Culture, Media and Sport Committee

Oral evidence: DCMS Annual Report 2013-14, HC 940

Tuesday 20 January 2015

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Watch the meeting

Members present: Mr John Whittingdale (Chair); Mr Ben Bradshaw; Angie Bray; Conor Burns; Tracey Crouch; Philip Davies; Paul Farrelly; Mr John Leech; Steve Rotheram; Jim Sheridan; Mr Gerry Sutcliffe

Questions 1-119

Witnesses: Rt Hon Sajid Javid MP, Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, and Sue Owen, Permanent Secretary, Department of Culture, Media and Sport, gave evidence

Q1 Chair: Good morning. This is the Committee’s annual session during which we look at the work of the DCMS and, in particular, the annual report and I should like to welcome the Secretary of State, Sajid Javid, and the Permanent Secretary, Sue Owen.

Sajid Javid: Thank you. Good morning.

Q2 Chair: Can we start with more general questions about the department? The department has had to suffer a succession of cuts in funding over the last few years. It has become smaller and smaller with less and less money to spend. Are you confident that you are still capable of meeting all the responsibilities, and how do you intend to deal with the fact that your department seems to be shrinking every year?

Sajid Javid: Thank you, Mr Chairman. First of all, good morning to all members of the Committee. It is always a pleasure appearing in front of the DCMS Select Committee.

Starting with your first question, Mr Chairman, yes, I am. From what I have seen so far of the department, since I have been in this role and when I look forward at the plans and the budget, looking forward at least to 2015-16 where we have good visibility, I think we are in a position to discharge the responsibilities of the department.
Maybe I could say a word in summary of how I see the key role of the department itself. There are a couple of roles but all related. First of all, it has a role to help boost the economy and also, alongside that in that process, to make Britain an even better place than it is today to live, work and visit. I would divide its responsibilities into three distinct but related areas: there is that economic role, to keep helping with the recovery; there is the intrinsic value the department can add, such as the work that is ongoing but started a few years ago, planning for the First World War commemorations, which brings huge intrinsic value to our country and its people; and there is also a role that I would describe as social change. A good example of that might be participation in sport. For example, trying to get more women and girls engaged in sport. When I look at those roles—and I can pick off examples, such as the work we have done on broadband, the Olympic work, including the Olympic Village work that has been ongoing, and tourism—I think we can discharge our responsibilities looking at the budget and the resources that we have.

Q3 Chair: During several inquiries we have had witnesses suggest to us that DCMS is lacking clout in Whitehall and that they might be better served as part of another department, possibly BIS. Do you feel that you have sufficient authority in Whitehall to be able to speak up in defence of the industries for which you are responsible?

Sajid Javid: Yes, absolutely I do. If you look at some of the key achievements, and maybe we will get on to some of them later, like the work that has been done on broadband, on mobile coverage, the work through the bodies that are the ALBs in the department, such as on tourism and what they do and sport, I think in each of those there has been good progress. Often it does require co-operation with other departments, for example, with the Home Office on visas and naturally with the Treasury on all matters relating to funding. I think the relationship with colleagues is very good. Access to the Prime Minister, the Chancellor and other key members of the Cabinet is very good, and I think we have seen good demonstration that DCMS does have the clout that it needs to get its job done.

Q4 Mr Bradshaw: In its analysis of the Chancellor’s autumn statement, the IFS said that under Conservative plans in the next Parliament non-protected departments will be facing further cuts of between 30% and 40% in their budgets, and I assume DCMS would be among those unprotected departments given the Government’s record. How confident are you that Britain’s cultural and artistic fabric could survive further unprecedented cuts of that level?
Sajid Javid: Thank you, Mr Bradshaw. First of all, I would say I do not recognise those numbers from the IFS.

Mr Bradshaw: These are independent numbers from the Institute for Fiscal Studies.

Sajid Javid: Yes. As I said, I do not recognise those numbers and the reason is what the IFS has gone on is what has been published, as you mentioned, in the autumn statement itself and those are the plans of the coalition Government. While I cannot speak on the plans for any other parties, the Conservative Party has made it clear that when it comes to future budget consolidation, and in terms of needs for further cuts, I think I am right in saying that for the first fiscal year of the new Parliament that fiscal consolidation has already been set out in that autumn statement, so department by department including my department. But for years two and three, and I think that is where the IFS has focused, the total consolidation required is around £30 billion and what the Conservatives have set out is that, of that £30 billion, approximately £13 billion will come from further welfare cuts and £5 billion will come from further action on tax evasion and aggressive tax avoidance. That will leave about £12 billion for departmental cuts.

So the number of future cuts for a non-ring-fenced department is a lot lower than the IFS suggests. I think the reason the IFS has come up with the number it has is that it is looking at the coalition Government plans, and it is quite clear the coalition itself has not agreed between the two parties in the coalition how exactly that further consolidation would be done in a future Parliament.

Q5 Tracey Crouch: Secretary of State, the largest cuts in grant-in-aid were experienced by sports bodies. How do you think this squares with coalition strategic priorities for promoting sport?

Sajid Javid: The first thing I would point out, Ms Crouch, is that we just had a conversation about budget consolidation, looking for savings. We started off with the Chairman asking about how we are coping in the department with the changes we have been asked to make in terms of spending, and so we have had to look at every area as a department and find savings, and that includes sport as well. When we look at the money that we are spending, so I am looking at the latest numbers where it is investing through the department roughly around £500 million each year on sport in the UK, that is split roughly £150 million in UK sport and £350 million in Sport England. I feel the return that we get from that, in terms of both professional sport but especially grassroots amateur sport, it seems that in many areas we are increasing participation. We are certainly increasing participation, for example, of women taking part in sport. I think we are getting a good
return from that, but we should always remain vigilant and see what more we can do.

**Q6 Tracey Crouch:** The Chancellor recently announced extra funding for football. Was that new money or was that money that is already coming from the Department for Culture, Media and Sport?

**Sajid Javid:** That was new money. As to that particular announcement—we are working with the FA, local councils and other partners in investment in grassroots sports, particularly for more 3G pitches in our schools—I do not have the number in front of me, but there is about £8 million of new money, plus matching by the FA and other partners. One thing that we have certainly been trying to do a lot more of is leverage the amount of money that the Government can put in with other third party organisations, in this case the FA key among them, and get a bigger bang for the buck—and I think that is a good example of how that can be achieved.

**Q7 Tracey Crouch:** You mentioned the rise in participation, but there has only been a 1.3% rise in participation in sport overall since 2005/06. That is not a great increase, particularly given the fact that we have had the Olympics. The latest figures show that within the age group of 16 to 25 year-olds there has been no significant improvement and in disabled sport there has been a fall. What are you doing with your colleagues in the Department for Education to try to increase participation and address this persistent problem of low activity levels among children?

**Sajid Javid:** We are co-operating a lot on this issue with the Department for Education. I understand the DfE has spending on what it calls a sports premium and a lot of DfE spending, unlike my department, is protected. I think that is helpful in this regard. We continue to look at new ways to work together with them and also to see what more we can do in terms of leveraging with third party partners.

**Q8 Tracey Crouch:** Do you think the issue of scrapping the school sport premium and the hiatus that we had for an entire school year of funding of school sport has had a negative effect on the number of children participating in sport in schools?

**Sajid Javid:** I am not aware there is any evidence that it has and I cannot say it has.

**Tracey Crouch:** But it hasn’t increased school sports participation. I completely appreciate the reasons behind the decision, based on the lack of proper assessment of sport in schools but then we had this gap of an entire school year of people not knowing how to invest in
alternative sports to get children engaged and participating. At the end of the day the buck stops at your door in terms of sports participation. Was it frustrating for the department to have that year-long gap?

**Sajid Javid**: Honestly, I cannot tell you if it was frustrating for the department because I wasn’t in the department at the time and it was not an issue that I followed closely. No doubt, certainly at a local level, it would have been difficult in not having that certainty, but I think we have moved on from that now and, as I said, since I have been in the role I have not seen any evidence that that caused a big problem.

**Q9 Tracey Crouch**: You talked in your opening statement about the Olympics legacy. Can you define for the Committee what you see that legacy as?

**Sajid Javid**: Yes, I will mention a couple of things. First of all, I think there has been a long-term benefit to the economy from that. One example, in planning for the Olympics the department, with other departments, worked a lot at trying to use that as a base to promote tourism to the UK, not just to London itself for the Olympics but working with many countries around the world to make sure, for example, that their journalists when they came and covered the Olympics, their sporting events, that they also took time out with VisitBritain, VisitEngland and others to go and see what else Britain has to offer, whether that is in Scotland or Wales or elsewhere.

There is plenty of evidence that that is one of the contributing factors that has helped to raise tourism in Britain, and in 2013 incoming tourism was at the highest level ever and all the numbers that I have currently seen for 2014, although we do not have the final numbers, suggest that 2014 will be another record year. That is one example of how I think it has had an ongoing benefit for the economy. It has certainly helped with the regeneration of East London. In fact, I think all parts of the Olympic Park are now open to the public. The Aquatic Centre, for example, is used by schools on a daily basis and others. Also, it has helped with the cause of disability inequality. I think we also had the best Paralympics ever in 2012 and that has been something for us to build on as well.

**Q10 Tracey Crouch**: The last part of your answer was very interesting because, as I mentioned before, we have virtually seen a decline in the number of people participating in disability sports. What we have seen is the number falling for that but also the amount of return on the Olympic assets not necessarily reflecting current market conditions. Do you think we have made the most out of the Olympic legacy, given the
fact that obviously we have seen property prices in London increase but the value of the Olympic Park assets fall?

*Sajid Javid*: I think we have seen good value. Go back to the point about disability sport, first of all the Paralympics themselves broke all records for the most tickets ever sold for the Paralympics; over 2.4 million tickets being sold. In an ONS opinion survey carried out after that in March 2013 half the population said that the Paralympic Games has had a positive impact on the way they view disabled sport. I accept there is a lot more to do and this is something that is a priority for the department, but I think that does help to demonstrate how the Olympics will have a lasting legacy.

**Q11 Tracey Crouch:** What about the return on the assets for the Olympic Park?

*Sajid Javid*: First of all, if you look at the return on the assets just in a raw way, the money that went in to create the assets and what their market value might be now, I think in that sense it was always going to be the case. It would be hard to find any Olympics that has been held where those assets are worth more after the event than before the event. But if you look at it in its totality and at the other benefits that we achieved from the Olympics—for example I talked about the ongoing tourism benefits and things that we cannot value that easily, the soft power of Britain and the image of Britain around the world, by putting on I think the world’s best Olympics and all those people that came to Britain and took away those positive views of Britain, the disability sports we have talked about, the boost to the economy in other ways—once you take all that into account then it is much easier to see that the overall investment brings a long-term, positive return over and above what went into the assets.

**Q12 Jim Sheridan:** Could I make a brief mention of tourism and suggest that the Commonwealth Games last year made a significant contribution to the local economy and, indeed, tourism and perhaps put that on the record as well?

*Sajid Javid*: Yes.

**Jim Sheridan:** But could I focus my questions on football, particularly the football governance and the transparency of the ownership of football clubs? As I understand it, the UK Government still has responsibility for the governance of football. If we look at clubs, like Portsmouth, Glasgow Rangers, Cardiff City and perhaps to a lesser extent Newcastle where the fans are left out in the cold. They don’t know what is happening. The clubs have been involved in casino gambling. They call this the people’s game but there is very little input from fans and casinos among millionaires about who has taken over the
clubs and who are fit and proper people and so on. Are the Government making any attempt to address the situation of football governance and transparency of club ownership?

**Sajid Javid:** Yes. First of all, I take your point about the Commonwealth Games. I think you are absolutely right. I went to those games myself on more than one occasion and I think they did a lot to boost tourism, not just in Glasgow but in Scotland in general. You are quite right to make that point.

Turning to football, first of all the Government is not responsible in any way for the governance of football. It is like any sport. It is an autonomous sport and it is not for Government to regulate that sport. Naturally we have various bodies that are well known to the Committee, clearly the FA being one of the most important. Since before my time in the department, the Select Committee itself did an inquiry into governance in 2011, Ministers in the department over those years have worked with football authorities in a partnership role, which has brought forward some results and improved the overall governance of the game. We have seen the FA’s main board introduce greater independence and tougher rules around club ownership and improved transparency, including financial transparency. Those changes have already happened but these are ongoing discussions where we are constantly working as a partner with not just football governing authorities but some other sports as well to see what we can do to have measures like this, have that independence, make sure fans are put first and have a lot more transparency than we used to in the past.

One other thing we have focused on is the whole role of fans and how they could have more of a say in their clubs and get better representation. That is why the Sports Minister has worked with football and fans associations to set up an expert working group on support of ownership and engagement. This has been set up. It has been constituted. It was launched by the Sports Minister and this is a group that will look at ways to improve that and make it better. It will do its initial report in March of this year and then the Government expects a full report by the end of the year. I hope the then Government will take that very seriously and see what can be done to make sure fans get better representation with their clubs.

**Q13 Jim Sheridan:** I don’t know who has written your brief but it is a million miles from real life and football. This expert report we are looking at, is that across the UK?

**Sajid Javid:** I believe it is England only. I don’t believe it includes Scotland. That is my understanding.
Q14 Jim Sheridan: Who has responsibility for Scotland and Wales and—

Sajid Javid: We are dealing with this under the English FA and this is not something we have looked at with Scotland.

Jim Sheridan: Can I move on to the ongoing debate about FIFA?

Q15 Chair: Jim, I will come back to you on FIFA in just a second, but, Secretary of State, as you referred to, this Committee conducted two inquiries into the governance of football, the second at the request of the then Sports Minister. We made recommendations for reform of the governance of the game and the FA made changes but, in our view, nothing like sufficient. It was the declared position of the Government that, unless the full changes were made, the Government would legislate to require the FA to make change. Is that still your position?

Sajid Javid: I haven’t ruled that out. My position is that we have made progress and talked about some of that since that report was published in 2011, but that situation should be monitored at all times and, if the Government feels by engaging with other stakeholders that not enough has been done, that is something that we would not rule out.

Q16 Chair: Is it your view that enough has been done or do you—

Sajid Javid: At this stage my view is that we are making good progress and there is no need for the Government to take any legislative action.

Chair: But, unless more progress is made, you still reserve the right to legislate?

Sajid Javid: Yes.

Chair: Do you believe there does need to be more progress?

Sajid Javid: Yes.

Chair: Jim, just before I come back, Steve, do you want to come in on that?

Q17 Steve Rotheram: Just on that specific point, one of the predecessor Ministers, Hugh Robertson, said that the FA were drinking in the Last Chance Saloon and also that he would give them six months to put their house in order. Do you believe that has happened?

Sajid Javid: I believe we have made progress with the FA and that progress so far is, as it sounds, positive. It is heading in the right direction. I mentioned earlier some of the other work we have been
doing with the FA where they have been very co-operative, such as working in communities at the grassroots level as well; so not just the governance aspect of the FA but also how they are working with communities. I think, taking all that into account, at this point we are happy with the progress we have made but, as I have said, we will keep it under review.

**Q18  Steve Rotheram:** The reason I am asking the question is I don’t think the FA believes that the Government would take action. Do you believe the Government would take action if the FA does not comply with what they have been requested to do on several occasions?

**Sajid Javid:** Yes. First of all, from my discussion with the FA, I think they understand the Government is serious on that point. If the Government says that it would consider legislation of any issue if necessary, and I stress the “if” because I am not convinced it is at this point, then that should be taken seriously.

**Q19  Jim Sheridan:** If necessary; not only this Committee made formal recommendations but a number of supporters’ groups have made representations as well. How long do we accept that we are making progress? What is the deadline for this making progress and making a decision?

**Sajid Javid:** I have not set a deadline because I accept that making changes, especially to something that has been constituted in a particular way and governed in a certain way for many years, does take time and my bar has been: have we been taking positive steps on transparency and governance and other issues? As long as that is happening, I think the best way forward is to keep working in a co-operative way. There is no getting away from the fact that if you do move to some kind of legislative solution the co-operation disappears and there could be some unintended consequences to that. I think it is always better to try to work with the FA in trying to get the kind of changes that we want that are in everyone’s interests but to not rule out taking other action if it is deemed necessary in the future.

**Q20  Jim Sheridan:** I will not labour the point, but I think it is highly unlikely you will get a voluntary agreement from the football authorities. Can I move on to the situation that we find ourselves in with FIFA and the outrageous behaviour of some of the heads at FIFA? I know you are limited in what you can say in terms of FIFA, but would you support the FA and perhaps other football associations withdrawing from FIFA and maybe forming a new UEFA group?
**Sajid Javid**: First of all, I agree with your concerns about FIFA. I have made my views clear on the whole issue around the Garcia report and why it should have been published, the full version unredacted. I wrote to Sepp Blatter, the President of FIFA, and made my views absolutely crystal clear. I did get a response from him and it basically told me to go away. I cannot say I was expecting much more but I think it is important, not just for me and Britain but my counterparts around the world, not just in Europe and elsewhere, to make their views clear as sports ministers about what they think of this particular issue regarding FIFA.

Turning to the second part of your question about whether I would support such moves, I think it is not a decision for the Government at the end of the day. In all the countries that I am aware of, how football is governed and the relationship with FIFA is an independent decision and it is not something I, as the Secretary of State, should be getting involved in.

**Q21 Jim Sheridan**: I am asking you for an opinion. Would the Government oppose such a move?

**Sajid Javid**: The Government has not been approached by anyone even with a suggestion of such a move. If there was ever a suggestion from the relevant authorities it is something the Government would look at then, if they were asked to comment on it, but I would not like to dive into that now without ever being approached. It is not something that I know of that is on the agenda and I think it would be wrong for me to give a view one way or the other on that.

**Q22 Mr Leech**: I think you went on the record as saying you did not think England coming out of the next World Cup was the right thing to do. Do you think there is any action that could be taken more European-wide that would make FIFA sit up and take notice?

**Sajid Javid**: I think that not just Britain but also my counterparts in other countries should consider what could be done to put more pressure on FIFA. It is something I know the Sports Minister has discussed with her counterparts in Europe especially, but to have a realistic chance of getting change I think it would require co-operation beyond Europe as well with, for example, South American and Asian countries that also play a big role in FIFA. That is something that we could look at further. I know the Sports Minister is thinking about this.

**Q23 Mr Leech**: Do you get a sense that there is an appetite across Europe to push for real change? Time and time again, there have been
complaints and things said about FIFA but nothing has ever happened. Do you sense that there is a different attitude towards it now?

**Sajid Javid:** I think there is a very strong attitude in Europe especially for change. I think following the incident with the Garcia report and what came of that, that certainly brought people together on this issue, realising that something needs to change. FIFA need to take a much more transparent, positive attitude. Possibly what holds a lot of countries or their relevant football associations back is probably the fear of being the first mover in trying to do something different. That is for those associations. I think if Governments are approached or if we were approached, as I was just saying to Mr Sheridan, we would listen to what people say, but there is a view today versus let’s say this time last year that something has to change.

**Q24 Mr Leech:** Can you think of a more dodgy sporting governing body than FIFA?

**Sajid Javid:** “Dodgy” is not a word that I use, Mr Leech.

**Mr Leech:** It is a word that I am quite happy to use, but can you think of a governing body that you would consider to be dodgier than FIFA?

**Sajid Javid:** I think there are a number of challenges that FIFA is presented with and it would do well to listen.

**Q25 Mr Leech:** That was a diplomatic answer. Can I just turn to football heritage? Do you think there is ever any role for Government in protecting the interests of football fans in relation to actions by their owners, whether it be in relation to the colour of their shirts or where they are playing or the name or the team, or is that down to individual clubs to decide and individual sets of supporters to put pressure on their owners?

**Sajid Javid:** I think it is ultimately down to the clubs working with their supporters. Clubs would do well, and many of them do and have shown the results of that, to put their fans first, their supporters first, whenever they make decisions like that, but I cannot see there is a role for Government.

**Q26 Mr Leech:** But isn’t football different? If I don’t like going to Tesco I can choose to go to Asda or to Morrisons or to Sainsbury’s or wherever else. If I am a football fan of a football team, if I don’t like the way my football club is being run—I am a season ticket holder at City—I am not about to turn around and go and start watching United instead. Isn’t football different?
**Sajid Javid**: Of course, when you have a football team and you pick your football team it sticks with you for life and, of course, there is that difference that you highlight. That is why you need to take some measures that allow for fans having a bigger role and a bigger say. That is why we have set up this expert group with fans and others, as well as the FA club representatives on board, to see what more can be done, because it is different.

**Q27 Mr Leech**: Doesn’t that suggest then that there could be a role for Government to legislate in those circumstances to protect fans?

**Sajid Javid**: No, I don’t think it leads naturally to that.

**Q28 Mr Leech**: Finally, I don’t know whether you are a regular attendee at football matches, but do you think that the introduction of all-seater stadiums in the Premier League and Championship has been successful in terms of persuading people to sit down?

**Sajid Javid**: It is not something I have looked at closely and I think the results have been encouraging so far.

**Q29 Mr Leech**: Would you accept, though, that on every football ground in the Championship and Premier League people continue to stand week after week?

**Sajid Javid**: I have seen evidence of that.

**Q30 Mr Leech**: Have you thought of any possible solutions, how we might make it safer for those people who continue to stand at football grounds?

**Sajid Javid**: This is an issue that has been looked at for some time, ever since the Hillsborough disaster, and the Government have no appetite to change the rules that are governing seating at football stadiums. It has come up from one or two football clubs, but I would take the view that this is—

**Q31 Mr Leech**: 19 out of 20 Premier League football teams voted to say that they would like the issue looked at.

**Sajid Javid**: Maybe that time will come. It just hasn’t been a priority for us because, although one or two clubs have approached us about this, I did not sense there is a big willingness out there among the clubs for change. This is an area that anyone would have to be very careful in if they looked at it, and that is why we have experts, sports ground safety officials, that understand this area and I do not think it is
the kind of thing that should be a political decision based on a few clubs bringing up the issue again and again.

**Q32 Mr Leech:** A final question. Can you explain to me why the Government persists in the view that rail seating does not comply with the existing rules about all-seater stadia if you provide one seat/standing position for each individual spectator?

**Sajid Javid:** From what I have seen, I think one reason, and it might be the only reason, in countries where they do have rail seating, even when it is set as a seat, people tend to stand, even if it is one seat per person.

**Q33 Mr Leech:** But you will also be aware that the regulation states that clubs have to provide all-seater stadia. It does not say that people have to sit down. Those regulations are dealt with through licensing by local authorities.

**Sajid Javid:** Clearly the intention of all-seater stadia is that people sit down. I think everyone would accept that.

**Mr Leech:** On that basis then it has been an unmitigated failure because people continue to stand.

**Sajid Javid:** There will be some individuals that continue to stand. My point is that—

**Mr Leech:** Thousands.

**Sajid Javid:** —if you had rail seating it is quite likely you would have even more stand when it is set in a seating position. Based on what I have seen, I am not convinced that rail seating is the way to go. I don’t rule it out as something that can be looked at in the future, but I am not convinced that it meets the safety requirements that have been set by the Government.

**Mr Leech:** Sorry, one last question—

**Chair:** Then we need to move on. This is your third last question.

**Q34 Mr Leech:** I want to pick you up on that last point because you say that there is evidence that other people will then stand up. There is absolutely no evidence. There is lots of anecdotal evidence to the contrary, that where you have rail seating people who want to stand go into those areas of rail seating and then in the other areas people do then sit down. I would be interested to know where you got the evidence to suggest that that is not the case.
Sajid Javid: I have seen evidence from countries that have rail seating. What I am specifically referring to, to make sure it is clear, is that where the seating is set as a seat at that time, even when it is set as a seat, people are more likely, from what I have seen, to stand up than sit down versus having fixed seating.

Chair: Can we move on to another topic, which is gambling?

Q35 Steve Rotheram: As you can imagine, the Secretary of State mentioned Hillsborough. Lord Justice Taylor’s report, just to put it on record, was about safety at football stadia and not necessarily about how many people sat down. His recommendation is that you can ensure safety with all-seater stadia. The question was predicated falsely I think on: has it been successful or not or how many people sit down? How many people have been killed?

Sajid Javid: Thank you, Mr Rotheram, I take your point. Thank you.

Q36 Steve Rotheram: In regards to the DCMS annual plan, it states that young and vulnerable gamblers enjoy appropriate protections while protecting children and vulnerable adults from the dangers of problem gambling. Liverpool City Council and 92 others, I think, have signed an agreement and passed motions within councils to request that the Government looks specifically at FOBTs and at the maximum stake of FOBTs and reduce that to £2. Do you agree, Secretary of State, that FOBTs are the crack cocaine of gambling and what do you intend to do about maximum stakes?

Sajid Javid: First of all, I fully understand the concerns around FOBTs and that is why last year the Government announced action in this area with a whole suite of new gambling controls. For example, one specifically refers to giving more powers to local councils; so returning powers to the local community by requiring planning applications to be submitted by local authorities for new betting shops. I think that was something that not just Liverpool Council but many councils wanted to see.

In terms of the stakes, any stakes over £50 now will have to use an account-based play or low cash over the counter, which means that sort of space where someone is taking part in that activity and is completely unsupervised is less likely to happen. Also, we require all players of FOBTs to be presented with a choice to set the time they want to spend playing and/or the money they want to spend. This is all on track to be in place by 6 April this year. The Government has moved fast on this. Generally there was strong support for this and these measures should make a difference. It is hard to say exactly what difference it will make.
until they kick in, but I think it was a step in the right direction and we have no plans to go any further.

**Q37 Steve Rotheram:** I think you are right in as much as those proposals were welcomed widely, but they do not go far enough for many people who were interested in the deleterious effect of FOBTs on problem gambling. What evidence would you need, Secretary of State, to look specifically at the maximum stake or minimum stake?

**Sajid Javid:** I think that the best thing to do and the sensible thing to do would be to see how these changes come in in April and what impact they have. Problem gambling where it does exist of course is an issue we take very seriously. The problem gambling rate among adults in England and Wales is currently less than 1%. That is lower than some comparable jurisdictions such as the US, South Africa or Australia. That does not mean to say it does not exist, but it is something that we take seriously. These measures, particularly regarding FOBTs, will make a difference but I think, rather than for us to jump now and say, “We should move even further”, I would like to see these bed in and then look at the evidence and see if there is a need for any further action at all or if what we have done is enough.

**Q38 Jim Sheridan:** There are no plans by the Government to do anything other than what is already proposed, even if a body of evidence came forward that suggested that the maximum stake was problematic?

**Sajid Javid:** If people want to present us with their research and their evidence, that is something that we would always look at and we would look at carefully, but I believe the measures that we have taken so far are the right response to the problem we have identified.

**Q39 Philip Davies:** Further to that, the Government have always stated in the past that they will make decisions based on evidence and then have gone and made decisions based on anything other than evidence. What commitment can we have from you that you are genuine in the fact that you will only move based on evidence and not on any political campaign route?

**Sajid Javid:** My approach, not just in this job but when I was in the Treasury as a Minister as well, has always been based around evidence, to look at evidence carefully. Sometimes I am fully aware that the evidence can be counterintuitive to what people think and also a certain action can have an unintended consequence that might make the problem you are trying to solve even worse. I always look at evidence carefully and that is why I have made it clear, regarding this particular issue with FOBTs, that we must be driven by evidence going forward. The best time to do that is to first let these changes bed in, because
anyone who presents evidence about how these changes might have an impact, they wouldn’t know until we have allowed them to take place.

Q40 Philip Davies: You see the thing is this Committee looked at the fixed odds betting terminals as part of a wider inquiry into the Gambling Act and did not recommend any reduction in stakes because we looked at the evidence and there was no evidence for it, yet obviously we subsequently find that people then deviate from that evidence and call for things to be produced when there is no evidence. The problem rate of gambling, which you said, has not increased since fixed odds betting terminals were introduced into the UK. The rate of problem gambling is pretty much the same now as it was before they were introduced. Every new gambling product since records began have been dubbed the crack cocaine of gambling since Donald Trump referred to Video Keno games as the crack cocaine of gambling when they threatened his business back in the 1980s; lottery scratch cards were called the crack cocaine of gambling when they were first introduced.

What I am saying is there is lots of evidence out there already. The evidence is there that FOBTs haven’t increased problem gambling. They are not the crack cocaine of gambling; it is just that that is a good term for opponents of gambling to use for them. Given that all of this evidence is already out there and yet the Government has still made changes that were completely unnecessary based on the evidence, I just wonder why we should have any confidence that the Government will stick to the evidence when all the evidence is out there and it still hasn’t stuck to the evidence in the past?

Sajid Javid: All I can say, Mr Davies, is that I am certainly driven by the evidence and not just with regard to this particular issue but when I look at my whole mandate in my department. Certainly my commitment to you and the Committee would be that every action we take must be backed up by the evidence to the extent it is available.

Q41 Philip Davies: The final point I want to ask is the impact on the Government’s changes on the racing industry because, of course, not only does the betting industry pay a considerable amount of money in levy payments for the horse racing industry but that is dwarfed by the amount the betting industry pays in picture rights, and those picture rights are based on a per shop basis. Every betting shop that closes down has a direct impact on the amount of money that goes to the racing industry. I wonder what effect the Government’s changes, which they have already introduced needlessly, based on no evidence at all—what calculation the Government has made on the impact that will have on the number of betting shops and, as a consequence, the amount of income that is therefore received by the racing industry?
Sajid Javid: The horse race betting levy modernisation, first the Government wants to make sure that all betting operators benefit from bets made by British racing in the country and that they contribute to funding of the sport. We haven’t yet decided on what action, if any, we will take in replacing the levy. That is something we have been looking at but no final decision has been made, again, partly because of the work that we have done. We want to look carefully at what comes out of that, but I also want it to be driven by the evidence.

Q42 Philip Davies: The point I am trying to get across to you is the number of betting shops directly impacts on the amount of money that goes into racing. All the betting shops that close down, that will have an impact on the racing industry. Lots of people will lose their jobs in the betting industry and the racing industry, and I wondered what prominence the Government gave to those job losses in the betting industry and the facing industry whenever it makes these decisions based on political expediency rather than on actual factual evidence.

Sajid Javid: Mr Davies, I can only focus on the issues I have looked at in the horse race betting levy and, as I have said, I haven’t made a decision. We will be looking at what to do next. In terms of what has already happened and the changes that have taken place, you asked a specific question about impact, for example, on jobs in the industry and I cannot tell you what that number is. I do not have that information with me today. If you would like me to look into it a bit more carefully and write to you I will be very happy to do that.

Q43 Mr Sutcliffe: I am a trustee of the Responsible Gambling Trust, and, on that point, I wonder if the Secretary of State has looked at the evidence that the industry or the trust have provided into FOBTs. Just to reinforce Mr Davies’ point, the changes that have taken place so far are welcome, giving local authorities more opportunity to decide what they want on their high street, but the impact on jobs and the impact that the gambling industry has on the country in terms of its contribution to GDP is vast. It is important that all decisions are factually based. I wonder if the Secretary of State has seen the report from the Responsible Gambling Trust.

Sajid Javid: Yes, I have and the report was published at the beginning of December. We have and it contributes to our knowledge and we welcome the report and the work they have done. I think it is a very important piece of research and I hope they keep working with us in partnership in helping to provide research. The point you make about the impact on jobs, and as Mr Davies was alluding to as well, is very important. When we take action in this space, and for that matter in other areas that this department is responsible for, we should also at
the front of our minds the impact on jobs, employment and on the local economy as well.

Q44 Mr Sutcliffe: On the horse racing levy negotiations, good luck I would say to you. I have been trying not to do that in a previous existence. But the important aspect of that is that in the rush, and I think it is a rush, to get to an agreement the individual parts need to be looked at. There is an issue regarding the on course bookmakers who already have a relationship with race courses because in fact that is where there pitches are and that is where they stand. They will feel aggrieved if they get caught up in having to pay an additional amount of money towards the levy, so I wonder if in the negotiations and the discussions that point could be looked at.

Sajid Javid: No, absolutely, we are looking at that point. As I said, we haven’t made a decision yet, but that is certainly something we will consider carefully.

Q45 Philip Davies: Before we move on I think I should probably refer people to my entry in the Register of Members’ Interests. I don’t know if there is anything relevant in there or not, but there probably is. Just to make sure I will refer people to that.

One very final question about this that just dawned on me is that the Government sold the Tote to Betfred. Do you feel in any way that you might have done the dirty on Fred Done, in the sense that you sold the Tote and all the betting shops that go with it and then completely changed the tax regime for FOBTs and completely changed the nature of the stakes. In effect, you devalued what you sold on to Fred Done shortly after you had sold the stuff on to him. Do you not feel that that kind of behaviour brings dealing with the Government into disrepute? I don’t know how he feels, but I am sure if I was him I would feel rather aggrieved at the fact that I had paid for one thing and then you had gone and changed the rules that devalued it not long afterwards.

Sajid Javid: I hope it doesn’t. I wasn’t involved in that transaction so I cannot share any details of exactly how it was done, but I am sure that anyone who buys something from the Government would be fully aware, given the Government’s role in society and how broad reaching it is, that there are things the Government could do after the sale that they may like or may not like from the point of view of their purchase. I think any serious business person would take that into account. While I cannot give you the details of whether that was something that was specifically made clear, “There will obviously be future Government changes, positive or negative, that may impact your business”, I think any business person would know that Governments’ rules and regulations are not constant. They change over time. Governments
change and so things can happen that may affect the value of their business.

**Q46 Paul Farrelly:** There were certain regulatory changes that went hand in hand with the move, as far as online operators are concerned, the point of consumption taxation at the end of last year. When is the department going to review how the Gambling Commission is coping with the changes and its performance, including reviewing the number of operators who choose to license themselves here as opposed to overseas jurisdictions?

**Sajid Javid:** You are quite right. That is quite a significant change in the taxation in that space and it does put more work on to the Gambling Commission, a different type of work. We are in constant touch with the Gambling Commission. As far as I am aware, they have not raised this as a resourcing issue for them, at least at this point, but it is something that we would keep under review and if they did raise it of course we would look at it seriously to see if there is anything that can be done.

**Q47 Paul Farrelly:** Is there any date for review after a year of how they are coping with the changes?

**Sajid Javid:** No, we haven’t set a date for a review. I think we would be led by the Gambling Commission itself in terms of its own feedback to us about how it is coping with the changes. Given that we have not had anything back from them that suggests they are having a problem, that is the reason why it is not a priority issue for us.

**Q48 Paul Farrelly:** Is the department still concerned with one large online operation that is very well respected has now chosen to relocate its licence to Gibraltar in its entirety?

**Sajid Javid:** That would be up to the operator itself to decide what to do. I think our only concern around that would be to make sure that was consistent with the rules and if that is a business decision they have made then that is something that we shouldn’t get involved in.

**Paul Farrelly:** It has prompted no concern?

**Sajid Javid:** It hasn’t prompted any concern.

**Q49 Mr Leech:** Mr Davies referred to the need to have evidence-based policymaking and Mr Sutcliffe referred to the RGT research, but the RGT research did show that four out of five gamblers who were staking the average stake on FOBT machines, which I think is between £13 and £14 per spend, showed problem gambling characteristics. Doesn’t that
suggest that there is some evidence to suggest high stakes on FOBTs are a problem and encourage problem gambling?

**Sajid Javid:** We are looking at the evidence from the Responsible Gambling Trust, but I think it goes back to the point I was making earlier. We think the changes that we have made regarding FOBTs at this point in time, coming in April, think are the right and sensible changes to make. We want to then look at what impact that has and see if there is any further action we need to take.

**Q50 Mr Leech:** Chances are that there is going to be absolutely no impact whatsoever, because people have to register if they want to spend more than £50 a spin or they have to open an account. Many people who use these machines do have accounts. Given that people showed problem gambling characteristics at the average spin amount, which is £13 to £14, surely £50 a spin is no precautionary approach at all.

**Sajid Javid:** There are a number of measures, which I referred to earlier, that we are taking that kick in in April and stakes is clearly one of them. I think taken together they will make a difference. I respect your view, Mr Leech, but I think neither of us know the true result yet until the changes kick in. Your view is that they will not make a difference. I think that they will, but the sensible approach is to see what impact they have and then for the Government at that time, once they have had some time to kick in, to see if any further action is required.

**Q51 Mr Leech:** We have always tended to concentrate on the issues surrounding stakes rather than the rate of spin. I think one of the issues that anecdotally people talk about is how quickly the return spins are. I think it is three a minute. Most people tend to play roulette on FOBT machines. Compared with normal roulette on a table it is much faster. Has the Government looked into the issues surrounding the rate of spin as well as the stakes and prizes?

**Sajid Javid:** I am not aware that we looked at it. It doesn’t mean to say we have not because these changed that I refer to that take place in April were announced before I joined the department. It wasn’t something I was personally worked on in detail. I cannot tell you here and now exactly what we looked at and what we didn’t. If it would be helpful to you I would be happy to find out if we looked at the specific issue of rate of spin, and write to you.

**Q52 Mr Leech:** I believe we were expecting a statutory instrument before Christmas on this, but it hasn’t arrived yet. I know there are significant areas of disagreement on this issue between the coalition
partners. Is that the cause of the delay and, if so, when are we likely to see something laid before Parliament?

Sajid Javid: Sorry, just to be clear, are you referring to the FOBT changes that I mentioned earlier?

Mr Leech: Yes.

Sajid Javid: I don’t think that is the reason for the delay and we are on target to have these measures in place by April this year.

Q53 Mr Leech: When are we likely to have this in front of Parliament?

Sajid Javid: Very soon.

Q54 Mr Leech: Very soon. Finally, Mr Rotheram referred to Liverpool City Council. They have done some good work on campaigning on this issue, but a quarter of all councils have been arguing for a reduction to £2 per stake maximum. How many local authorities would it take before the Government would think this was an issue they should look at again?

Sajid Javid: We are always listening. If more local authorities want to contact us with their views that would be a very positive step.

Chair: I think we need to move on to tourism.

Q55 Mr Bradshaw: As you are probably aware, Secretary of State, we are currently holding an inquiry into the tourism industry. How do you react to this sense we are getting quite strongly from both the national bodies, but also from the tourism industry in regions like mine in the south-west, that your department does not take tourism seriously?

Sajid Javid: I think we do a lot as a department and as a Government to promote tourism. I am always open-minded and willing to listen to people that have fresh ideas, particularly if they do not involve spending lots more money. What we have shown through, for example, how we approached the Olympics was to take sport, another responsibility of the department, but to use that as a platform to boost tourism as well. It is something that Britain did very well. If you look at the evidence of other countries when they have approached the Olympics in the past, it is something that they did not even think of. Incidentally, since that success, we have talked to Brazil and also South
Korea with the Winter Olympics about what they can do to leverage off such an approach. I think it has been recognised by many people as a successful way of both promoting tourism as well as sport. That is just one example.

Another example I can give where I have worked with my colleagues quite intensively is around looking at visas. If you look at the high-growth countries for inbound tourism, such as China and India, working with the Home Office we have looked at how we can streamline our visa regime without compromising our standards, making it quicker, in some cases making it cheaper, and making sure it is competitive vis-à-vis other countries that those tourists might think of. When it comes to China, a Chinese family might think of the US or they might think of Australia. So we have to be competitive in terms of our offering regarding those countries.

The other thing I would mention, because I have also personally spent a lot of time on it, is the GREAT campaign the Government has, which is there not just to promote tourism but also investment and study and other things in Britain. Tourism is a big central part of that and I have been to many places around the world where I personally have helped to promote tourism, but also speaking to a lot of the tour operators that work in those countries to see what kind of impact that campaign is having. It has been very positive. That campaign has used the funds that it has been allocated very well overall to promote the UK and I think that is one of the reasons that we saw record tourism in 2013. As I alluded to earlier, although we do not have the full-year figures for 2014, I think we will see another record year of inbound tourism.

Q56 Mr Bradshaw: Just on visas, we heard from VisitBritain, for example, that one of the reasons the UK is falling down the competitiveness league when it comes to attracting tourism from countries like China and others is because, in spite of what you say, it is far more difficult for Chinese, Indian and other visitors to get tourist visas to this country. Once you have a visa for the EU, you can move around in Schengen. Actually, the Home Office has further proposals coming in any minute now, I think, Mr Chairman, that are going to make this even worse. Are you saying to us that you are winning these battles with the Home Secretary?

Sajid Javid: No, what I am saying is that the Home Secretary understands that our visa offering is an important part of our tourism offering. Many of the changes the Home Office has made over the last few years, in particular the speeding up of processing times of visas, are making a difference. In the past, we had run the risk where we would compare what we are offering today regarding visas to what the UK offered a few years ago and say, “Aren’t we doing a lot better than
the UK a few years ago?” I think it is very important that we are always comparing ourselves to the countries we are competing with for those tourists and looking at their offering.

In regard to India, for example, if I pick one country in the case of Australia, if an Indian wants to travel to Australia as a tourist they do not have to make a separate application for a visa. Their tour operator takes care of it and I understand the visa is turned around in two or three days. Ours still takes many more days than that and you have to make a separate application. There is still possibly more work for us to do. I am not saying we should have exactly the same offering as Australia, but I think we should always be looking at what other countries are offering and seeing if there is something we can do better.

Q57 Mr Bradshaw: You are on the Home Secretary’s case and she is listening to you, is she?

Sajid Javid: She is listening.

Q58 Mr Bradshaw: On numbers, you are absolutely right, the Olympics were fantastic, but largely for London. If you talk to tourism businesses in the south-west, as we did last week, including at places like the Eden Project, the Olympics were a disaster outside London. The regions still are not feeling the benefit of the increased numbers that you are talking about. Scotland is an exception because Scotland tourism is still taken seriously and is well funded by the Scottish Government, but what are you and the tourism bodies in Britain that you fund doing about the English regions and the fact they are losing out on these new tourism visitors?

Sajid Javid: It is a good point and it is always good to stress it. Tourism is not just about London, notwithstanding we must never forget that, for most tourists coming into the UK, London is the key attraction for them. We want them to not just come to London but to get out much more into the regions. The kinds of initiatives that we have taken since I have been in the department have been, for example, an initiative with China, again one of our high-growth countries for incoming tourism, where we announced last year that we will cut the price of visas for tour operators in China that put a minimum number of days that Chinese tourists must spend outside of London. China is a market that is driven a lot by tour operators and the itineraries for the middle-market tourism. What we have said to those tour operators is that if you guarantee that your customers will spend days outside of London, wherever it is—just outside of London—we are not saying whether it is the south-west or the north or Scotland, wherever it is—then we will cut the price of a visa for you. It is early
days, but the evidence so far is that it is working to change the itinerary once those tourists arrive here.

Another initiative we announced towards the end of last year was a special fund for tourism in the north, a competitive fund where I think we set the limit at £10 million. We have said that we are now in the market, through the arm’s length bodies, looking for ideas from local councils and other bodies about any initiatives they think we could be taking by helping to fund tourism in the north. Again, there is so much that the north has to offer, but we need to be a bit more creative on how we go about attracting that.

Q59 Mr Bradshaw: It is great that you are making and winning the argument with the Home Secretary on visas. Are you making and winning the argument with the Treasury on VAT?

Sajid Javid: Well, VAT, like all taxes, is going to be a matter for the Treasury. Having spent some time in the Treasury as well, one thing that is always clear is these things, even if one wanted to do them, are never that straightforward. There is a lot more complexity to it. There are a lot of EU rules, for example, that govern indirect taxes. Ultimately, a decision like that is only for the Chancellor and the Treasury. What I focus on are the kinds of things that we have mentioned and working with VisitBritain, VisitEngland and the GREAT campaign to see what this department can do to boost tourism.

Q60 Mr Bradshaw: As the Secretary of State responsible for tourism and promoting tourism, you must be aware of the internal Treasury work that has been done showing that a cut in VAT would be of overall benefit not just to tourism hugely but also to the Exchequer. You are aware of that work, are you?

Sajid Javid: That is a matter for the Treasury. I know they keep all taxes under review, but what happens or does not happen with VAT—

Mr Bradshaw: But are you aware of that work and have you studied it as the man responsible for promoting tourism?

Sajid Javid: The priority to look at any potential future tax change is for the Treasury and not for my department.

Q61 Mr Bradshaw: But as the Secretary of State of another department you do not think it is your role to make the argument? Surely, Secretaries of State all over Whitehall are making representations to the Treasury about all sorts of things.
Sajid Javid: I think it is all too easy for any Secretary of State to say, “Can I have a tax cut because it would help this mandate that I have?” However, as a member of the Government, not just a Secretary of State but a member of the Cabinet, it is also my responsibility to make sure that, from the Treasury’s point of view, the numbers add up at the end of the day as well. There is a lot of demand on the Treasury.

Q62 Mr Bradshaw: That is why I am suggesting you look at this work because it shows we get more back in increased revenue to the Treasury from a cut, as has happened in Ireland, for example, and a number of other places.

Sajid Javid: We are presented with information on this all the time by stakeholders and, of course, we would look at the work that they give us. Ultimately, this is not a decision for any department other than the Treasury.

Q63 Mr Bradshaw: You are presented with the work by stakeholders and you look at it, but if you are convinced by it you would not make the argument to the Treasury?

Sajid Javid: We have a number of discussions with the Treasury on various issues, but they have to make their final decision.

Q64 Mr Bradshaw: Are you hinting there that you might make representations to the Treasury on this on behalf of the tourism industry?

Sajid Javid: No, I am not. I think you are trying very hard to get that kind of hint out of me, but I am not. I am just saying that it is not as straightforward an issue as it sounds. Like any tax, and this is one of the most important taxes in the country in terms of the revenue it raises for the country, I think it is all too easy for any department to do a bit of special pleading and say, “Can you cut this tax?”

Q65 Mr Bradshaw: Have you at least met the tourism industry to discuss this issue?

Sajid Javid: Absolutely. I think the Tourism Minister has another meeting scheduled soon with representatives of the industry as well where they discuss a variety of issues and this will almost certainly come up.

Q66 Mr Bradshaw: Would it not give a bit more clout if you dropped into that meeting?

Sajid Javid: I have discussed it myself with representatives of the tourism industry on a number of occasions.
Q67 Mr Bradshaw: Just one other thing on tourism, Chairman. One of the other things we heard repeatedly during our visit to the south-west was the abolition of the regional development agencies has meant there is no single organisation in the English regions either responsible for tourism statutorily or co-ordinating the support that is out there for tourism and this has resulted in a very damaging and debilitating fragmentation of the whole tourism supporting sector. Were you aware of these concerns? Do you have any plans to replace the work the RDAs did in some way to provide that level of strategic leadership?

Sajid Javid: I would not entirely recognise the comment, if you have heard it, that there is no organisation responsible. We have VisitBritain for marketing Britain overseas, all regions of the UK, and then we have VisitEngland, which of course includes the south-west, for internal tourism and in many cases working jointly with VisitBritain. We do have organisations that are responsible for this. Some of them, in the case of VisitEngland for example, received a substantial amount of fresh funding to help with that from the regional growth fund when that was established, and I think that has helped to make a difference. We do have organisations responsible and in many cases there are examples where they work with local councils or wider bodies in a local region to promote local tourism. They are always looking for new ways to work in an area and often those good ideas can come from a local council, who naturally understand their region better than others. We do have organisations that focus on this, so anyone that says we do not have any organisation out there that is funded by Government to carry out this activity would not be correct.

Q68 Conor Burns: Secretary of State, can I ask you if you have had an opportunity, either in your current role or in your private life before your current role, to visit Dorset to see the Jurassic Coast?

Sajid Javid: Yes, I have.

Q69 Conor Burns: You will be aware that it is England’s only naturally-designated world heritage site?

Sajid Javid: Yes.

Q70 Conor Burns: This relates to tourism and potential impact because, in the conurbation that I have the privilege of representing half of, tourism is our second largest economy and a lot of the visitors who come through Bournemouth and travel more widely into Dorset come to enjoy the Jurassic Coast. Are you aware of the obligations under Article 4 that the Government and UNESCO entered into in terms of the preservation of the Jurassic Coast?
**Sajid Javid:** I am aware, but not in any great detail.

**Q71 Conor Burns:** Okay. Let me just tell you exactly what it says. Under Article 4 of the World Heritage Convention 1972, the Government is under an obligation, specifically your department, to protect, conserve, present and transmit to future generations the sites identified as being part of the cultural and natural heritage. Some of this predates your arrival, in fairness, into the department, but I would like to ask you a question relating to how your department has handled its responsibility in relation to an application for a significant offshore wind farm off the Jurassic Coast, indeed off the coast of Dorset more widely.

There is a letter dated 17 February 2014 to the director of the World Heritage Centre at UNESCO in Paris. That is signed by your department’s head of world heritage. In that letter, she forwards on in full the impact assessment conducted solely by the developer, by the applicant, for the application and takes on trust the findings of it, despite significant concerns by UNESCO’s advisors on the basis on which that report was conducted. It waxes lyrical about the United Kingdom’s energy policy, which seems slightly divergent from the central role of your department in looking at that application. Do you know if that letter had ministerial sign-off?

**Sajid Javid:** I do not know and I would not know mainly because that was before I joined the department.

**Q72 Conor Burns:** Is that something you could look into for me and come back?

**Sajid Javid:** Yes, of course.

**Q73 Conor Burns:** It would seem peculiar, given it is England’s only designated natural heritage site, if that did not have ministerial sign-off. The letter concludes by the department saying, “We will review our position in the light of any new information” and this letter is dated, as I say, 17 February. On 2 May there was a letter from the International Union for Conservation of Nature, who are UNESCO’s formal and official advisors on this sort of project. That concludes, “Any potential impacts from the project of the natural heritage property are in contradiction to the overarching principles of the World Heritage Convention as stipulated in Article 4 as the completion of the project would result in the property being presented and transmitted to future generations in a form that is significantly different from what was there at the time of inscription and until today”. It concludes, “Specifically, the property will change from being located in a natural setting that is largely free from manmade structures to one where its setting is dominated by manmade structures”.

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Oral evidence: DCMS Annual Report 2013-14, HC 940
Do you agree with the International Union for Conservation of Nature that your department could and possibly should have commissioned independent analysis rather than relying on the developer’s own report and forwarding that to the planning inspectorate?

**Sajid Javid:** I can see your point on this, Mr Burns, and your concerns, but I do not think it would be sensible for me to tell you whether I agree or do not agree with that without looking into the issue in more detail. It sounds to me that clearly, first of all, it is a long-running issue. It is a complex issue involving, as you have alluded to yourself here, aspects of international law, for example, and I think it is the kind of thing that needs to be looked at carefully before I opine on it and give you any opinion.

**Q74 Conor Burns:** You are aware, of course, that UNESCO has, in fact, in the past been quite robust in removing world heritage designations. They did so in Mont Saint-Michel when the French potentially allowed a set of turbines to go in, and they removed it from the Elbe Valley in Germany in 2009 following the construction of a four-lane bridge. I am more interested in the process and whether the department have lived up to the obligations that are placed upon them because the International Union for Conservation of Nature said of your department forwarding on the developer’s analysis that this raises questions on the capability and objectivity of the assessment. I am interested to know whether you would be prepared to go away and look at this again and see whether it has been properly handled and whether your department could have had more of an impact in slowing the process down. It is obviously now with the Planning Inspectorate so it has gone ahead and we are waiting for a review on that.

Of course, the UNESCO committee, which ultimately will opine on this, does not meet until May when the Planning Inspectorate may well by that time have made a judgment. I would ask you to undertake a little bit of a review of this whole process. I have tried this through the form of an Adjournment debate but, despite having given the questions in advance, the answers were less than satisfactory. At stake here is England’s only designated natural heritage site. It is potentially very serious and will have a massive impact not only on tourism to that area but to our international reputation.

**Sajid Javid:** It sounds to me it is a very important issue, not just to you and the people of Dorset but there is a wider issue for the UK for the reason you set out. I would be more than happy to look at it in greater detail and to review it and thank you for the opportunity.

**Chair:** Can we move on now to the knotty question that has occupied this Committee for quite some time of press standards and potential regulation?
Q75 Paul Farrelly: A recent job advertisement for the chief executive of the Press Recognition Panel prompted some wry amusement of the job spec because it implied a level of activity that simply does not look as if it is going to be there, quite frankly. The prospect is that, after much twiddling of thumbs, sometime after the election the Press Recognition Panel is going to come out and say it has not had anything to report on. Does that concern you?

Sajid Javid: No, because when the charter process was established one of the requirements was that there would be a recognition panel set up. Whether it has much work to do in terms of trying to recognise something depends on whether the press want to come forward with a body that wants to apply for recognition. That is a decision for the press.

Q76 Paul Farrelly: It does not concern you at all that nobody has approached the panel for recognition?

Sajid Javid: No.

Paul Farrelly: Not at all?

Sajid Javid: No.

Q77 Paul Farrelly: Notwithstanding that we all understood it was the Government’s position that it wanted to encourage self-regulators to seek recognition?

Sajid Javid: Not this Government’s position.

Paul Farrelly: Would you like to check that against replies given from the Prime Minister downwards after the session?

Sajid Javid: Well, as a Secretary of State for this department, it is certainly not my position.

Q78 Paul Farrelly: That is a change in Government policy, is it?

Sajid Javid: No, I think that is a settled Government policy and I am sure the Prime Minister and others will be in full agreement with that.

Q79 Paul Farrelly: After the Leveson inquiry, where do we go from here then, in your view?

Sajid Javid: One of the key outcomes of that inquiry was, first of all, to make sure that there is a system of independent self-regulation. I stress the words “independent” and “self”. What was established through the royal charter process was a system where the press, if it
chooses to do so, can set up a body that they set up themselves, because it is self-regulation and it is independent, and then that body can apply to the recognition panel and the recognition panel will then make a decision as to whether that body meets the requirements.

**Paul Farrelly:** We know all this.

**Sajid Javid:** Yes, I am just making sure that you know this.

**Paul Farrelly:** We know all this.

**Sajid Javid:** Oh, good.

Q80 **Paul Farrelly:** Time is running short. I have just mentioned Leveson. Let me divert. Is the Government still keen to see Leveson Part Two go ahead?

**Sajid Javid:** I think we will stay open-minded about what comes out of Leveson Part Two, but the priority was—

**Paul Farrelly:** No, it has not started.

**Sajid Javid:** No, but the priority was to have the royal charter process established, have the recognition panel established, and whether Leveson Part Two goes ahead will be something that we will see in the fullness of time.

Q81 **Paul Farrelly:** How much consideration have you given to that?

**Sajid Javid:** To Leveson Part Two?

**Paul Farrelly:** Yes.

**Sajid Javid:** Not much at all.

Q82 **Mr Bradshaw:** Sorry, Leveson Part Two has nothing to do with regulation and the royal charter. Leveson Part Two was about who did what to whom. It was a promise the Prime Minister made that would happen after the court cases had finished. Are you now saying the Government is not committed to that anymore?

**Sajid Javid:** No, as I understand it, Leveson Part Two has been more about the whole issue about media plurality.

**Mr Bradshaw:** No, sorry, you need to go back and get a better brief, Secretary of State. I am so sorry. It is about much more than that and it is a fundamental part of the original Leveson process that the Prime Minister set up. I am happy for you to correct the record in writing if you
want to, but I think you may want to reflect on the answer you gave my colleague.

**Q83 Paul Farrelly:** Regarding IPSO, when Sir Alan Moses took the job, on his first day in September, he gave an interview to the press saying that he was very disturbed about the resources at his disposal for investigations under this new body. In fact, he described the budget that he had been given as hopeless. Have you spoken to Sir Alan Moses to see what concerns he has and just generally apprise yourself of how things are going?

**Sajid Javid:** I am satisfied that the resources the recognition panel have are adequate.

**Q84 Paul Farrelly:** No, I am talking about IPSO now. Sir Alan Moses is the chairman of IPSO. On his first day in the job he gave a press interview where he described the resources at his disposal to pursue investigations with this newly found body as hopeless. I was wondering whether since you were appointed you have met with him before or after his appointment just to apprise yourself of how things are going.

**Sajid Javid:** I do not think it would be appropriate for me to get involved in that. That is a body that is set up by the industry or various members of the industry. It is for them to set it up the way they want to. It is for them to decide on important issues such as funding and it would be wholly inappropriate for me or any other Government Minister to get involved in that process. If that body then, once it has been set up, wants to go and apply to the recognition panel under this charter process, that is a decision, again, for that body and the industry. I think it would be wrong, given that this is independent self-regulation, for me as a Minister to get involved in decisions of that type.

**Q85 Paul Farrelly:** Given Leveson was a lengthy and very costly inquiry and it is a very controversial subject given the treatment of some of the victims, you seem to be displaying here a disinterest and lack of curiosity as to how things are going in the last months since your appointment.

**Sajid Javid:** No, I do not think it should be mistaken as a lack of interest. The Government have always been clear about what the charter process is, how it has come about, and how there is a system of incentives for bodies to apply for recognition, but that is a decision for those bodies. The principle that Lord Leveson had made absolutely clear, which I think most people have accepted, is that it should be independent. It should be self-regulation. I think for the Government to get more involved would be wrong because it would go against those key principles.
Q86 Paul Farrelly: Just one last question, Chair. Since you were appointed at the beginning of April, have you met any national newspaper editors?
Sajid Javid: Editors? Yes, I have.

Q87 Paul Farrelly: Roughly how many?
Sajid Javid: I cannot tell you, but all the meetings I have I would publish in any case. I cannot tell you exactly how many.

Q88 Paul Farrelly: You have met editors but you have not met the head of the new Press Complaints Commission, effectively?
Sajid Javid: No, I have met editors, of course. I think most politicians would meet editors of newspapers. I do not know if you ever have, but most politicians would do that.

Paul Farrelly: I used to work for one. It would be strange if I had not.
Sajid Javid: Yes.

Q89 Paul Farrelly: Have you met any representatives of the victims recently, Hacked Off, to discuss it?
Sajid Javid: Not recently, but I have met with Hacked Off, yes.

Paul Farrelly: Not recently, not since the body started at the beginning of September?
Sajid Javid: I can’t recall when I had the last meeting. I think it was when I was about three or four months into the job, so it probably would have been just before the summer.

Q90 Chair: While we are on the media, can I ask you, Secretary of State, one very different question, which is moving to broadcast media? Have you given any consideration to the future of Channel 4 or whether or not it might be transferred to the private sector?
Sajid Javid: It is not something we have looked at.

Q91 Chair: The Government has no current plans to look into that or give it consideration?
Sajid Javid: We have not looked at it. Since I have been in the department it is not an issue that we have looked at.
Q92 Angie Bray: Can we move on to some telecoms issues? I think around 18 December the Government was able to announce a binding agreement with the mobile networks, EE, O2, Three and Vodafone, to tackle poor signal issues, so-called partial non-spots. What undertakings have you given to mobile network operators in return for their agreement to invest in tackling partial non-spots in coverage?

Sajid Javid: First of all, can I say that this agreement was a landmark agreement when we announced it because it commits all the four operators in the UK to extend their coverage in terms of land mass to 90%. Land mass is not a measure that has been used before. It has always been about premises and, of course, that is important but, in terms of getting better coverage nationwide, land mass is absolutely key.

In terms of the commitments from Government, the key issue was around the Electronic Communications Code where it is something that I think should have been looked at in any case because it is outdated. It has been in place for over 20 years. It was set for an era of very different mobile communication technology and successive Governments have thought about updating it but never quite got round to it for whatever reason. What the operators wanted was a commitment from the Government that it would look at this issue. It would look at it seriously and introduce legislation to start making some of those changes. We looked at a Law Commission report on the ECC I think published around 18 months ago where they did a full consultation and the broad agreement was that the Government would try to take reform forward based on that Law Commission report.

Q93 Angie Bray: Do you foresee any barriers to the Government being able to deliver on its part of the deal?

Sajid Javid: It has to go through the parliamentary process, so no Government can give any commitment that something will 100% get done. I think the MNOs understand that there is a parliamentary process involved. It was also the changes being introduced by way of an amendment to the Infrastructure Bill. That Bill started life many months ago, so it is an amendment that many people would not have envisaged. It has to go through the Lords stage as well. The issue is a live issue but the Government have introduced the amendment and it is something that we will continue to work on.

Q94 Angie Bray: How committed do you think the operators are to getting this right and how soon do you think it might start showing some signs of working for all of us who get very frustrated when we are driving around the place and suddenly find our phones are not working?
**Sajid Javid**: First of all, I think they are very committed. Their commitment is to reach the 90% target by the end of 2017. I think they will reach that target in different ways because their starting positions can be quite different. What we also left open to them was it is up to them how they reach the 90%. For example, if they want the share masts or other technology and that is a way for them to get there, as long as that is within the regulatory framework, that is not an issue. There is no dictating about how this is done. I think they are all very committed to this and there is no reason to think that they would not reach their targets on time.

**Q95 Angie Bray**: Will the Government be watching closely and being tough on ensuring that they do get there in time? I think people’s patience is wearing pretty thin on this.

**Sajid Javid**: Ofcom will be watching closely. First of all, it was a voluntary agreement in the sense that they agreed with the Government that this is their target and this is what they will achieve. What makes it binding is that they are now in the process of putting that geographic commitment in their spectrum licences with Ofcom, so it is a hard-biting commitment from them. Ofcom will monitor the progress over the coming years to make sure that they are on target.

**Q96 Chair**: Before we move away from the Electronic Communications Code, are you aware of the concerns being expressed about the pressure to make it apply to the third party infrastructure providers?

**Sajid Javid**: Yes, I am.

**Q97 Chair**: What is your view of that?

**Sajid Javid**: At this point, I am listening to the concerns of stakeholders on that issue, not just the MNOs but you also have obviously landowners involved and you also have the third party infrastructure providers involved. What it highlights is that the old code has not kept up with how the industry has developed, the technology has developed and the practice has emerged on the ground. That is why I think it is sensible for Government to listen to all the stakeholders and to form a view based on that.

**Q98 Chair**: You have not yet reached a final view?

**Sajid Javid**: No, we have not.

**Chair**: You are still in listening mode?
**Sajid Javid**: We are still listening, yes.

**Q99 Angie Bray**: Looking at your annual departmental report and thinking about the big issue that we have covered very frequently when Ofcom has been before us, which is this issue around gaining provider-led switching, it is noticeable that, whereas the annual report talks a lot about tackling the not-spots and also talks about helping consumers with more transparency and contracts and avoiding unexpectedly high bills, it does not explicitly discuss making it easier for consumers to switch to different suppliers. Is that something that suggests this is still not an issue that the department is driving with any great force?

**Sajid Javid**: I think it does. It is not something that the department, when it comes to telecoms, has focused most of its resource and effort. The effort and resource over the last few months has been around improving coverage, notwithstanding that competition in this sector is vitally important for all the obvious reasons. That is something, however, that I know Ofcom is looking at and it is something that, once they have done their work on this and when they share their work with us and others, we would look at that very carefully in terms of the evidence they present us.

**Q100 Angie Bray**: Everything we have heard is that this is one of the key issues for consumers, that we need to get this change. I would have thought that would be something the Government would be alive to and wanting to drive forward with a certain amount of passion.

**Sajid Javid**: Yes. As I said, I would like Ofcom’s own work on this to be complete and at that point it would be sensible for the Government to take a look at this.

**Q101 Angie Bray**: How do you think you have performed on this so far?

**Sajid Javid**: On telecoms in general?

**Angie Bray**: Trying to push this gaining provider-led switching forward. How would you say that you have been—

**Sajid Javid**: Ms Bray, it just has not been a priority in terms of telecoms. The issue has been around improving coverage. That has been our focus, with the knowledge that Ofcom has been looking at this issue. I think between the Government and Ofcom there has been focus on the issue but, in terms of the Government’s own priority, it has been around improving coverage. Now that we have this deal, of course, there is still more work to be done on the ECC reforms that we just
talked about, but how you can get better competition in the market is something that I think will take more prominence.

**Q102 Angie Bray:** Ofcom has said if there was some help with legislation it might make it easier to get them where they want to be.

**Sajid Javid:** Yes. I am not aware that Ofcom has made any final decision on this yet. My understanding is they are still looking at switching and at what value it can add, but I wait for Ofcom’s final views on this.

**Q103 Chair:** Just quickly before we do broadband, going back to the historic agreement and so on, does this mean that national roaming is something that you are no longer pursuing as an option?

**Sajid Javid:** Yes, we are no longer pursuing it.

**Q104 Chair:** You do not think that national roaming will bring any more advantages than you have managed already to obtain?

**Sajid Javid:** Before this deal, we had announced a consultation that looked at various options and national roaming was one of the options that was presented. The point of consultation was to look at the pros and cons of each and to see what is feasible and to also look at the timeframe and the knock-on impacts of each issue. National roaming, as for many of those other issues that came up in the consultation, would have required legislation as well, which would have potentially slowed the process down. What we saw with the agreement in December was that the mobile companies, realising that it is in everyone’s interests that we reach a solution on this quickly—better coverage is not just the right thing to do, it is better for their customers—were in a mood to have this voluntary agreement, which I think is a credit to them and everyone that worked on that. I think it is a better outcome than the other alternatives.

**Q105 Chair:** Is national roaming permanently off the table or is that something that perhaps might be looked at again?

**Sajid Javid:** It is not something we are looking at.

**Q106 Angie Bray:** How would you say your department’s policy of the rollout of broadband across the country is going?

**Sajid Javid:** We have made some very good progress, especially in 2014. In terms of superfast broadband access overall, we are currently at over 40,000 properties a week getting access and that is the highest rate ever. I think by next month this year we will have reached
million properties in total having superfast broadband access and we are on target to meet our goals, which is 90% of premises having access by 2016 and 95% by 2017.

**Q107 Angie Bray:** It would appear that DCMS spent only 8% of its capital budget for the broadband programme for 2014/15 by midyear, while all 44 local projects are in delivery and some are nearing completion. How are you going to make sure that the remaining 92% of the budget for the broadband programme is going to be spent effectively?

**Sajid Javid:** I think Sue can respond on that.

**Sue Owen:** The reason that we have been slow getting the money out the door is because we have been bearing down very heavily on BT to make sure that they produce invoices for everything, that they are as cheap as they can be, and so on. They have been delivering stuff before we have paid them. I envisage that spend ramping up quite quickly next year. We have a very good system for making sure we get value for money with them, which the PAC are going to be talking to us about next week.

**Q108 Angie Bray:** Are you still happy that BT has such a dominant role in this particular programme or do you have concerns about that?

**Sue Owen:** I do not. I do not think you do either.

**Sajid Javid:** I think the reality is that, especially when you get out of the cities into the more rural areas, BT, by virtue of Openreach in the BT Group, is the one that has the infrastructure in those areas that can be utilised. It does not face much competition. When the local authorities are deciding with BDUK who can deliver access at the lowest possible government subsidy, BT Group is often the only player in town.

**Q109 Angie Bray:** BT does stand to benefit hugely from the public funding, though, doesn’t it?

**Sajid Javid:** I think the real benefit is overall to the consumer and to the economy as a whole. Our own studies, which I think we published at the time, show that, for every £1 invested of Government money, there is a £20 return to the economy overall. That does suggest there is a much wider benefit to the country and to society through this.

Also, the agreements that BDUK has signed with BT on this—more specifically, rather than BT I think we should call it Openreach because that is the partner—have a clawback mechanism. When the take-up of
superfast broadband reaches a level of 20% or more there is a clawback to the Government in terms of return of subsidy. That is because it reflects the fact that, when these agreements are entered into, the reason why Openreach has not automatically without subsidy gone into many rural areas is because it is not commercial for them because they do not believe they are going to get enough take-up. These contracts were rightly constructed in a way that, if they do beat their own take-up targets, they will have to give money back to the Government.

**Q110 Angie Bray:** Moving from the rural to the more urban, of course I represent a London seat, I have had a swathe of complaints from businesses, places like Park Royal, a lot of much smaller businesses, all of them very dependent on broadband, which they are just not getting. The message I get is that every now and then BT tells them, “Superfast, just round the corner; you will be next”, and then miraculously it disappears and they are never next and they never get it. They say the speeds they are getting offered at the moment are absolutely useless for the business they need to do. There is a feeling that residential has been given first priority, largely because there are more votes attached to residential than business. When are we going to start making sure we support our businesses by getting them the superfast broadband that they need?

**Sajid Javid:** First of all, you point out a real problem, but I think the feeling that somehow it is about votes and stuff would be wholly incorrect. The reason is as follows. In urban areas, under EU rules, effectively we cannot provide a subsidy or, put another way, what would have to happen to provide that subsidy is something that currently the operators—who are BT and others; it might be Virgin or whoever the other providers are in that urban area—just would not accept. That has been the issue. Compared to rural areas where it has been easier to use a subsidy approach, in an urban area EU rules restrict the options that we have.

Then you might say, “Okay, given it is an urban area, shouldn’t it just be commercial? Aren’t there enough people? You have residences and businesses that can take it up. That should make it commercial”. The reason why that seems not to be happening is many of the large companies—not the SMEs that you have identified, rightly so, but many of the larger companies—have entered into bespoke solutions. They have bypassed BT or other companies and entered into their own bespoke solutions. As a result, operators feel they might not get enough customers in total once those big guys are ruled out to cover their costs and make it commercial.

Having said all this, I totally agree with you, I think this is a real problem. We must work hard to find a solution for those companies,
the SMEs in those business parks and stuff, in those cities, and that is exactly what we are looking at, at this point, in great detail. We are talking to the EU and the operators and some other stakeholders and I am confident we can find a way forward. It is something that is very much on our agenda and we are making good progress in the next step to deal with that particular issue.

Q111 Angie Bray: Are you talking to representatives from SMEs?
Sajid Javid: Yes, we are talking to either businesses or their representatives, including people like the FSB.

Q112 Chair: Before we leave broadband, are you aware of the research that was commissioned by Ofcom, which showed that problems people are encountering in obtaining access to the internet at high speed, the part of the chain that is represented by the household cabinet is only responsible sometimes for around 30% of the problems and 70% of the time it is not there at all? The Government appears to be only concentrating on that part of the connection to the internet.
Sajid Javid: Sorry, just to be clear, which part, the cabinet?

Chair: All the concentration is on improving people’s access from their home to the fibre in the cabinet, but quite often there are problems associated at other points. It may even be from the device to the router in the home. In terms of people’s experience, we should not just look at that single part of the connectivity but we should be looking at trying to address the problem wherever it lies. That was what came out in the Ofcom research. Are you aware of that and have the Government given any thought to that?

Sajid Javid: Yes, I am aware of that. I remember when that came out from Ofcom. We have focused, through BDUK, in connecting more and more cabinets because I think that for most people, notwithstanding that some may have the kinds of problems that you talk about, that will make an immediate difference. Having that connection to the cabinet means that, although they are relying on the old copper lines to still get it into their home, the overall connection will certainly speed up. That is the quickest way to make a big difference.

A related issue is we have found in many cases when cabinets are connected many people are not aware that the superfast is available in their area. I get letters every week either from Members of Parliament or members of the public saying, “When am I going to get superfast broadband?” The first thing that I do now or ask the team to do is to check whether they have it or not. In almost half the cases they already have it and they just were not aware. As I said, 40,000
premises are being connected a week now, so the landscape is changing dramatically. The superfast broadband coverage footprint has gone up from just over 40% in 2010 to 80% today. Our priority has been about connecting the local cabinets. The points you make about some other problems people might have, I think it is worth looking at what can be done but only if we do not have to deprioritise some of the other efforts that we have in connecting those cabinets.

Chair: I apologise that I overlooked Ben. He wanted to ask another question on mobile.

Q113 Mr Bradshaw: Going back to mobile phones, Secretary of State, almost exactly a year ago your predecessor announced that the Government had achieved an agreement with mobile phone companies to cap bills for phones stolen abroad and that new agreement would be enforced in spring last year. According to the Citizens Advice service, this still has not happened and people are facing charges of up to £23,000 when their mobile phones are stolen abroad. They wrote to you about this in November but have not yet had a reply. I wonder if you could update the Committee.

Sue Owen: I think that is a joint responsibility with BIS and Ed Vaizey is having the mobile network operators in for a roundtable in January. To get them to confirm details of the caps that they will offer for lost phones is something we need to press them very hard on.

Q114 Mr Bradshaw: Any idea why this promise was not fulfilled and is now running so late?

Sue Owen: No, I have no idea why they are not doing it. We need to put more pressure on them.

Q115 Mr Bradshaw: It was a promise given by the Secretary of State. Why was that not delivered? Could you perhaps write to the Committee with some of the background to this?

Sue Owen: Okay.

Mr Bradshaw: It does not affect a huge number of people, but for those people it does affect it is absolutely horrible.

Sajid Javid: Yes. We will do. Thank you.

Chair: We have, I think, one final area, which is rather different: libraries.
Q116 Paul Farrelly: I have read both of the recent reports on libraries, one from the department and the Sieghart review, the “Independent Library Report for England”, and they share one thing in common. They do not give any overall figures for library closures over recent years, those operating on reduced hours, the numbers now dependent on volunteers to run them or, indeed, what has happened to those libraries that have transferred to volunteers and whether in the meantime everything has withered on the vine. Isn’t that a major omission?

Sajid Javid: Sorry, just to be clear, you mean an omission of those reports that they do not talk about the number of libraries?

Paul Farrelly: Yes, isn’t it an omission that they give no overall figures for library closures and the impact on libraries over the years of local authority spending cuts?

Sajid Javid: That is not the purpose of the report. Take the recent “Sieghart Report”. First of all, it recognises the hugely important role that libraries play in our local communities and how important they are to us all, but recognises the challenges they face. One challenge you have mentioned would be that in certain local authorities they would need to look at their funding and they would look at ways to save money, but equally, even without that, libraries face challenges not least because of the internet digital revolution. How people use libraries compared with the past is changing and continues to change. The reports are looking at how libraries can develop, how they can become more relevant in their local communities, and how they can co-operate with perhaps other offerings of a local authority or other community offerings to share costs and grow stronger that way.

Q117 Paul Farrelly: We produced a report on libraries and library closures in 2012. During the evidence session in March 2012, the Minister gave us a commitment that he would produce those statistics by the end of 2014. I have the exchange in the evidence here. In fact, in our report we repeated it high up in the summary, “During our inquiry, the Minister gave us a commitment to produce a report by the end of 2014 on the cumulative effect on library services of the cuts in local authority provision and the promotion of alternatives such as transfers to community volunteers. We welcome that commitment and look forward to that report”. In the Government’s response to the report, the Government gave a commitment to do that and a commitment to give us the evidence on the cumulative outcome of library service restructuring and it has not done so. Why is that?

Sajid Javid: I will look into that commitment. You just brought it to my attention; thank you for that. I will look into it.
Q118 Paul Farrelly: Could we be provided with the figures as a matter of urgency following this session, because the department gave that commitment?

Sajid Javid: I will see what figures we have on the issue you raise. I think you are asking about library closures and where they have happened. We will see what figures we have.

Q119 Paul Farrelly: Over the years we were also asking about those on reduced hours. We were asking about those that were dependent on volunteers, and there was a concern that those that transferred to volunteers might wither through lack of resourcing on the vine. There was a commitment given to review what had happened to those and it has not been fulfilled.

Sajid Javid: I will look at that and I will certainly get back to you.

Q120 Paul Farrelly: Just a final question. The “Sieghart Report” makes some very worthy recommendations about the future of the library service and it includes recommendations for professional development of librarians. When we started our inquiry in 2012, my own county council, Staffordshire, stood out from the crowd in committing itself to making no cuts to its libraries, but it has since been put in a position where it has changed that approach. I have two in my area that have been the centres of local communities for generations, in a village called Audley and a former mining community at Silverdale. If volunteers do not take those libraries over, it is quite possible they would close. Whatever happens, as in all parts of the country, the proposals mean there will not be professional librarians in those libraries. Given that picture, how does the Government propose to implement the recommendations on professional development when it can hardly be a calling that is very attractive to people?

Sajid Javid: First of all, the “Sieghart Report” was commissioned by the Government precisely because we take the issue of libraries and the future of our libraries very seriously. The report has just been published; it has only been a matter of weeks. Now is the time for the Government to consider what is in the report, the recommendations, and to respond to them. We have not responded formally yet. Of course, we are discussing internally about which one of these recommendations we can take forward, and when we do we will publish that report and you will get an answer to the issue on professionalism and training.

Chair: I think those are all the questions we have. We have covered a lot of ground. Secretary of State and Permanent Secretary, thank you very much.
Sajid Javid: Thank you very much.