

# Green member of House of Lords seeks to 'abolish' herself



3 February 2017

**\* Green peer seeks to transform House of Lords from within**

**\* Jenny Jones: Lords reform is essential for proper scrutiny of Brexit process**

Jenny Jones, Green member of the House of Lords, will today (February 3) continue her fight to transform the unelected chamber.

Baroness Jones' House of Lords Reform Bill will get its second reading on Friday, with reform of the Lords more important now than ever to enable proper scrutiny of the Brexit process.

Baroness Jones hopes to gather support from within the Lords for her plans to replace the House of Lords with a democratic and effective second chamber. This would use proportional representation to elect a new house, but keep many existing peers as non-voting experts.

Her Bill is the first with this mix of proposals to come from within the Lords.

Jenny Jones said:

"I'm not the only Lord who wants to abolish their right to vote in the second chamber, but I'm aiming to be one of the most energetic peers in making it happen. I'm relatively new to the Lords and I hope my fresh approach will help fast track the various discussions about Lords reform.

"The referendum vote in favour of Brexit makes Lords reform both urgent and inevitable. The government could try to push through all kinds of bad ideas on the back of the Brexit negotiations, the Great Repeal Act and hasty trade deals.

"We need an effective and democratic chamber to help scrutinise the secondary legislation and the international deals.

"The Government may well give itself so-called Henry 8th powers to just unilaterally repeal or amend European laws after the Repeal Act passes, opening the door to a bonfire of environmental and social protections. We need a second chamber that has the legitimacy and popular backing to challenge the use of such anti-democratic powers."

**Notes:**

1 <https://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld/ldordpap.htm>

Jenny's bill is the third on a list to be taken at 10am on Friday 3rd June. Nine peers in addition to Jenny have put their names down to speak so far.

House of Lords Reform Bill [HL] Second Reading [[Baroness Jones of Moulsecoomb](#)]

If the bill is read a second time, [Baroness Jones of Moulsecoomb](#) to move that the bill be committed to a Committee of the Whole House

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## **Press release: New charity investigation: The Suyuti Institute**

From:

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Part of:

The Charity Commission has opened a statutory inquiry into The Suyuti Institute (registered charity number 1151600).

The Charity Commission, the independent regulator of charities in England and Wales, has opened a statutory inquiry into [The Suyuti Institute \(registered charity number 1151600\)](#). The inquiry was opened on 16 January 2017.

The charity has objects to advance the Islamic Faith through education and distributing literature.

Concerns were raised with the Commission about a lecture given by a trustee of the charity and whether the content of that speech was appropriate and furthered the charity's purposes. As a result of these concerns the regulator met with the trustees and conducted a visit and books and records inspection at the charity on 1 November 2016.

At the visit, the Commission learnt that the charity had taken over a private trust linked to one of the trustee's late mother, which included all of its assets and liabilities. The Commission has specific concerns relating to the management of conflicts of interest and whether the trustees have acted in the best interests of the charity to accept the assets and liabilities of the

private trust. The Commission is also concerned that this decision has exposed the charity to significant financial risk.

As a result of these serious concerns the Commission has issued an order restricting transactions from the charity's bank account and directed the trustees to provide information and documents to the Commission – [see notes to editors](#).

The inquiry will examine the administration, governance and management of the charity by the trustees, in particular:

- whether the trustees have properly exercised their legal duties and responsibilities under charity law in the administration of the charity
- the financial management of the charity, in particular with regard to the decision to accept the assets and liabilities of the private trust
- whether there has been any private benefit to the trustees of the charity
- whether the trustees have operated the charity in furtherance of its charitable objects for the public benefit
- whether there has been misconduct and/ or mismanagement by the trustees

It is the Commission's policy, after it has concluded an inquiry, to publish a report detailing what issues the inquiry looked at, what actions were undertaken as part of the inquiry and what the outcomes were. Reports of previous inquiries by the Commission are available on its website.

The charity's details can be viewed on the Commission's [online charity search tool](#).

Ends

PR 09/17

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## Notes to editors

1. The order to freeze the bank accounts of the charity was made on 18 January 2017 under section 76 (3) (d) of the Charities Act 2011. The Direction to the trustees to provide information to the Commission was made on 19 January 2017 under section 47 of the Charities Act 2011.
2. [The Charity Commission](#) is the independent regulator of charities in England and Wales. To find out more about our work, see our [annual report](#).
3. Search for charities on our [online register](#).
4. Section 46 of the Charities Act 2011 gives the Commission the power to institute inquiries. The opening of an inquiry gives the Commission access to a range of investigative, protective and remedial legal powers.
5. The Commission's decision to announce the opening of a statutory inquiry is based on whether it is in the public interest to do so and with consideration of our objective to increase public trust and confidence

in charities.

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## News story: Government announces efficiency savings for 2015/16

The Government saved £3.3 billion for the taxpayer during the last financial year through greater efficiency in the procurement of common goods, services and information technology; more efficient management of office space and the disposal of surplus government property; and through tackling fraud, error and uncollected debt in welfare spending.

These savings were delivered across government and the Cabinet Office is continuing to improve capability and performance in key areas, helping departments collaborate to save money on everything from web servers to office buildings.

Savings in 2015/16 consist of:

- £1.2 billion of operational savings from reforming government's commercial activities through improving government's ways of purchasing, improving the provision of specialist expertise in complex commercial procurements, negotiations and disputes, and reducing the cost of the government's property estate
- £339 million through setting standards and providing assurances through the Government Digital Service
- around £805 million in savings from a number of cross-government reform packages aimed at tackling fraud, error and debt
- £973 million through the sale of surplus government property.

After the progress made in the last Parliament, where the Government announced total savings of £52.2 billion\*, many of the more straightforward savings have already been achieved.

Some of the larger savings that the Government is targeting will only be achieved by total service transformation, much of it enabled by digital. That means making some early investments at the beginning of this Parliament to achieve considerable gains at the end.

This is the first time the Government has measured efficiency including savings delivered in the current Parliament and represents a significant step toward enabling greater efficiency in the way government works for years ahead.

Minister for the Cabinet Office Ben Gummer said:

Ensuring that our public finances are on a sustainable path is

vital to securing a strong and stable economy that works for everyone. We have made significant steps forward in tackling fraud, selling off redundant government property such as the former Civil Service College in Sunningdale and making better use of modern digital technology to drive savings.

The Government is committed to delivering value for money for taxpayers and the Cabinet Office will continue to drive savings right across departments as set out in the Spending Review in 2015.

The Government is maintaining relentless focus on efficiency. It is committed and is on-track to deliver the manifesto commitment of £15 billion to £20 billion of annual efficiency by the end of the Parliament.

Ongoing improvement in efficiency should be part of business-as-usual activity across the public sector.

As announced at Budget 2016, the Government intends to identify an additional £3.5 billion of savings in 2019/20. This will be done through the Efficiency Review, which will report in autumn 2017. The Efficiency Review will look to embed a culture where incremental improvements in the efficiency of public services are made year on year.

## **Savings examples**

### **Commercial**

We saved £1.06 billion in 2015/16 from reforming government's commercial activities. This includes £182 million from improving the way departments across government purchase common goods and services, encouraging collaboration to achieve better value for money, and £879 million from improving the provision of specialist expertise in complex commercial procurements, negotiations and disputes.

For example in the Department of Health the Complex Transactions team has worked on the negotiation of extension to current NHS Supply Chain contract with significantly improved terms that deliver value to the NHS customers through savings in product costs. This work realised savings in 2015/16 of £76.7 million.

### **Digital**

The Government Digital Service (GDS) helps government departments work together to transform government, meet user needs and deliver value for money in the purchase of technology goods and services. Through setting standards and providing assurance, GDS realised £339 million in 2015/16 from controlling costs and the implementation of their ICT strategy by Departments.

For example, GDS Spend Controls, in line with the Government's Technology Code of Practice, have collaborated and helped the Department for Work and

Pensions (DWP) to save Her Majesty's Government over £875,000 in 2015/16. This was achieved across several of their digital services where GDS helped to either deliver the outcome in a more efficient way or reduce spend on part of a whole project because the user need had changed.

## **Fraud, error and debt**

The Fraud, Error, Debt and Grants (FEDG) function works with Government departments to identify initiatives that will reduce financial loss and waste in this area. It also agrees cross-government standards for fraud, error, grant and debt activities. Across Government, several specialist programmes, mainly focused in DWP and HMRC, realised benefits worth £803m in 2015/16. Some of these have been led by programmes within departments, others by programmes, such as the Debt Market Integrator and National Fraud Initiative, that are led by the Cabinet Office.

## **Property**

The Government Property Unit (GPU) has central oversight over all government land and property. GPU work across the Civil Service to create a more effective, efficient, and better value government estate. In 2015/16 GPU facilitated the selling of surplus property worth £973 million and fully realised annual savings of £95 million from exiting (in 2014/15 and 2015/16) property leases and negating running costs such as rent, rates and facilities management.

For example, the sale of the famous Admiralty Arch building that straddles the entrance to the Mall and Trafalgar Square generated capital receipts worth £66 million in 2015/16.

## **Information about the savings data**

The Cabinet Office ensures departments work together to address waste and improve accountability across a range of areas, including IT, procurement and property.

In the last year of the previous Parliament the Cabinet Office helped departments across Whitehall save £18.6 billion against a baseline year of 2009/10. For this savings data, as much as possible we updated the baseline year against which we measure savings to 2014/15. This is to reflect the efficiency and reforms made in the previous Parliament which have been embedded into how government works.

These savings figures are not national or official statistics: they are based on management information evidence in department reports and other supporting evidence.

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## **News story: GC represented at international event on food fraud and food allergy**

Close to 100 participants from Europe, Canada, north and south America, Australia and Hong Kong attended an exciting and informative conference on food fraud and food allergy in Bari, Italy, on 26th and 27th January 2017. The conference was organised by Prof. Roland Poms of [MoniQA](#) (International Association for Monitoring and Quality Assurance in the Total Food Supply Chain) and Dr Linda Monaci of [ISPA](#) (Istituto di Scienze delle Produzioni Alimentari).

Michael Walker, of the Government Chemist Programme in [LGC](#), delivered a keynote talk 'Food detectives: what it takes to trace food fraud' in the Food Fraud section of the conference. Michael also discussed allergen analysis with a talk entitled 'What do we need to measure? How should it be reported? And how low can we go?' in the Food Allergen Management section.

Food fraud and food allergen management are topics that rarely share one event, but have a lot in common. Appropriate food labeling and consumer trust are very important issues which need to be managed by the food industry. Both may have strong impact on the health and socio-economic status of a society. They both need adequate communication and demand the use of comprehensive databases and sophisticated analytical methods. Both require a collaborative effort from science, industry and the regulatory environment.

The conference brought together participants from the food industry, ingredient suppliers, agricultural producers, retail and trade, consumer organizations, private and public analytical laboratories, representatives from R&D, marketing, quality control, legal departments, as well as food scientists, technologists, analytical method providers, regulatory bodies, authorities and the media. There were productive discussions and sharing of ideas that, it is hoped, will assist stakeholders to address the problems in these interrelated areas.

Notes from the event are collected in the attached document.

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## **Press release: Multi-million pound cash boost to help create local jobs**

## and growth

Communities Secretary Sajid Javid today (2 February 2017) announced [the latest instalment](#) from a £1.8 billion dedicated Local Growth Fund to help create jobs, support businesses and encourage growth.

Today, Mr Javid announced £492 million for 8 local enterprise partnerships across London, the South East, and a further £150 million for the East of England.

This investment could see 237,000 jobs created, 119,000 homes built and attract over £4.7 billion investment. It comes on top of the £2.2 billion of growth funding already awarded.

In line with the government's modern [Industrial Strategy](#), this funding will help build on the UK's strengths and spread growth more evenly across the country.

Communities Secretary Sajid Javid said:

As part of efforts to deliver an economy that works for everyone, the government is equipping local people with the resources they need to boost growth in their area.

This new money will give businesses across the region the support and opportunities they need to achieve their potential. This is on top of the £2.2 billion we have already awarded.

Minister for London Gavin Barwell said:

London is recognised the world over as an economic powerhouse and we're determined to see it go from strength-to-strength.

Today's £141 million funding for the capital will help deliver as many as 5,400 homes over the next 5 years, support projects to improve the environment at the heart of the city and help young Londoners learn a wide range of new skills.

Local Growth Minister Andrew Percy said:

From Brighton to the Norfolk Broads today's investment will support the delivery of new homes and jobs right across the South East and East of England.

These growth deals are a crucial part of our efforts to create an economy that works for everyone, and will ensure every region of the country has the chance to realise its full potential.



# Creating an economy that works for everyone

The £12 billion [Local Growth Fund](#) provides local leaders with the cash they need to support locally determined projects. Under the fund, England's 38 local enterprise partnerships – made up of council leaders and business representatives – bid for investments based on local priorities.

Bids are highly competitive and – to be successful – local enterprise partnerships need to work with partners to agree strong and accountable governance and put forward proposals that boost growth and bring in private sector funding.

£7.3 billion of the £12 billion Local Growth Fund has already been allocated to more than 900 projects across England – helping to build vital infrastructure, improve skills and create thousands of jobs. The remainder of the funding has been invested in projects such as improving transport networks and building new homes.

Across London, the South East and the East of England, this has already:

- invested £102 million in 20 projects across London's further education sector, which are projected to provide support to over 120,000 students and deliver nearly 17,000 apprenticeships
- contributed £4.5 million into the Oxfordshire Centre for Technology and Innovation to boost local skills in across engineering and emerging technologies
- funded improvements to the A2300 Burgess Hill Link Road relieving congestion and unlocking up to 3,000 new homes and 5,000 jobs
- put the UK at the forefront of next generation mobile communication development by supporting the establishment of the 5G Innovation Centre at the University of Surrey
- started the creation of the world-first International Aviation Academy – Norwich, which will deliver training in all aspects of aviation engineering

Now this latest allocation of £1.8 billion government investment – including £492 million in London and the South East and £150 million in the East of England – will help do even more to benefit the lives of local people across the country. New projects include:

- Air Quality Programme – improving London's air quality through a commercial boiler scrappage scheme and further grant support to businesses to implement measures to reduce pollution from their operations
- creating a Bio-Innovation Centre, a business incubator for new life-science projects, part of a new Life Sciences building at the University of Sussex
- developing a Technical and Professional Skills Centre at Stansted Airport helping to create or safeguard an estimated 540 jobs and support 530 students in aircraft engineering.
- building the Stoke Mandeville Relief Road as part of the Aylesbury Ring Road development – the new route will connect and enable development of

- major new housing and employment locations to the south of Aylesbury
- £15 million to establish an Innovation and Productivity Fund in the New Anglia LEP to provide capital investment to use technology to boost productivity in local businesses

Of the funding awarded today, £492 million will be awarded to the 8 local enterprise partnerships in London and the South East and £150 million will go to the 3 local enterprise partnerships in the East of England.

This comes on top of the £556 million allocated to [local enterprise partnerships in the Northern Powerhouse](#) last week – with allocations to the Midlands due very shortly.

## Further information

Today the government has announced the [Local Growth Fund 3 allocations](#).

The 8 local enterprise partnerships in the London and the South East have been awarded:

### Local Enterprise Partnership Funding awarded

Buckinghamshire Thames Valley	£20.48 million
Coast to Capital	£66.06 million
Enterprise M3	£71.12 million
London	£141.28 million
Oxfordshire	£24.16 million
Solent	£31.02 million
South East	£102.65 million
Thames Valley Berkshire	£35.56 million

The 3 local enterprise partnerships in the East of England have been awarded:

Local Enterprise Partnership	Funding awarded
Greater Cambridge Greater Peterborough	£37.62 million
Hertfordshire	£43.95 million
New Anglia	£69.06 million