

Briefing

The Queen's Speech 2009 Introduction

Yesterday, the Queen addressed Parliament to set out the legislative agenda for the 2009/10 Parliamentary session. Nick Clegg described the event as "a waste of everyone's time" whilst David Cameron called the speech "the most divisive, short-termist [and] shamelessly self-serving... in living memory".

Whilst the comments are hardly impartial observations, they do highlight the two major criticisms levelled against the speech: first, that Gordon Brown hijacked it to road test Labour's election manifesto and second, given that an election is likely to be called at Easter, few of the bills will ever pass onto the statute books.

Certainly the agenda is a full one with ten new bills, two draft bills and three bills carried over from last year. The next general election must take place by 3 June 2010 but it is most likely to be scheduled to coincide with the local elections being held on 6 May. Even if the Prime Minister were to delay the election until the last possible moment, Parliament would sit for no more than 80 days before it is dissolved. A normal session can last anything from 140 to 200 days.

In the debate in the House of Commons that followed the Speech, Nick Clegg pointed out that just two of the bills proposed in last year's speech had been passed by May. He did not expect a different story this year.

Whilst Harriet Harman has said that the Government is determined to push the majority of the bills through, Conservative peers in the House of Lords will not make it easy. Labour lacks an overall majority in the Lords and the Conservatives will capitalise on this to delay the progress of the bills. Lord Strathclyde, the Conservative leader in the Lords, made it clear that he was in no

hurry to get the bills passed when he said that "it was too early to say which bills we will allow through, but we will have to look at each bill in turn".

So which bills are most likely to get through? A great deal of work has already been done on the three bills carried over from last year (the Equality Bill, the Constitutional Renewal and Governance Bill and the Child Poverty Bill). These are therefore in better shape to be passed into law. The Digital Economy Bill will start in the Lords which should also make for a smoother passage.

By including so many electorate-friendly policies, the Prime Minister has laid a series of traps for David Cameron: will he lend credibility to his rival by supporting his populist initiatives or will he take a stand and risk alienating voters? Legislation designed to curb excessive risk-taking in the banking sector and to ensure that more people receive personal care in their homes will be particularly hard for the Conservatives to navigate.

Given the shortened session and the imminent election, there is great potential for influencing the debate on all of the bills laid before Parliament yesterday. For further details contact Anthony Julius, Head of Public Advocacy on +44 20 7440 7025 or by e-mail to: anthony.julius@mishcon.com.

Agency Workers Regulations

Summary

Through the regulations, the UK is implementing the EU's Temporary Agency Workers Directive and giving protection to a group of workers that were excluded from certain benefits and rights available to permanent employees.

Sponsor

Department: Business, Innovation and Skills

Minister: The Minister for Business, Innovation and Skills, Pat McFadden MP

Website: www.berr.gov.uk

Digest

If passed, the bill would:

Place a duty on hirers of agency workers to guarantee equal treatment with permanent staff in relation to pay, holidays and other basic conditions, after 12 weeks in a given job.

Comment

The draft Agency Workers Regulations have recently been published in response to the Temporary Agency Workers Directive, which requires EU member states to implement protection for agency workers before December 2011. The Government announced its intention to introduce legislation to implement the Directive in January 2009.

The right to equal treatment applies once the agency worker has carried out

“My Government will legislate to provide agency workers with the right to be treated equally with permanent staff on pay, holidays and other basic conditions.”

the same role with the same hirer for a continuous period of 12 weeks. Equal treatment, i.e. the right not to be treated less favourably than staff employed direct by the hirer, applies to pay, working time and holiday. Agency workers will also be entitled to access the same on-site facilities as permanent staff, receive information about vacancies. It also guarantees risk assessments for pregnant and new mothers and time off for antenatal care. These latter rights are not subject to a 12 week qualifying period.

The Government has stated that the Regulations will become law during this Parliament, with a view to them coming into force in October 2011.

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Bribery Bill

Summary

The Bribery Bill's stated aim is to reform the criminal law to provide a new, modern and comprehensive scheme of bribery offences that will enable courts and prosecutor's to prosecute those involved in bribery within the UK or abroad. The Bill aims to "reinforce integrity in the business and public sectors", bring the UK in line with legislation in other jurisdictions and to ensure the UK complies with its international obligations to combat bribery wherever it is committed.

Sponsor

Department: Ministry of Justice

Minister: Jack Straw

Websites: parliament.uk | Joint Committee on the draft Bribery Bill
justice.gov.uk | Draft Bribery Bill (PDF)

Digest

If passed, the Bill would:

Provide a modern and consolidated piece of legislation to allow for the prosecution of bribery occurring in the private and public sectors both at home and abroad.

Comply with international obligations to combat bribery and corruption.

Ensure foreign nationals residing in the UK can be prosecuted for offences of bribery committed abroad.

Create a corporate offence of "negligent failure to prevent bribery" by commercial organisations where there is a failure to prevent bribery by those working on behalf of a company in order to support high ethical standards in business.

Create a new offence of bribing foreign officials.

Permit prosecution of MP's and Peers in relation to bribery offences and allow evidence from proceedings in Parliament to be considered as evidence.

Comment

Despite the existence of a number of government bodies, agencies and regulators in the UK, such as the Serious Fraud Office, the Financial Services Authority and the Office of Fair Trading, all of whom have a remit

to prosecute corrupt practices, the UK has an infamous reputation for failing to effectively tackle corruption. The present arsenal of criminal legislation and civil remedies have proved ineffective tools in dealing with corruption in an international context, especially in relation to the bribery of foreign public officials in the context of corporate liability.

In response to calls for bribery law reforms, the Government proposed a draft Bribery Bill in 2003, but failed to win cross-party support. Due to significant international criticism compounded by an international report published in October 2008 that noted the UK's failure to comply with its international obligations to modernise anti bribery laws, the Government published a draft Bill in March 2009.

The Bill seeks to reform the criminal law in relation to bribery and to establish a set of offences which will allow bribery to be tackled effectively. The Bill will make it an offence to offer or accept a bribe whether in the UK or abroad and will permit, for the first time, the prosecution of MPs and Peers involved in bribery.

One of the main aims of the Bill is to tackle bribery in the business world and ensure ethical and honest business practices are employed both at home and abroad, especially by UK companies procuring foreign contracts. The new law would have serious ramifications for any company who in the future finds itself under investigation for similar bribery offences as those alleged against BAE Systems.

The Bribery Bill has already received support from the Joint Committee of MPs appointed to review it. A Government response to the Committee's report is due to be published at the same time as the Bill on 20 November 2009. The Bribery Bill will hopefully send a clear and loud message that the UK is taking progressive and substantial steps towards combating bribery and corruption both at home and abroad.

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Children, Schools and Families Bill

“Legislation will be brought forward to introduce guarantees for pupils and parents to raise educational standards.”

Summary

The Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families states that the Bill will create “world class standards in schools, listening to parents, giving them more information and acting to protect vulnerable children”.

Sponsor

Department: The Department for Children, Schools and Families

Minister: The Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families, Ed Balls

Website: www.dcsf.gov.uk/21stcenturyschoolssystem/

Digest

If passed, the Bill would:

Create a series of specific entitlements for pupils and parents and provide a means of redress if expectations are not met.

Enable schools to have greater flexibility in how they spend their budgets. The Bill would also allow for the introduction of a new School Report Card.

Reform the Primary curriculum to provide greater flexibility for schools to tailor teaching to the needs and interests of their children while also focusing on the basics of literacy, numeracy and Information Communications Technology (ICT).

Put Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) on a statutory footing and ensure for the first time that all young people receive at least one year of sex and relationships education.

Introduce a new licensing system to “professionalise” the teaching profession and encourage schools to put professional development and teaching quality at the top of their agenda.

Strengthen the powers of local

authorities and others with regards to registration, inspection and intervention. Introduce a new home educators’ registration system.

Give new powers to government to intervene in youth offending teams that are failing and potentially putting young people and their communities at risk. Increase public confidence in family courts. The Bill includes a commitment to review the publication of information relating to family proceedings and report to Parliament.

Comment

The Bill pulls together three strands of the Government’s children’s policy.

The first, which follows the DCFS’s June 2009 Schools White Paper, picks up on Tony Blair’s 1997 election mantra “education, education, education”. This latest education reforming Bill proposes a predictable change of focus in these financially constrained times - central resourcing is to be focussed on problem schools with earlier interventions where necessary, whilst schools that are thriving will be given greater autonomy.

The White Paper talks of a “move away from big, centrally managed contracts for supporting school improvement, towards a system where school leaders will have more flexibility to decide their own priorities for school improvement support.” For which perhaps read, swingeing cuts in education expenditure to follow.

The other two elements of the Bill relate to Ministry of Justice policy relating to anti-social behaviour and greater transparency in the Family Courts.

As for the former, the Government is looking to provide better resourcing for Youth Offending Teams which were intended to offer a multi agency perspective to working with and changing behaviours amongst young offenders.

The later reform is a response to perceived secrecy in the workings

of the Family Courts in the wake of public outcry following the Baby Peter debacle. Although the Government's intention is to have identical rules governing reporting restrictions in the Family Courts to those that exist in the Youth Courts, the Family judiciary are divided on this. In particular, the concern amongst Family lawyers is that children who become involved in disputes between their parents have no choice in the matter. This is to be contrasted with children who are convicted of criminal offences in the Youth Courts.

In response, the Conservatives have said they "would bust open the supply of education so that any suitably qualified organisation could set up a new school anywhere they wished. To tackle the injustice of the poorest children going

to the worst schools they will introduce a new pupil premium, so there is a real incentive for schools to take on those from disadvantaged backgrounds."

Given the likely timing of the next election, it is highly doubtful whether the Bill will be passed during this parliament, if at all.

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Constitutional Reform and Governance Bill

Summary

The Bill contains a wide-range of measures all designed to strengthen democracy, reinforce the principle of Separation of Powers and encourage transparency in Westminster.

Sponsor

Department: Ministry of Justice

Minister: Secretary of State for Justice and Lord Chancellor, Jack Straw

Website: www.justice.gov.uk

Digest

If passed, the Bill would:

Place the Civil Service and Civil Service Commissioners on a statutory footing, enshrining the Civil Service's core values in statute.

Create a statutory basis for the Parliamentary scrutiny of Treaties, prior to their ratification.

End the by-election of hereditary peers to sit in the House of Lords.

Provide for the disqualification of peers convicted of a serious criminal offence or who are subject to a bankruptcy restriction order.

Provide a power for the House of Lords to expel or suspend a member, including the withholding of a writ of summons.

Allow peers to resign and disclaim their peerage.

Repeal legislation that limits protests around Parliament and replace it with a regime to guarantee access to Parliament.

Remove the Prime Minister from the process of appointments of the President, Deputy President and judges of the Supreme Court.

Comment

Those who were concerned to see the Constitutional Renewal Bill introduced and then immediately shelved last year, will be pleased to see that it has been re-introduced this session.

If passed, the Bill would give effect to a number of the reforms proposed in the 'Governance of Britain Green Paper' published in July 2007, including popular proposals to repeal the restrictions on protesting outside Parliament.

“Legislation will continue to be taken forward on constitutional reform.”

The main focus of the Bill is the reform of the House of Lords. The Bill details new rules for the selection, disqualification and resignation of peers. Some have speculated that the provision which will allow peers to resign and disclaim their peerage has been included specifically to enable Lord Mandelson to re-enter the Commons although the Minister has denied this.

One aspect of the old Constitutional Renewal Bill that has not made it to the new session is the proposal to allow the Commons a greater say in any decision to send British forces to war. This has been watered down to a draft House of Commons resolution setting out processes for the House to follow in order to approve any deployment of the Armed Forces.

Given that the motivation behind the Bill is constitutional renewal, it is surprising that it does not address the fallout from the expenses scandal. None of the recommendations set out in the Kelly Report (eleven of which require primary legislation in order to be implemented) have been included in the Bill.

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Digital Economy Bill

Summary

The Digital Economy Bill aims to strengthen the nation's communications infrastructures to equip the UK to be competitive in the global digital economy, to provide support for creative industries in the digital world and to improve digital security and safety.

vision for the present Government. That strategic vision was set out in the Government's White Paper entitled "Digital Britain: Final Report" published in June of this year. The White Paper contained a number of measures intended to put the UK at the leading edge of the global digital economy and to lift the UK out of the downturn.

"My Government will introduce a Bill to ensure communications infrastructure that is fit for the digital age, supports future economic growth, delivers competitive communications and enhances public service broadcasting."

Digest

If passed, the Bill would:

Tackle the problem of online infringement in two key ways First, by making legal action more effective and educating consumers about online copyright infringement. Second, through reserve powers (if needed) to introduce technical measures such as disconnection.

Support the plurality of independent and high quality news locally and in the regions, in particular giving Ofcom powers to appoint and fund independently funded news consortia. Give Ofcom new duties to promote investment in infrastructure and public service media content.

Enable investment in next generation mobile and work wireless broadband technologies through spectrum modernisation.

Update the regulatory framework to support the switchover to digital radio by 2015.

Update the functions of Channel 4 Corporation to include public service content on all media platforms (online as well as television).

Make ratings compulsory for boxed video games designed for those aged 12 or above.

Whilst the Government's stated aim in introducing the Digital Economy Bill is to put in place the legislative measures needed to deliver on the proposals contained in the White Paper, the Bill appears to contain a number of unconnected provisions and it remains to be seen whether it will meet the ambitious goals originally envisaged by the White Paper.

One key area that the Government has pushed ahead with, is the proposed introduction of sanctions for illegal file sharing, as first announced by Lord Mandelson in October 2008. The Bill will provide for offenders initially to be contacted and warned not to repeat the downloading coupled with additional education about copyright infringement online, aimed at deterring consumers from downloading illegal material in the first instance. The Bill does allow for further sanctions such as disconnecting consumers who download persistently. The measures have been welcomed by the music industry but others have complained that requiring internet service providers to police illegal downloading could be cumbersome and expensive. There have also been claims that disconnecting consumers from the internet may amount to a breach of their human rights.

The new powers given to Ofcom to appoint and fund new local and regional news providers may be welcomed by many, but lack substance as it is not clear how such funding will be provided.

The Bill includes many of the measures anticipated in the Digital Britain White Paper, but some of those measures have not been included. The Bill does not set out proposals to achieve the

Comment

Growth in the information and communications technology and digital industries has long been a strategic

Government's stated ambition that everyone in the UK will have access to high-speed broadband services 2012, apparently because that does not require separate legislation. The provisions for a £6 annual levy on all fixed line telephone bills to subsidise broadband growth was not included in the Bill but may be included in the Pre- Budget Statement next month.

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Energy Bill

“Legislation will be introduced to support carbon capture and storage and to help more of the most vulnerable households with their energy bills.”

Summary

The Bill implements the ‘Low Carbon Transition Plan’ set out by the Department of Energy and Climate Change in July 2009. The Plan plots how the UK can meet a 34 percent cut in emissions on 1990 levels by 2020. As well as actions to cut emissions, the bill also aims to provide financial support for energy consumers and to tackle fuel poverty.

Sponsor

Department: Department of Energy and Climate Change

Minister: Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change, Ed Milliband

Website: www.decc.gov.uk/default.aspx

Digest

If passed, the Bill would:

Provide new mechanisms for financial support to energy consumers.

Create new financial incentives for carbon capture and storage demonstration projects.

Establish new powers for the regulator Ofgem to regulate the market, increase competition and protect vulnerable consumers.

Comment

The Energy Bill seeks to provide for support to vulnerable consumers and to promote initiatives which support a move towards a low-carbon economy. It includes a £9.5bn levy on electricity suppliers to fund four demonstration carbon captures and storage coal power plants. The bill also establishes a compulsory social price support scheme

to help the most vulnerable households with their energy bills, and strengthen the powers of regulator Ofgem to refer market abuse to the competition commission.

The Bill will require energy suppliers to provide support, such as in the form of rebates, to poorer customers. Ofgem will have a duty to proactively assist vulnerable consumers.

Ofgem will be given additional powers to tackle market exploitation and increase competition. It will also have greater power to impose financial penalties for breaches of licence conditions.

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Equality Bill

“My Government is committed to ensuring everyone has a fair chance in life and will continue to take forward legislation to promote equality, narrow the gap between rich and poor and tackle discrimination. The Bill will also introduce transparency in the workplace to help address the differences in pay between men and women.”

Summary

The Minister for Women and Equality, Harriet Harman, stated that the Equality Bill “will promote fairness and equality of opportunity; tackle disadvantage and discrimination; and modernise and strengthen our law to make it fit for the challenges that our society faces today and in the future”.

Sponsor

Department: The Government Equalities Office

Minister: Minister for Women and Equality, Harriet Harman

Website: www.equalities.gov.uk/equality_bill.aspx

Digest

If passed, the Bill would:

Create a new public sector duty to narrow the gap between rich and poor.

Ban age discrimination outside the workplace; when buying or receiving goods and services like healthcare.

Introduce gender pay reports. Public authorities with more than 150 employees will be required to report on gender pay. Businesses with more than 250 employees will be asked to report on gender pay. If sufficient progress hasn't been made by 2013, legal powers will be used to require it.

Put a new Equality Duty on public bodies to consider the needs of diverse groups in the community when they design and deliver public services. It will cover race, disability, gender, and be extended to cover age, sexual orientation, religion or belief.

Use £200 billion worth of public procurement funds to drive equality in the private sector.

Strengthen the powers of employment tribunals.

Protect carers from discrimination. Protect pregnant women and new mothers from discrimination.

Ban discrimination in private clubs. Strengthen protection from discrimination for disabled people.

Summary

The Equality Bill was announced in the Queen's Speech last year. Since then, it has gone through the parliamentary process and is expected to have its first reading in the House of Lords shortly. There have been some amendments to the Bill as a result of the debate in the House of Commons but the bulk of the Bill has remained unchanged.

The Bill is an ambitious piece of legislation which will harmonise and in some cases extend existing discrimination law covering the “protected characteristics” of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation. It will introduce new types of disability discrimination to address the impact of recent case law and it will widen the definitions of direct discrimination and harassment to cover claims based on association and perception. The Bill will also broaden the scope of permitted positive action to allow employers to choose between two equally-qualified candidates by selecting one from an under-represented minority.

In relation to the public sector, the Bill will introduce a unified duty on public sector bodies to consider the needs of diverse groups in the community when

designing and delivering public services, including a new duty to promote socio-economic equality. The Bill will also provide for public procurement to be used to "drive equality" in the private sector. In addition, public employers with more than 150 employees will be required to publish reports on their gender pay gap.

Perhaps the most controversial proposal relates to gender pay reporting by private employers with more than 250 employees. Though initially voluntary, it is likely that the duty to review and publish the differences in pay between male and female employees will become compulsory in 2013. Publication will have to be made annually so as to track any changes in the pay gap and, presumably, to progress towards closing it. It is estimated that around 6,000 private employers will be affected, together employing in the region of 10 million workers.

The Government is committed to passing the Bill before the general election and intends that it will come into force in October 2010. Given the size and complexity of the Bill it remains to be seen whether the Government will be successful.

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Financial Services Bill

“My Government will continue to reform and strengthen regulation of the financial services industry to ensure greater protection for savers and taxpayers. Legislation will be brought forward to enhance the governance of the financial sector and to control the system of rewards.”

Summary

The aim of the Bill is to strengthen and reform financial regulation, support better corporate governance, and protect and empower consumers.

Sponsor

Department: HM Treasury

Minister: Chancellor of the Exchequer, Alistair Darling

Website: www.hm-treasury.gov.uk

Digest

If passed, the Bill would:

Establish a new statutory Council for Financial Stability ('the Council'), to replace the Standing Committee, chaired by the Chancellor and comprising the Treasury, Bank of England and the Financial Services Authority.

Strengthen the Financial Services Authority, including through providing explicit objectives, formalising its international work, and expanding the remit of the Financial Services Compensation Scheme.

Take action, nationally and internationally, on remuneration.

Impose tougher requirements on systemically important financial firms to set up recovery and resolution plans (ie 'living wills'), that will make banks safer and easier to wind down in the event of a future crisis.

Enable the roll-out of a national money guidance service, to be delivered by a new Consumer Financial Education Body.

Create better routes for consumer redress, including enabling a representative to bring an action through the courts on behalf of a group of consumers.

Streamline the FSA's powers to order a review of past business and secure compensation if there have been legal or regulatory breaches.

Prevent financial institutions from encouraging customers to borrow more than they can afford.

Summary

A number of measures are outlined in the proposed Financial Services Bill, all designed more or less to restore confidence in the financial system. If that is the Government's objective, few would argue with it. However, matters are at an early stage in the evolution of the Bill, and the Queen's Speech is relatively light on how it is proposed that the objectives are to be achieved. We pick out three areas particularly worthy of comment at this stage.

First, the role of the FSA. It is suggested that a new Council for Financial Stability will replace the Standing Committee and that the FSA will take its place within the new Council, alongside the Treasury and the Bank of England. There is also an intention to "strengthen" the FSA, including through "explicit objectives" (although it is not clear what each of these will entail). In some respects, the devil will be in the detail and we await knowing what that detail will be. It is difficult, however, to avoid the feeling that this might all be to no avail. Most commentators believe that the Labour government will not be re-elected next year. It has been much trumpeted that, if the Conservatives take power, they propose to do away with the FSA. If that is what happens, it may turn out that Labour's apparently best laid plans concerning the FSA will come to nothing.

Second, there is an emphasis on protecting and supporting consumers. The goal of protecting consumers is nothing new; indeed, it has been one of the four regulatory objectives enshrined

in the current legislation since the birth of the FSA. Our view is that one of the casualties of the recent events in the financial markets has been trust. Any measures that can properly be taken to help restore that trust are to be welcomed. In that connection, one of the interesting aspects to monitor is the proposal to help consumers achieve redress more efficiently, either through the FSA or through representative actions.

Third, the Government has decided to introduce additional measures aimed at curbing excessive risk-taking in the City. Significant steps have already been taken to address the issue of banks incentivising risk through their bonus schemes. On 18 March this year, the FSA released its draft code on remuneration practices. It was released a couple of weeks before the G20 Summit and was clearly intended to be an example of how to give practical effect to the principles on bankers' remuneration that were agreed at the Summit.

It now seems that the Government has decided that the Code did not go far enough. Under the new Bill, the FSA will be given powers to tear up contracts

signed by bankers and their employers after 1 January 2010 if it believes the pay structures encourage the individual to take irresponsible risks. The powers would apply equally to employees of British banks who work outside the UK.

In a statement released yesterday, the British Bankers' Association said: "while the sector welcomes reform, our concerns remain that moves to bind how our banks operate at home and overseas could put the industry at a serious disadvantage and discourage global banks from coming to the UK. This would be a major problem for jobs, the taxpayer and the wider economy as well as bad for business."

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Fiscal Responsibility Bill

“As the economic recovery is established, my Government will reduce the budget deficit and ensure that national debt is on a sustainable path. Legislation will be brought forward to halve the deficit.”

Summary

The Government's plan is to halve the deficit over four years and put debt on a sustainable path in the medium term. The Bill would put this plan on a statutory footing.

would need to borrow £175bn (12.4% of GDP).

In the debate in the House of Commons that followed the Queen's Speech, Nick Clegg described the Bill as “absurd” and questioned why the Government needed a law to oblige it to cut the deficit when, given the spiralling levels of debt, it should be seeking to do it anyway.

Sponsor

Department: The Treasury

Minister: The Chancellor of the Exchequer, Alistair Darling

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Digest

The Chancellor will set out full details in the Pre-Budget Report, alongside his fiscal forecast.

Comment

The national debt currently stands at around 50% of GDP. The Treasury predicts that this will peak at 76.2% in 2013 - 14. In the fiscal year 2009/10 Alistair Darling announced that Britain

Full list of bills

Bribery Bill

A bill to strengthen the law against bribery.

Children, Schools and Families Bill

A bill that provides guarantees for parents and pupils on teaching standards.

Cluster Munitions (Prohibitions) Bill

A bill to implement the UK's international obligations under the Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM) by creating prohibitions on the use, production and transfer of cluster munitions in the UK and by UK nationals.

Crime and Security Bill

A bill to protect communities by requiring parents to take responsibility for the anti-social behaviour of their children. The Bill would also introduce new powers to help victims of domestic violence.

Digital Economy Bill

A bill to ensure a communications infrastructure that is fit for the digital age.

Energy Bill

A bill to provide support for vulnerable energy consumers. It also creates new financial incentives for carbon capture and storage demonstration projects.

Financial Services Bill

A bill to strengthen and reform financial regulation.

Fiscal Responsibility Bill

A bill to halve the budget deficit over four years and put debt on a sustainable path in the medium term.

Flood and Water Management Bill

A bill to protect communities from flooding and to improve the management of water supplies.

Personal Care At Home Bill

A bill to provide free personal care at home for those with the highest needs, regardless of means.

Child Poverty Bill (re-introduced)

A bill to enshrine in law the commitment to eradicate child poverty by 2020.

Equality Bill (re-introduced)

A bill to promote equality, narrow the gap between rich and poor, outlaw age discrimination and generally strengthen Britain's anti-discrimination legislation.

Constitutional Reform and Governance Bill (re-introduced)

A bill designed to rebalance the relationship between Parliament, the Government and the public. The Bill reinforces the principles of transparency, accountability and probity across all of government.

International Development Spending Draft Bill

A draft bill to make binding the present government's commitment to spend 0.7 per cent of national income on international development from 2013.

House of Lords Reform draft legislation

Draft legislation to set out proposals for a reformed second chamber of Parliament with a democratic mandate.

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