ADEPT: Parliamentary monitoring

May 2016

This document is tailored to provide a monthly overview of key activity, debates, questions, reports, PMQs, speeches and bills relevant to the Association of Directors of Environment, Economy, Planning and Transport.

Key dates

18 May: The State Opening

26 May: Whitsun, House of Commons and House of Lords rises

06 June: Whitsun, House of Commons and House of Lords returns

Planning – starter homes

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| Date | Type | Organisation | Notes |
| 03 May | Housing and Planning Bill | House of Commons | During the consideration of Lords amendments for the Housing and Planning Bill Housing Minister Brandon Lewis MP reiterated the governments plan to replace higher-value social housing with affordable homes. The full transcript is available: [here](https://hansard.parliament.uk/Commons/2016-05-03/debates/16050323000001/HousingAndPlanningBill). |
| 04 May | Written Q&A | DCLG | Starter Home Initiative: Written question – 32811 Asked by [**Julian Sturdy**](http://www.parliament.uk/biographies/commons/julian-sturdy/4079) (York Outer)  Asked on: 08 April 2016  **Department for Communities and Local Government**  **Starter Home Initiative**  To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, what estimate his Department has made of the number of housing development sites which were previously seen as financially unviable that may now be developed under the Starter Home initiative.  Answered by: [**Brandon Lewis**](http://www.parliament.uk/biographies/commons/brandon-lewis/4009) on: 04 May 2016  The Department does not hold this information. The Housing and Planning Bill and national planning policy changes will set the framework to deliver our starter homes commitment; and once in force will apply to all housing development planning applications. Section 106 agreements may of course be re-negotiated at any time by mutual consent. Planning guidance is clear that local planning authorities should be flexible in their requirements, taking into account site specific circumstances and changing circumstances, including regarding viability. |
| 04 May | Written Q&A | DCLG | Starter Home Initiative: Written question – 32808 Asked by [**Julian Sturdy**](http://www.parliament.uk/biographies/commons/julian-sturdy/4079) (York Outer) on: 08 April 2016  **Department for Communities and Local Government**  **Starter Home Initiative**  To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, what assessment he has made of the potential effect of the Starter Home scheme on the level of home ownership among people under 40 years of age.  Answered by: [**Brandon Lewis**](http://www.parliament.uk/biographies/commons/brandon-lewis/4009) on: 04 May 2016  Over the last twenty years, the proportion of under 40 year olds who own their home has fallen by over a third from 61% to 38%, and the average house price to earnings ratio for successful first time buyers is now 4.3 compared to 2.7 in 1993.  The Government is determined to change this and ensure that more young people can afford to buy their own home. That’s why we are committed to building 200,000 starter homes to provide affordable homes for purchase with a minimum 20% discount for first-time buyers under the age of 40.  Starter homes are an important innovation to improve the level of home ownership in this age category. |
| 05 May | Housing and Planning Bill | House of Lords | During the consideration of Commons amendments for the Housing and Planning Bill saw a debate on starter homes, including the exemptions for rural areas and the percentage of the discount to be paid back on resale and the revised amendments on local authorities retaining funding from housing sell-offs were agreed. The full debate is available: [here](https://hansard.digiminster.com/lords/2016-05-04/debates/16050461001406/HousingAndPlanningBill). |
| 10 May | Housing and Planning Bill | House of Commons | During the consideration of the Lords message peers discussed the starter homes retirement, like for like replacement of sold off social housing and community rights of appeal – disagreeing with the Lords on all counts. The Government have however committed to review energy efficiency standards for new homes as well as suitable drainage. The full debate is available: [here](https://hansard.parliament.uk/Commons/2016-05-09/debates/16050922000002/HousingAndPlanningBill). |
| 10 May | Comment | House of Lords Labour | Lord Roy Kennedy of Southwark, Shadow Housing Minister in the House of Lords comments on the latest round of ‘parliamentary ping-pong’ on the Housing and planning Bill. Lord Kennedy’s comments can be found: [here](http://www.labourlords.org.uk/concession_stand). |
| 11 May | Housing and Planning Bill | House of Lords | The Peers returned to issues surrounding starter homes in the Commons Reason and Amendments debate. The full debate is available: [here](https://hansard.parliament.uk/Lords/2016-05-10/debates/16051041000142/HousingAndPlanningBill). |
| 11 May | PMQs | Prime Ministers Office | [Victoria Prentis (Banbury) (Con)](https://hansard.parliament.uk/search/MemberContributions?house=Commons&memberId=4401) Q2. In Banbury and Bicester, we have unprecedented housing growth. Does the Prime Minister agree that we must build sufficient starter homes so that the dream of home ownership becomes something to which everybody can really aspire? [904963]  [The Prime Minister](https://hansard.parliament.uk/search/MemberContributions?house=Commons&memberId=1467) I thank my constituency neighbour and hon. Friend for raising that question. The fact is that we are building more houses, including more affordable homes, right across England. The legislation going through this House and the other place will ensure that we deliver on our manifesto pledge of 200,000 starter homes. Those are the homes that we want to see—affordable for people to buy. I hope that, even at this late stage, the Labour party and the House of Lords will stop blocking this Bill. |
| 12 May | Written Q&A | DCLG | Affordable Housing: Greater London: Written question - 36791  Asked by [**Mr David Lammy**](http://www.parliament.uk/biographies/commons/mr-david-lammy/206) (Tottenham)  Asked on: 09 May 2016  **Department for Communities and Local Government**  **Affordable Housing: Greater London**  To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, what estimate his Department has made of the number of affordable starter homes that will be built in (a) Tottenham, (b) Islington, (c) Barnet, (d) Haringey, (e) Enfield and (f) London in (i) 2016 and (ii) each of the next four years.  Answered by: [**Brandon Lewis**](http://www.parliament.uk/biographies/commons/brandon-lewis/4009) on: 12 May 2016  The Starter Homes policy is expected to deliver at least a 20% discount from market value on new homes built for first time buyers under 40 years of age. We recognise that first time buyers can face affordability pressures within parts of London which is why we want Starter Homes to make a significant contribution to housing delivery. The London £450k price cap is not an expectation of the going price for a Starter Home. In London in 2014, the average price paid by a first time buyer was £364k – which would equate to a starter homes price of £291k. We are consulting on starter homes regulations which will set the requirement for starter homes and any exemptions. The Department does not make assessments on the number of starter homes that are to be built by local authority area. |
| 13 May | Press release | DCLG | Landmark housing and Planning Bill receives Royal Assent. The full release is available: [here](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/landmark-housing-and-planning-bill-receives-royal-assent). |
| 18 May | Press release | Council of Mortgage Lenders | CML responds to starter homes initiative. The full article is available: [here](https://www.cml.org.uk/news/news-and-views/cml-responds-to-starter-homes-initiative/). |
| 18 May | Consultation | DCLG | DCLG’s consultation on the regulations to support the starter homes clauses in the Housing and Planning Bill will close on May 27th 2016. More information on the consultation can be found: [here](https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/starter-homes-regulations-technical-consultation). |
| 19 May | Consultation | London First | Starter homes policy should be devolved to the Mayor – London First responds to the Government’s consultation. More details are available: [here](http://londonfirst.co.uk/starter-homes-policy-should-be-devolved-to-the-mayor/). |

Planning – housing planning

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| Date | Type | Organisation | Notes |
| 18 May | Research briefing | House of Commons Library | The House of Commons library publishes a research briefing on planning reform proposals. The briefing can be downloaded: [here](http://researchbriefings.parliament.uk/ResearchBriefing/Summary/SN06418#fullreport). |

Planning – loss of employment land to residential development

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| Date | Type | Organisation | Notes |
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Economy – business rate retention

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| Date | Type | Organisation | Notes |
| 03 May | Written Q&A | DCLG | Non-domestic Rates: East Sussex: Written question - 35148  Asked by [**Caroline Ansell**](http://www.parliament.uk/biographies/commons/caroline-ansell/4512) (Eastbourne)  Asked on: 22 April 2016  **Department for Communities and Local Government**  **Non-domestic Rates: East Sussex**  To ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, whether he has made an estimate of the cost to East Sussex County Council of changes to business rate retention consequent to changes announced in Budget 2016; and if he will make a statement.  Answered by: [**Mr Marcus Jones**](http://www.parliament.uk/biographies/commons/mr-marcus-jones/4024) on: 03 May 2016  I refer the hon. Member for Eastbourne to the answer given to the hon. Member for Croydon North on 31 March to Question 31745. |
| 23 May | Report | Core Cities UK and Metro Dynamics | Core Cities UK and Metro Dynamics suggest that cities need a wide range of fiscal freedoms to deliver economic growth and whilst localised businesses rates is a welcome step it is not without risk and should be introduced as a programme and wider fiscal reform. The report is available: [here](http://www.corecities.com/what-we-do/publications/call-greater-fiscal-autonomy-our-cities). |

Transport – maintenance funding for transport

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| Date | Type | Organisation | Notes |
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Devolution deals

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| Date | Type | Organisation | Notes |
| 03 May | Oral Q&A | BIS | [James Morris (Halesowen and Rowley Regis) (Con)](https://hansard.parliament.uk/search/MemberContributions?house=Commons&memberId=3992) 2. What recent steps he has taken to (a) promote regional growth and (b) create a midlands engine. [904764]  [The Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills and President of the Board of Trade (Sajid Javid)](https://hansard.parliament.uk/search/MemberContributions?house=Commons&memberId=3945)     Share this contribution  We are absolutely committed to regional growth. We recently launched a further round of growth deals, and the March Budget highlighted the Government’s support for the midlands engine. It includes a £250 million midlands engine investment fund, new enterprise zones, and a devolution deal for Greater Lincolnshire worth £450 million. |
| 19 May | Oral Q&A | Business of the House | **Regional Devolution**  Justin Madders (Ellesmere Port and Neston) (Lab)  My local authority, Cheshire West and Chester Council, with Warrington Borough Council and Cheshire East Council, is locked in talks with the Department for Communities and Local Government about a devolution deal for the area. I welcome devolution in principle, but there seems to be a strange insistence on elected mayors. The area I am talking about is so broad and large, bordered by north Wales on one side and Greater Manchester on the other, that I question the suitability of an elected mayor. May we have a debate on the necessity of elected mayors in areas outside city regions?  Chris Grayling  The whole point of the devolution package is that we are offering additional powers to local communities, but we need them to come to use with a credible governance structure for managing those additional powers. A variety of deals are being done across the country. Not all are identical and not all involve the same structures for local government; the one thing they have in common is that to go ahead, we have to have confidence that they can deliver what is necessary. I am sure that is no different in Cheshire. |

Environment – on shore oil and gas

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| Date | Type | Organisation | Notes |
| 06 May | Debate | House of Lords | Question for short debate: Lord Lucas – to ask Her Majesty’s Government what assessment they have made of the case for a new generation of polytechnics to address the technical skills gap? – On shore oil is discussed within, the full debate can be found: [here](https://hansard.parliament.uk/Lords/2016-05-05/debates/160505104000508/Polytechnics). |
| 09 May | Press release | BIS | Government confirms £80 million for National Colleges to deliver the workforce of tomorrow. A National College for on shore oil and gas is announced, the hub to be located in Blackpool. The full release is available: [here](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/government-confirms-80-million-for-national-colleges-to-deliver-the-workforce-of-tomorrow). |

Environment – fracking

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| Date | Type | Organisation | Notes |
| 10 May | Press release | Prospect | Prospect conference rejects ‘amber light’ for fracking – ‘conditional support’ for shale gas exploration was rejects at Prospect’s national conference. The full press release is available: [here](https://www.prospect.org.uk/news/id/2016/May/10/Prospect-conference-rejects-amber-light-fracking). |
| 10 May | Science and Technology Committee | House of Commons | **Science Communication**  **Engaging public confidence**  Monaghan asked Wingham how NERC could engage public confidence with such controversial issues as fracking.  Wingham said NERC wanted to engage, and already did, with local authorities, parish councils and individuals to address their concerns scientifically to demonstrate NERC was working on their behalf.  (Professor Duncan Wingham, Chief Executive of the Natural Environment Research Council) |
| 11 May | Debate – Steel industry | House of Common | Anna Soubry states that fracking could have a positive effect on the steel industry, “One piece of work that I am determined to carry on doing relates to fracking. There is a huge job that can be done that will have huge benefits for our steel industry . I will speak bluntly: we have to get on with fracking. I met representatives of that industry only recently. We know that fracking could have real benefits for our steel industry . It was a great joy and pleasure to go to the plant in Hartlepool, which also has excellent unions, good management and an outstanding workforce and is hugely important for that community. They make an outstanding product. They do not make the seamless pipes that have to be used for fracking, but I do not see why we cannot look at making their pipes absolutely compliant so that they can be used.” The full debate is available: [here](https://hansard.parliament.uk/Commons/2016-05-11/debates/16051154000001/SteelIndustry). |
| 12 May | Oral Q&A | DECC | **Oil and Gas: North Sea**  ngIf: !isBackOfficeUser() ngInclude: 'partials/document/view/content.html'  ngIf: isBackOfficeUser()  ngIf: parsedDocumentLength > 1 ngIf:  **Hannah Bardell (Livingston) (SNP)**  17. What steps she is taking to increase exploration for oil and gas in the North sea. [905009]  **The Minister of State, Department of Energy and Climate Change (Andrea Leadsom)**  This year the Government have pulled out all the stops to support the oil and gas sector. This includes a fiscal package worth £1.3 billion over five years, £20 million for new seismic surveys and, of course, our core policy of establishing the Oil and Gas Authority, whose job is to maximise economic recovery from the North sea. This is a vital UK industry, and we are totally committed to keeping the UK continental shelf as an attractive destination for investment, securing hundreds of thousands of jobs.  **Hannah Bardell**  I thank the Minister for her answer, and I do appreciate the work that is being done. However, while the SNP welcomes the support announced in the Budget and what has been done, those who have lost their jobs in the north-east would not necessarily agree with her characterisation. It is essential that we listen to those in the industry who are calling for a strategic review of the fiscal and regulatory regime. What steps are being taken to review the tax rates and the investment allowance?  **Andrea Leadsom**  As I said, the Treasury has already taken enormous steps through fiscal policy towards the North sea to promote further oil and gas exploration. It is constantly looking at that; in fact, I am having a dinner next week to talk again to the maximising economic recovery group of operators and investors, the Oil and Gas Authority and so on to look at what more we can do, and the Treasury plays its full part in that.  However, we have to be clear that the Oil and Gas Authority is already transforming things such as production costs and the level of co-operation between different operators in the North sea. This is an incredibly important area. We have an inter-ministerial group, which I think is meeting again next week to discuss what more can be done. We are pulling out all the stops for the North sea.  **Mr Peter Lilley (Hitchin and Harpenden) (Con)**  Although I sympathise with the constituents of the hon. Member for Livingston (Hannah Bardell) who have lost their jobs in the North sea, would not the best thing for them be for us to create new jobs by allowing fracking in Scotland for those very people, with those skills, who have been denied the prospect of such jobs by the hypocrisy of the SNP Government in Scotland?  **Andrea Leadsom**  I absolutely agree. Obviously, it is a matter for the Scottish Government to decide, but one of the policy options I am looking at in my Department, together with the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills, is what more we can do in the energy space for those who have lost their jobs. For example, an experienced offshore engineer may well be able to retrain to work with offshore wind or even nuclear. There are therefore other opportunities in the energy space, and I know the Scottish Government are looking at that. I would certainly be delighted if they wanted to think again about the importance of shale gas. |
| 12 May | Oral Q&A | DECC | **Fracking**  **Michael Tomlinson (Mid Dorset and North Poole) (Con)**  T3. I have been contacted by a number of constituents who are concerned about fracking in Dorset. What reassurance can the Minister give to me and to my constituents about environmental considerations, about issues of public consultation and letting local residents have their say, and, importantly, about fracking being considered only in appropriate locations? [904979]  **The Minister of State, Department of Energy and Climate Change (Andrea Leadsom)**  I can absolutely assure my hon. Friend that the UK has more than 50 years of safely regulating onshore and offshore oil and gas. We have the best regulatory environment in the world. The Environment Agency looks very carefully at any proposals for hydraulic fracturing, the Health and Safety Executive monitors all activity in that area, and of course local authorities will consult widely with their local communities. I am desperate for local communities to be given the proper facts—that is a really important part of the job for us and for local authorities to do. |
| 12 May | Oral Q&A | DECC | **Fracking: Ryedale**  **Lisa Nandy (Wigan) (Lab)**  I think that people across the country will be really concerned by the lack of an answer in the response just given by the Minister. They will also be looking very closely at Ryedale, where North Yorkshire County Council is set imminently to make a decision about whether fracking should be given the green light there. If so, will she extend the same courtesy to that community as she has extended to communities affected by wind farms and promise the people of Ryedale that she will not override their wishes and impose fracking against their will?  **Andrea Leadsom**  With regard to the industry for hydraulic fracturing, safety is absolutely paramount. If there was any likelihood, chance or risk of any of the issues in the scare stories that the hon. Lady likes to propagate being real, this Government would not be looking at promoting this vital industry. We provide 40% of our own natural gas; the rest is imported from overseas. It is vital for our energy security that we continue to use home-grown resources wherever we can. It is also a massive jobs and growth opportunity for very many communities where employment is desperately needed, and she should take some interest in that. |
| 12 May | Oral Q&A | DECC | **Fracking: Ryedale**  **Rachael Maskell (York Central) (Lab/Co-op)**  T4. I am going to push the Minister of State further on fracking, because a week tomorrow an important decision will be made. In Ryedale, one energy company wants to frack the beautiful landscape just south of the North York Moors national park . More than 4,000 well- informed local people want to protect their local community and environment. Who should have the greatest influence? [904981]  **Andrea Leadsom**  I say again: the shale industry is vital to the UK’s energy security future, and we absolutely support the idea of local consultation and local people having their say, but as in all planning matters—[Interruption.] If the hon. Member for Wigan (Lisa Nandy) could just stop chuntering for one minute—every time I try to answer a question, she chunters. There is a balance between the absolutely right case that local people should have their say, and the national interest. That is why there is a very clear local consultation process, and that is why the people of Ryedale will have their views taken into account and the local authority will balance up those interests. |
| 12 May | Oral Q&A | DECC | **Fracking**  **Michelle Donelan (Chippenham) (Con)**  Does the Minister agree that historic market towns built for the horse and cart, such as Bradford on Avon in my constituency, could not cope, because they do not have the infrastructure, with the extra traffic that fracking will bring?  **Andrea Leadsom**  I absolutely think that is one of the factors any local authority planning committee will take into account. That is precisely the point of having local authority involvement and a community say, because local people of course know best what is suitable for their area. Local planning is one aspect of this, but the whole safety regulatory environment—the Health and Safety Executive and the Environment Agency —is, nevertheless, absolutely vital. I assure my hon. Friend that there will be no compromise either on safety or on the view of the local community. |
| 13 May | Press statement | Friends of the Earth | **Fracking Decision: Friends of the Earth Respond**  Planners Recommend Fracking in Ryedale, Campaigners Say Battle Not Over  Responding to North Yorkshire County Councils’ recommendation regarding Third Energy’s planning application to frack in Ryedale, Friends of the Earth ’s Yorkshire campaigner, Simon Bowens, said:  "While it is disappointing that planning officers have dismissed the serious risks of fracking in Ryedale, Third Energy shouldn’t be popping champagne corks yet.  “North Yorkshire Councillors have been presented with clear evidence that Third Energy's application could harm local wildlife, local business, people's health and the environment - including from Ryedale District Council, Flamingo Land and the Wildlife Trust.  "The council must now listen to the thousands of residents who have objected to fracking, and the strong evidence put before them, and reject Third Energy's proposal to frack ”. |
| 23 May | Press release | Green Party | Ryedale anti-fracking campaigners have the full support of the Green Party. The full press release is available: [here](https://www.greenparty.org.uk/news/2016/05/23/ryedale-anti-fracking-campaigners-have-the-full-support-of-the-green-party/). |

Environment – nuclear

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| Date | Type | Organisation | Notes |
| 04 May | Written Q&A | BIS | Energy: Industry: Written question - 35693  Asked by [**Mr Douglas Carswell**](http://www.parliament.uk/biographies/commons/mr-douglas-carswell/1527) (Clacton) on: 26 April 2016  **Department for Business, Innovation and Skills**  **Energy: Industry**  To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills, if he will make a comparative assessment of energy costs for heavy industry in the UK and in other EU countries.  Answered by: [**Anna Soubry**](http://www.parliament.uk/biographies/commons/anna-soubry/3938) on: 04 May 2016  UK industrial gas prices are among the lowest in Europe, while electricity prices are among the highest. Industrial energy use overall is split relatively evenly between electricity, gas and other fuels.  We are addressing the fundamental causes of the UK’s relatively high electricity costs, through:   * Short-term cost control measures, including the Levy Control Framework actions on solar and onshore wind, announced in summer 2015; * Longer term measures including investment in new energy infrastructure (such as nuclear); and interconnection with French, Belgian and Norwegian networks which should help to reduce the difference between the electricity prices here and in Continental Europe. |
| 06 May | Report | DECC | A note has been produced providing an overview of the current government’s energy policy. The note is available: [here](http://researchbriefings.parliament.uk/ResearchBriefing/Summary/CBP-7582). |
| 09 May | Written Q&A | DECC | Hinkley Point C Power Station: Written question - HL8161  Asked by [**Lord Stoddart of Swindon**](http://www.parliament.uk/biographies/lords/lord-stoddart-of-swindon/950) on: 03 May 2016  **Department for Energy and Climate Change**  **Hinkley Point C Power Station**  To ask Her Majesty’s Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth on 24 March (HL6984) concerning Hinkley Point nuclear power station, what effect the delay by the government of France will have on the project and its projected completion date.  Answered by: [**Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth**](http://www.parliament.uk/biographies/lords/lord-bourne-of-aberystwyth/4282) on: 09 May 2016  Both the French Government and EDF have restated their support for the Hinkley Point C project. After addressing the financing of the company and its investment plans, the chairman of EDF has begun a non-binding consultation with the company council ahead of a final investment decision. In the meantime, EDF has maintained development work in order to secure the overall schedule of the project. EDF has not changed the planned date for first operation in 2025. |
| 09 May | Press release | BIS | Government confirms £80 million for National Colleges to deliver the workforce of tomorrow. A National College for nuclear is announced, the hubs are to be located in Somerset and Cumbria. The full release is available: [here](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/government-confirms-80-million-for-national-colleges-to-deliver-the-workforce-of-tomorrow). |
| 12 May | Written Q&A | DECC | Hinkley Point C Power Station: Written question - 36948  Asked by [**Paul Flynn**](http://www.parliament.uk/biographies/commons/paul-flynn/545) (Newport West) on: 10 May 2016  **Department for Energy and Climate Change**  **Hinkley Point C Power Station**  To ask the Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change, what assessment she has made of the implications for her policy on the building of a nuclear power plant at Hinkley Point C of the finding of the UN Economic and Social Council in the Report of the Implementation Committee on its thirty-fifth session, page 21, that the UK is in non-compliance with its obligations to examine the potential adverse transboundary impacts of an accident at any new nuclear plant constructed in the UK.  Answered by: [**Andrea Leadsom**](http://www.parliament.uk/biographies/commons/andrea-leadsom/4117) on: 12 May 2016  Compliance with international obligations is something we take very seriously. The proposed recommendations published by the Implementation Committee are still subject to adoption by the Meeting of the Parties to the Espoo Convention at their next meeting which is due to take place in June 2017.  We are confident that we have met the relevant international requirements in relation to Hinkley Point C, however we will consider the Implementation Committee’s report in advance of the meeting. |
| 12 May | Oral Q&A | DECC | **Energy Bills**  **Lisa Nandy**  The absurdity of the situation appears to be completely lost on the Secretary of State, but as she has been on this panic spending spree recently perhaps I could ask her another question. She recently announced generous subsidies to EDF, the big energy company that operates Britain’s nuclear fleet. She has agreed to hand over £153 million in 2018 and a further £139 million the following year to subsidise nuclear power stations that would have been open in any case. Is she aware of the recent news that the cost of Hinkley Point C is set to rise to £21 billion, which is £3 billion more than was forecast? What is her estimate of the cost to bill payers and taxpayers in the UK of this new revised figure?  **Amber Rudd**  I am concerned that the hon. Lady did not hear my answer to her earlier question. The fact is that energy security has to be the priority of government. In bringing forward changes to the capacity market, we have made sure that, with low wholesale prices, we have sufficient energy during the next two years. She just reveals her total lack of understanding of getting the right balance on secure electricity—nuclear and, yes, in the short term, coal —which supports our renewable investment, keeps bills low and ensures that customers always have a good supply of electricity. |
| 12 May | Oral Q&A | DECC | **Hinkley Point C**  **Kevin Foster (Torbay) (Con)**  The Secretary of State will be aware of the continuing speculation about the Hinkley Point C project. Will she reassure me that, in any assessment of it, the Government will bear it in mind that it could create 25,000 jobs in the south-west during the construction period? Those are the skilled jobs that this economy desperately needs.  **Amber Rudd**  I thank my hon. Friend for that question and for giving me the opportunity to say how much this Government support the Hinkley Point project. We are delighted to be able to say that we expect it to go ahead and to deliver much-needed clean, secure, affordable energy. This Government are focused on a new nuclear programme, not only with Hinkley Point but with other new nuclear, because we are doing what the Labour party so dismally failed to do for 13 years, namely deliver on investment in infrastructure to the benefit of all consumers. |
|  | Press release | NSSG | The Nuclear Skills Strategy Group welcomes £15 million in funding to support the creation of the previously announced National College for Nuclear. The full press release is available: [here](http://www.niauk.org/news/2353-nssg-welcomes-15-million-government-funding-for-nuclear-skills-nssg-welcomes-15-million-government-funding-for-nuclear-skills). |
| 23 May | Written Q&A | DECC | Nuclear Reactors: Somerset: Written question - 37290  Asked by [**Lisa Nandy**](http://www.parliament.uk/biographies/commons/lisa-nandy/4082) (Wigan) on: 18 May 2016  **Department for Energy and Climate Change**  **Nuclear Reactors: Somerset**  To ask the Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change, what discussions her Department has had with other government departments on the potential for the construction of new nuclear reactors in Somerset independent of the proposals by EDF at Hinkley Point C.  Answered by: [**Andrea Leadsom**](http://www.parliament.uk/biographies/commons/andrea-leadsom/4117) on: 23 May 2016  DECC has had no discussions with other government departments on the potential for the construction of new nuclear reactors in Somerset independent of the proposals by EDF at Hinkley Point C. |
|  |  |  | Nuclear Power Stations: China: Written question - 37126  Asked by [**Lisa Nandy**](http://www.parliament.uk/biographies/commons/lisa-nandy/4082) (Wigan) on: 18 May 2016  **Department for Energy and Climate Change**  **Nuclear Power Stations: China**  To ask the Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change, what representations the Government has received from (a) the Chinese government and (b) Chinese energy companies on the use of alternative nuclear technology to that proposed by EDF at Hinkley Point.  Answered by: [**Andrea Leadsom**](http://www.parliament.uk/biographies/commons/andrea-leadsom/4117) on: 23 May 2016  No representations have been received from (a) the Chinese Government, or (b) Chinese energy companies on the use of alternative nuclear technology to that proposed by EDF at Hinkley Point. |
| 24 May | Energy and Climate Change Committee | House of Commons | EDF Chiefs and Minister discuss Hinkley nuclear power station delays. Coverage not yet available. |