Further to my oral evidence to the Committee I am writing with two further thoughts about building low-cost high-gain capacity in the Lords committee system:

1. In terms of following-up on the impact of ad hoc committees it would be very easy and quite innovative to commission academics to do this work on the basis of an agreed template. As you know, academics are very keen to generate 'impact' case studies and so taking on a small role for the House of Lords like this would be perfect. It would need to be made absolutely clear that the aim was not to launch a new investigation but simply to assess the degree to which the government had (or had not) followed-through on recommendations. I think this would be completely sensible, it could bring bright new scholars within the ambit of parliament, and it would give the Lords a valuable positive win-win resource. I would be happy to help to pilot this proposal should the Committee so wish.

2. One of the most obvious 'gaps' at the moment in relation to the Lords committees is their ability to translate and promote their reports to the public. As a result, the House of Lords does a huge amount of brilliant work that rarely gets acknowledged beyond SW1, and certainly does little in terms of promoting the public understanding of politics. However, I am working with a team of computational scientists and big data specialists who think they might be able to design an algorithm through which reports and debates could be automatically recorded and translated into accessible forms for a public audience. So this would be a more sophisticated form of Hansard that could be tailored for different sections of the public. I have no idea if this can actually work but they are very confident and I just thought it might inject some valuable capacity for engaging with the public into the House of Lords. I could send you some details if you would like - we could even test it on a couple of case studies if you wanted.

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