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**Thursday**  
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**PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES**  
**(HANSARD)**

# **HOUSE OF LORDS**

## **WRITTEN STATEMENTS AND WRITTEN ANSWERS**

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[I] indicates that the member concerned has a relevant registered interest. The full register of interests can be found at <http://www.parliament.uk/mps-lords-and-offices/standards-and-interests/register-of-lords-interests/>

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<b>Baroness Wheeler</b>	Deputy Chief Whip

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# Written Statements

*Thursday, 9 January 2025*

## Independent Review of the Windsor Framework

[HLWS354]

**Baroness Anderson of Stoke-on-Trent:** My Rt Hon Friend the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (Hilary Benn) has today made the following statement:

On 10 December, the Northern Ireland Assembly held a vote on the continued application of Articles 5-10 of the Windsor Framework. On 12 December, the Speaker of the Assembly formally wrote to me confirming that the motion passed with a majority of the elected members voting in favour, but not with cross-community support.

As set out in Schedule 6A of the Northern Ireland Act 1998, this obliges me to commission an Independent Review into the functioning of the Framework, in accordance with paragraphs 7-9 of the Unilateral Declaration of October 2019. I have today commissioned the Right Honourable Lord Murphy of Torfaen to conduct this Review.

Lord Murphy previously served in Government as Minister of State for Northern Ireland, Secretary of State for Northern Ireland and Secretary of State for Wales. In his many years of public service, he has shown a deep understanding of the bonds between the nations of the United Kingdom, and an appreciation of the operation of all three strands of the Good Friday Agreement to which the Government is committed. This experience and knowledge, and the high regard in which he is held across communities in Northern Ireland, will be valuable as he undertakes the Review.

Lord Murphy will work to provide me with a report of the Review's conclusions, no later than six months from today, on the functioning of the Windsor Framework and its implications for social, economic and political life in Northern Ireland, and on the UK Internal Market, including any recommendations. I have today placed a copy of the Review's Terms of Reference in the Library of the House.

Following receipt of the Review's report, I shall lay a copy of it before Parliament and respond to its recommendations in accordance with my duties under the law.

## Irregular Migration and Organised Immigration Crime

[HLWS355]

**Baroness Chapman of Darlington:** My Rt Hon Friend the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs (David Lammy) has today made the following statement:

Today I am updating the House on my plans to use sanctions to tackle irregular migration and organised immigration crime.

People smuggling is a challenge to global security. Criminal networks are making huge profits exploiting vulnerable people by facilitating irregular migratory movements, including dangerous sea crossings across Europe.

As Foreign Secretary, I will ensure the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office uses every tool at its disposal to tackle the challenges posed by irregular migration as part of the Government's wider effort to secure our borders.

I am therefore pleased to inform the House that the FCDO will develop legislation for a new sanctions regime targeting irregular migration and organised immigration crime. This shows further UK innovation in mobilising sanctions to tackle evolving threats that matter at home and abroad. The sanctions regime will allow the Government to take further robust action against the people smuggling gangs and their enablers.

The FCDO is also working to deliver more returns arrangements, and more projects and programmes to tackle irregular migration at source.

In this way, the FCDO will use the widest possible toolkit to smash the people smuggling gangs and tackle the challenges posed by irregular migration to deliver the Government's Plan for Change.

## Written Answers

Thursday, 9 January 2025

### Deer and Squirrels: Forests

Asked by *The Earl of Caithness*

To ask His Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answers by Baroness Hayman of Ullock on 3 January (HL3645 and HL3646), what are their considerations on the impact of deer and grey squirrels on woodlands; whether they have consulted any stakeholders; and if so, who. [HL3728]

**Baroness Hayman of Ullock:** Defra is responsible for woodlands in England, and we are considering how to go further to reduce the impacts of grey squirrels and deer on our woodlands. We recognise the pressure on new and existing woodlands from the increasing damage caused by over-foraging of young trees and woodland flora by wild deer and from squirrels stripping bark from trees. In England this damage is primarily from grey squirrels due to their prevalence. As part of routine policy development, the department regularly engages with a variety of stakeholders, including the UK Squirrel Accord and the Deer Initiative Partnership.

### Nitrogen Dioxide: Greater Manchester

Asked by *Lord Berkeley*

To ask His Majesty's Government what discussions they have had with the Greater Manchester Combined Authority to ensure that its legal obligations to reduce nitrogen dioxide are met. [HL2245]

**Baroness Hayman of Ullock:** Officials from the Defra/Department for Transport Joint Air Quality Unit

have been in regular contact and discussion with those in Greater Manchester Combined Authority, through Transport for Greater Manchester, throughout their development. We are currently considering the Greater Manchester proposals and will respond shortly.

### Prisons: Repairs and Maintenance

Asked by *Lord Balfe*

To ask His Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Timpson on 16 December 2024 (HL3055), what is their timescale for tendering new contracts for prison maintenance service providers. [HL3714]

**Lord Timpson:** The Government is currently running a competitive tender process that aims to award new contracts for the provision of maintenance services for prisons by December 2025.

Asked by *Lord Balfe*

To ask His Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Timpson on 16 December 2024 (HL3055), what recent assessment they have made of the value and performance of current prison maintenance service providers. [HL3715]

**Lord Timpson:** The value and performance of the Department's private-sector service providers are subject to ongoing contract management, and current performance is in line with expected parameters.

As contracts approach expiry, assessments are conducted to inform decisions about future services. A 2023 assessment in partnership with the Cabinet Office determined that a privatised solution was the preferred option for future prison maintenance services. These contracts will be competitively tendered.

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