would be a fair nomination for the single most influential member of the House of Lords outside the party front benches, which matters in a house where there is no overall majority. He has been a thorn in the side of successive governments. When he rises to speak, the government whips wince, because he has proved his ability to mobilise the crossbenchers, who are now the swing vote in the Lords.

Typically, he intervenes on issues of human rights and due process – the kind of issues that attract the small legion of retired judges and senior lawyers in the upper house. This amendment to the Immigration Bill proved a classic example of his ability to extract concessions out of ministers. At issue were proposals to give the home secretary powers to remove British citizenship obtained by naturalisation, ‘for reasons of the public good’, even if that left someone stateless.

Lord Pannick’s speech could be used as a template for any effort to persuade the House of Lords. He began by name-checking his Lib Dem and Labour supporters. Then he complained that ministers had added in the proposed powers at the last moment, just 24 hours before the Commons report stage debate, making the telling point that they had not, therefore, been properly considered by MPs.

Then he presented a carefully calibrated response – rather than

simply striking down the clause, he called for a committee of MPs and peers to study its implications. The new powers were aimed at people who posed a serious national security risk. But Lord Pannick questioned how the powers would help. One objective was to prevent suspects travelling to terrorist training camps on a British passport – but, he noted, the home secretary could already withdraw passports for that very reason, without making the passport holder stateless. There were already too many dictators willing to use statelessness as a weapon against opponents, he added, and Britain should not give such conduct respectability.

For the government, the home office minister Lord Taylor of Holbeach warned that a few people became British citizens and then sought to threaten

It was noted that the Home Secretary already had the power to prevent suspects travelling to terrorist training camps on a British passport







Crossbench Peer Lord Pannick

the UK's security, and even fought against UK armed forces. 'It would be perverse,' he added, 'if such people, while attacking our forces or terrorising civilians, could invoke our protection.'

The government lost the vote on Lord Pannick's amendment by 62 votes – with crossbench peers breaking 53 to 6 in his favour, and with an unusually large rebellion in the normally highly disciplined ranks of Lib Dem peers.

The result was that ministers offered a compromise proposal, which was debated during the 'parliamentary ping-pong' on the Bill, when the Lords and Commons settle any differences

they have over a Bill. On 12 May, Lord Taylor announced a watering down of the proposals such that citizenship could be removed only when someone already held another nationality or could reasonably be expected to acquire one. Lord Pannick hailed this as 'a very substantial concession'. He did not continue to press his amendment, although Labour peers did force a further vote. It was a typical example of the way the Lords have, with increasing effectiveness, made detailed changes to new laws, and forced the government to, at least, meet them half way. But the issue of deprivation of citizenship may now re-emerge because of events in Iraq

## 'Dare to be a Daniel' – the Commons says farewell to Tony Benn



Tony Benn (3 April 1925 to 14 March 2014)

Almost the final words in Tony Benn's farewell address to the House of Commons, where he had sat for half a century, were: 'I love the place.' When he died, at the age of 88, the house returned the compliment, with an afternoon of tributes.

With a couple of breaks, Tony Benn spent almost 50 years in the Commons. He had to fight a long battle to remain an MP when his father died and he inherited his peerage. He sat in the cabinets of Harold Wilson and James Callaghan, and came within an ace of winning control of the Labour Party at the head of a left-wing insurgency.

The tributes were opened by the Deputy Prime Minister Nick Clegg, who noted: 'Over his lifetime, Tony Benn went from being vilified to being lauded by the press; perhaps there is hope for all of us. [That brought a shout of derision.] Okay; perhaps not. He had mixed feelings about this. He once said: "If I'm a national treasure in *The Telegraph*, something's gone wrong."'

Sir Peter Tapsell, the longest-serving MP, recalled Mr Benn's oratory: 'At his best, he was spellbinding, so that listening to him one was sometimes in danger of being intellectually swept towards some of the wilder shores of

politics. Harold Wilson – they were chalk and cheese – famously said of him that he was the only man he had ever known who immatured as he grew older, but that was his great charm.’

Labour’s deputy leader Harriet Harman was one of dozens of MPs with personal recollections. She described how, one evening, as a new MP with young children, she was sitting, exhausted, in a Commons café waiting for a late-night vote: ‘Tony came and sat down next to me, and said, “You look exhausted. You should be at home.” I said that I could not go home, because I had not been let off by the whips. He said: “I can give you a really important piece of advice for your future. You do not have to worry about the whips; I never do.”’

Hilary Benn, Tony’s son, sat listening to the tributes. Five Benns have sat in the Commons across three centuries and four generations, with the prospect of more to come. He said his father had won 16 elections: ‘Fifteen of those elections enabled him to walk through those doors and take his place in this chamber. One of them – the by-election he fought after the death of his father – did not. He was barred from entry to the chamber on the instructions of the Speaker because, it was alleged, his blood was blue. His blood was never blue; it was the deepest red throughout his life.’



Sir Peter Tapsell, the longest-serving MP

The key to his father’s beliefs lay in his upbringing: ‘He was, at heart, not just a socialist; he was a non-conformist dissenter. His mother taught him to believe in the prophets rather than the kings, and his father would recite these words from the Salvation Army hymn, which I think best explain what he sought to do in parliament:

“Dare to be a Daniel  
Dare to stand alone  
Dare to have a purpose firm  
Dare to make it known.”

... Whatever the scribes and the Pharisees may have to say about his life, it is from the words and kindnesses of those whose lives he touched that we – those who loved him most – take the greatest strength. After all, any life that inspires and encourages so many others is a life that was well lived.’

## The coalition splits over knife crime

It was always likely to happen as the coalition entered its final year; sooner or later one of the two coalition parties was going to gang up with the opposition to defeat the other partner on some electorally-potent issue. As it turned out, the issue was mandatory sentencing for the second

offence of possession of a knife in England and Wales. The Conservative backbencher Nick de Bois had consistently campaigned for tougher measures against knife crime; as in many areas of London, knife crime was a serious problem in his Enfield North constituency, and he put down two



The amendment would ensure that people aged over 18 caught carrying a knife for a second time would automatically get a six-month jail sentence

amendments at the report stage of the Serious Crime and Courts Bill, which would impose the compulsory sentences for both adults and minors.

This went beyond agreed coalition policy, but intensive campaigning by Mr de Bois had rallied support among Conservative backbenchers – and, as the vote approached, the party leadership decided to allow them a free vote and instructed Conservative ministers to abstain. Labour also backed the proposal – and so when they joined forces with the Conservatives the Lib Dem side of the coalition found itself outvoted.

Conservative Tim Loughton, a former Children’s Minister, said gang culture was reaching primary schools

In the debate, Mr de Bois said the current sentences for possession were



‘little more than an occupational hazard’. His amendment would ensure that people aged over 18 caught carrying a knife for a second time would automatically get a six-month jail sentence – those aged over 16 would get a detention and training order of at least four months. The courts, he said, should send a clear message – particularly to the two and a half thousand 10–17-year-olds caught with a knife in the previous year.

The Conservative Tim Loughton, a former children’s minister, said gang culture was reaching primary schools, and younger children were copying older gang members whom they saw carrying knives. Mr de Bois agreed – the ‘journey to destruction’, as he called it, involved picking up and carrying a knife for the first time.

Labour’s justice spokesman Andy Slaughter said that in his home borough of Hammersmith and Fulham there had been more than 800 knife crimes since 2010 – and in the previous year more than half the murders in London had been committed with a knife. He supported Mr de Bois – but a key reason for his support was that judges would be able to use discretion in exceptional cases. And he noted that, in 2011, the Liberal Democrats had supported mandatory sentencing for people who used a knife in a threatening way. He could not see any distinction of principle between that measure and this one.

The Liberal Democrat Julian Huppert retorted there was a simple distinction: brandishing a knife at people was a far more serious matter than carrying a knife. In the first case, a direct threat was being made; in the second, the knife might be for personal protection – and he mocked Labour for supporting mandatory sentences, so long as there was discretion.

A note of caution came from the Conservative Sir Edward Garnier, a



former solicitor general, who said MPs should consider why judges did not always give a prison sentence for possession of a knife, adding some of the most difficult cases involved

younger teenagers who would not be caught by Mr de Bois' amendments. But when it came to the vote MPs voted 404 to 53 in favour of introducing mandatory sentences.

## A hero's welcome – David Cameron reports back to the Commons

For a leader outvoted 26 to 2 by his fellow EU leaders, David Cameron received a near-ecstatic welcome from his troops when he arrived to deliver a statement to a noisy House of Commons on the decisions reached by the Ypres Council of Ministers.

'I always knew he had lead in his pencil,' said Eurosceptic backbencher Stewart Jackson. Pro-EU Tory Richard Ottaway said Mr Cameron had stood up for British interests. Former cabinet minister Peter Lilley compared him to Mrs Thatcher. Backbencher James Duddridge noted his stand had gone down very well in Southend.

The Prime Minister's objections to Mr Juncker – whom he criticised as an old-guard EU federalist – had been overridden, but his party united around him. The Labour leader Ed Miliband and a parade of Labour ex-ministers accused Mr Cameron of grandstanding and alienating allies, who might have helped block the appointment. It was, Mr Miliband said, a gloomy precedent for the Prime Minister's planned renegotiation of Britain's EU membership, which was to precede his promised referendum: 'His renegotiation strategy is in tatters. We know where it would end, he would be caught in

The Prime Minister's objections to Mr Juncker were overridden by his fellow EU leaders, but his party united around him





Mr Cameron said it was a point of principle for him that the EU presidency should be determined by national leaders

the gulf between his backbenchers who want to leave and what he can negotiate ... The Prime Minister has failed over Mr Juncker; he was outwitted, outmanoeuvred, out-voted.'

Mr Cameron retorted that previous British leaders would have been able simply to veto an unacceptable candidate for the presidency. But Labour governments had given that right away. And it was a point of principle for him that the presidency should be determined by national leaders, not by the voting in the European Parliament elections – that was an erosion of national sovereignty.

A series of MPs – notably pro-EU Conservative Sir Nicholas Soames – suggested there was a potential pro-reform alliance within the EU, and urged the Prime Minister to seek like-minded allies. The Liberal Democrat Charles Kennedy rebuked Mr Cameron for taking the Conservative MEPs out

of the pan-EU European People's Party, where he might have been able to block Mr Juncker's candidacy before it had even started. He could have had 'influence in private rather than impotence in public', Mr Kennedy said.

Meanwhile, some on Mr Cameron's own side put down markers for that renegotiation. Sir Peter Tapsell criticised the free movement of labour across the EU. Christopher Chope called for 'revision, if not abolition' of the Working Time Directive. Jacob Rees-Mogg called for Britain not to opt into the European Arrest Warrant, and Robert Halfon called for a cut in the EU budget.

Some backbench Tory voices hinted at problems to come. Douglas Carswell asked simply: 'What would have to happen for my Rt Hon Friend to come back from his negotiation and recommend that people vote "Out"?' Mark Reckless recalled the Labour Prime Minister Harold Wilson's promise to win 'big and significant improvements on the previous terms' in his 1975 renegotiation of British membership, with the implication that what was actually delivered was only cosmetic. Mr Cameron replied that he was confident he could deliver the changes he sought.

These exchanges were just another episode in the continuing debate over Britain's place in – or out of – the EU, a debate which has become increasingly important with the rise of UKIP, and the approach of the general election.

## The Lords debate assisted dying

After a marathon ten-hour debate that saw speeches from 130 peers, the House of Lords gave a second reading to a carefully-limited Bill intended to allow terminally ill people choice over how they die. It was an impressive, intense debate, with speakers including an archbishop, an ex-archbishop, senior lawyers,

doctors, judges and a severely disabled peer. Personal experiences were related and the theological, philosophical and practical implications were discussed.

The Bill was presented by Lord Falconer, who served as lord chancellor under Tony Blair. He proposed that doctors

should be permitted to prescribe lethal medications to patients judged to have less than six months to live. The present law forced many people facing a painful death to hoard drugs or put a plastic bag over their head, and they died alone to avoid implicating family or carers in their suicide. His Bill would not mean more death, but less suffering.

He was opposed by another former lord chancellor, Lord Mackay of Clashfern, who asked if it could be compassionate to confront a dying person with such a decision; but he did not want the Bill to be rejected at this stage, to allow further debate on the issue. Also opposed was the Most Rev John Sentamu, the Archbishop of York, who rejected the idea that assisted dying was 'an assertion of human freedom'.

Baroness Greengross, a former director general of Age Concern, focused on the need to help people who have become incapacitated and are physically unable to end their lives without help. They should have the same rights as the able-bodied, she said.

One of the most moving speeches came from Baroness Campbell of Surbiton, who has spinal muscular atrophy. Speaking from her wheelchair, she said the Bill was about her, and people like her. 'It frightens me because in periods of greatest difficulty I might be tempted to use it,' she said.

A similar view came from the Conservative former cabinet minister Lord Tebbit, who spoke of his wife, who was injured in the 1984 IRA bombing in Brighton. Carers were all too familiar with the moments of 'black despair' in which those they cared for would wish they were dead so their loved ones could get on with their lives, he said. And he warned that there would be plenty of human and corporate 'vultures' with an interest in pushing people into assisted death.



Lord Falconer proposed that doctors should be permitted to prescribe lethal medications to patients judged to have less than six months to live

On the other side of the argument, Lord Carey, the former Archbishop of Canterbury, said he now believed assisted dying was 'quite compatible' with being a Christian, and the Conservative Baroness Wheatcroft described her mother's last agonised hours. She would have seized the option to die, she said.

The Bill was given its second reading without a vote, with even its opponents arguing that a chance to examine the issues it raised in detail, in committee-stage debate, would be valuable. But, even if it is ultimately approved by the Lords, the Bill looks unlikely to be given debating time in the Commons, and so stands little chance of becoming law. But it will add to pressure for the next government to act, after the 2015 election.



Baroness Campbell of Surbiton



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