



The UNITED KINGDOM PARLIAMENT

**COMMITTEE OF
PUBLIC ACCOUNTS**



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**Briefing for posts & hosts
Visit to Copenhagen and Stockholm
20-24 May 2007**

Membership of the Committee of Public Accounts

The Committee consists of sixteen members, of whom a quorum is four. The members are nominated at the beginning of each Parliament (before December 1974, Members were nominated at the beginning of each Session) on the basis of a motion made by a Government minister, after consultation with the Opposition. Changes in membership are made from time to time during the Parliament, often because Members have become Ministers or front-bench opposition spokesmen.

The party proportions of the Committee, like other committees, are the same as in the House, and at present this gives 9 Labour members, 5 Conservative members, and 2 minority party members (at present from the Liberal Democrats). One of the members is the Financial Secretary to the Treasury, who does not normally attend (Rt Hon John Healey MP). The Committee chooses its own chairman, traditionally an Opposition member, usually with previous experience as a Treasury minister. Divisions in the Committee are very rare, generally occurring less than once a year.

The current membership of the Committee is as follows:

Mr Edward Leigh MP (Chairman)	(Conservative, Gainsborough)
Mr Richard Bacon MP	(Conservative, South Norfolk)
Annette Brooke MP	(Liberal Democrat, Mid Dorset and Poole North)
Mr Greg Clarke MP	(Conservative, Tunbridge Wells)
Rt Hon David Curry MP	(Conservative, Skipton and Ripon)
Mr Ian Davidson MP	(Labour, Glasgow South West)
Mr Philip Dunne MP	(Conservative, Ludlow)
Helen Goodman MP	(Labour, Bishop Auckland)
Rt Hon John Healey MP	(Labour, Wentworth)
Mr Sadiq Khan MP	(Labour, Tooting)
Mr Austin Mitchell MP	(Labour, Great Grimsby)
Dr John Pugh MP	(Liberal Democrat, Southport)
Rt Hon Don Touhig	(Labour, Islwyn)
Rt Hon Alan Williams MP	(Labour, Swansea West)
Mr Iain Wright MP	(Labour, Hartlepool)
Mr Derek Wyatt MP	(Labour, Sittingbourne and Sheppey)

Purpose of visit

The proposed visit stems from the Committee's ongoing interest in methods of financial management and control. It will give the Committee a valuable opportunity to compare the Westminster model of accountability to those of the Danish and Swedish Parliaments. The visit will also allow the Committee to compare audit arrangements of the two countries. It follows similar visits to other European Union countries and to the United States.

Participants on the visit

The following Members and staff will be participating on the visit:

Members:

Mr Edward Leigh MP (Chairman)
Mr Richard Bacon MP
Annette Brooke MP
Mr Ian Davidson MP
Mr Philip Dunne MP

Mr Austin Mitchell MP
Dr John Pugh MP
Mr Iain Wright MP

Staff:

Mark Etherton – Clerk of the Committee
Emma Sawyer – Committee Assistant

A brief guide to the Committee of Public Accounts

History and order of reference

A Committee of Public Accounts was first appointed in 1861, and in the following year the appointment was made permanent by a Standing Order, now No. 148, which states that the Committee is appointed for the examination of the accounts showing the appropriation of the sums granted by Parliament to meet the public expenditure, and, since 1934, of such other accounts laid before Parliament as the Committee may think fit.

The Appropriation Accounts for each financial year are prepared and laid before Parliament under the Exchequer and Audit Department Acts 1866 and 1921. They show the extent to which the money granted by Parliament by Consolidated Fund Acts (following voting by the House of Commons on Estimates presented to it) has been spent, and are signed by senior civil servants from the departments concerned (Accounting Officers, see para. 20). They are audited by the Comptroller and Auditor General, and in addition to giving his certificate that the expenditure has been applied for the purposes authorised by Parliament, he may make reports on the accounts.

Constitution and powers

The Committee consists of sixteen Members, of whom a quorum is four. The Members are nominated at the beginning of each Parliament on the basis of a motion made by a Government Minister, after consultation with the Opposition. Changes in membership are made from time to time during the Parliament, often because Members have become Ministers or front-bench opposition spokesmen.

The party proportions of the Committee, like other committees, are the same as in the House, and currently this gives 9 Labour members, 5 Conservative members, and 2 minority party members (at present from the Liberal Democrats). One of the members is the Financial Secretary to the Treasury, who does not normally attend.¹ The Committee chooses its own chairman, traditionally an opposition member with previous experience as a Treasury minister.² Divisions in the Committee are very rare.

The Committee has the usual power to send for persons, papers and records, to adjourn from place to place and to report from time to time. It does not have the power, given to most select committees, to sit on days on which the House is adjourned or to appoint specialist advisers.

Examination of accounts

Following the passing of the National Audit Act 1983, the main work of the Committee has been the examination of the Reports made by the Comptroller and Auditor General (C&AG) on his value for money (VFM) studies of the economy, efficiency and effectiveness with which

¹The Financial Secretary is sent most of the Committee papers, which results in their being available to the Treasury.

²The Chairman since 17 October 2001 has been Mr Edward Leigh MP. The previous Chairman was Rt Hon David Davis MP (1997-2001) and prior to that Rt Hon Robert Sheldon MP (now Lord Sheldon) (1983-1997).

Government Departments and other bodies have used their resources to further their objectives. About two-thirds of these reports, of which there are around 60 a year, have been taken up by the Committee, either by taking oral evidence or occasionally by sending written questions to the Government departments concerned. The Committee's objective is to draw lessons from past successes and failures which can be applied to future activity by the department examined or more generally.

Before the passing of the 1983 Act, the C&AG presented the results of his VFM studies as memoranda to the Committee, and this course is still sometimes followed, usually because the matters reported on have a security classification or are commercially confidential, or demand a very rapid response.

In his investigations, which are not tied to any particular financial year, the C&AG plans to establish both that proper arrangements exist for securing value for money, and that these systems are operating satisfactorily in practice. It is not always possible to distinguish clearly between the three elements of VFM audit, but the broad classification used by the National Audit Office (NAO) is as follows:

- *economy* is concerned with minimising the cost of resources used for an activity, having regard to appropriate quality;
- *efficiency* is concerned with the relationship between the output in terms of goods, services or other results and the resources used to produce them. How far does the activity achieve the maximum output for a given input or use the minimum input for a given output?
- *effectiveness* is concerned with the relationship between the intended impact and the actual impact of an activity. How far do the outputs in terms of goods, services or other results achieve the effects that were intended? How far do they achieve policy objectives?

Under the 1983 Act, the C&AG in his VFM audit is not entitled to question the merits of policy objectives. This does not mean that the C&AG is barred from examining documents relating to policy: indeed, it is essential for the NAO to find out what the policy is so as to be able to tell if it is being carried out effectively.

The Committee usually examines only those Appropriation Accounts on which the C&AG has made a substantive report.³ Most of these now refer to Excess Votes (see para. 19), or the Revenue Departments. The C&AG's certification audits on these accounts are designed to ensure that the form and contents of the accounts conform to statutory and Treasury requirements; that they are accurate; and that the funds have been spent for the purposes authorised by Parliament and in accordance with the law and any relevant regulations. As the principles and practices of accounting propriety and regularity have by now been clearly established, mainly by reports of the Committee in earlier years, the Committee does not have to spend as much time on these matters as on VFM Reports, and most detailed accounting points are cleared up between the NAO and the departments during audit. The Committee does, however, treat any reports of failures to keep to these principles with considerable concern.

³Before 1968 the Committee used to minute formally that it had considered all the remaining Appropriation Accounts.

The Committee's order of reference extends to the examination of any account laid before Parliament.

The National Audit Office and the National Audit Act 1983

From 1866 until 1983, the staff of the Comptroller and Auditor General formed the Exchequer and Audit Department, and were civil servants. For many years they had been supplementing their certification audit of the Appropriation Accounts with value for money studies. There was, however, no statutory framework for this type of audit.

The National Audit Act 1983, which resulted from a private Member's Bill by Mr Norman St John-Stevas (later Lord St John of Fawsley), came into force on 1 January 1984. Its principal provisions are as follows:

- The Exchequer and Audit Department became the National Audit Office; its staff were no longer civil servants, and did not have to be paid at civil service rates of pay (this has assisted recruitment and retention of staff, who now number over 800).
- The Comptroller and Auditor General was declared to be an Officer of the House of Commons. He continues to be appointed by the Queen, but this now follows an address from the House of Commons, moved by the Prime Minister acting with the consent of the Chairman of the Committee.⁴
- The Act empowered the NAO to inquire into the economy, efficiency and effectiveness with which government departments use their resources to further their objectives.
- The Estimates of expenditure for the NAO would no longer be laid by the Treasury, but by a newly-constituted Public Accounts Commission (acting with the advice of the Treasury and the Committee). This Commission consists of nine Members of Parliament, including the Chairman of the Committee of Public Accounts, and has the functions of appointing an accounting officer for the NAO's Vote⁵ as well as a firm of accountants to audit the NAO's accounts.

Programme of meetings

The Committee meets twice weekly, on Monday at 4.30 pm and on Wednesday at 3.30 pm. Meetings usually last up to 2 hours. As mentioned above, the Committee cannot sit on days when the House is adjourned. The Committee usually meets between 50 and 60 times a Session.

⁴The Chairman stated, when speaking in the debate on the first such motion, on 16 December 1987, that he had carried out the interviewing. On a previous occasion, the Chairman had been consulted on a new appointment. The C&AG's independence of Government and Parliament is secured, like that of a high court judge, by the charging of his salary directly to the Consolidated Fund, not the Estimates, and by the provision that he may only be dismissed by an address to the Crown by both Houses of Parliament.

⁵The Comptroller and Auditor General holds this appointment.

The C&AG has complete discretion in his choice of VFM inquiries, but as these are the main subject-matter of the Committee's hearings, the 1983 Act places a duty on the C&AG to take into account representations from the Committee when planning his programme. This is done both by requests made from time to time throughout the year, and also by formal annual consideration of the C&AG's two-year forward programme of VFM work, the second year of which is provisional. Some of the subjects chosen may arise from suggestions by other Members of the House or outsiders.

About three times a year, the C&AG gives the Committee a list of the reports and memoranda he expects to be ready in the coming three months or so, on the basis of which the Committee decides on a programme and the clerk arranges for the attendance of the Accounting Officers. The C&AG also monitors government action on past Committee recommendations and on the government replies to Committee Reports, and the Committee frequently includes examination of these matters in its programme.

The Committee examines annually the estimate for the expenditure of the NAO, taking evidence from the C&AG. The Committee's opinion on these estimates is transmitted to the Public Accounts Commission.

Excess votes

One of the Committee's duties is to examine the Excess Votes, i.e. the accounts on which the Estimates provision (including any provision by Supplementary Estimates) has been overspent, and to report to the House upon them. Occasionally this involves the taking of oral or written evidence. If the Committee reports that it sees no objection to Parliament authorising the excess expenditure retrospectively by Excess Vote,⁶ the House is able to consider them (on the basis of a Treasury Statement of Excesses⁶) without debate, and authorise the grant by way of a Consolidated Fund Bill.

Evidence

The Committee generally takes oral evidence only from Accounting Officers, the senior civil servants in each department responsible for the expenditure in question.⁷ They may bring other staff with them to assist in answering the questions, and where a grant to a public body is concerned, will usually bring the Chief Executive (or equivalent) of that body, who is appointed Accounting Officer for that body. Accounting Officers are given a statement of their duties by the Treasury. Other bodies sometimes submit written evidence to the Committee; sometimes this is printed with the oral evidence or deposited in the House of Lords Record Office and the Library of the House of Commons. Ministers do not usually give evidence to the Committee.

⁶The Committee has never reported that it *does* see any objection, but it frequently passes comment on how an excess came about.

⁷The Committee recommended in 1920 that an accounting officer should personally refund the sum of £101 3s 6d which had been improperly charged to public funds, and the Treasury instructed him to do so. However, the Treasury told the Committee in 1980 that they believed that this doctrine of personal liability had no basis in law, and removed reference to it from their memorandum to accounting officers (First Special Report 1980-81, HC 115-III, p. 179).

During evidence sessions, the C&AG (or his Deputy) and some of his staff are also present, as is the Treasury Officer of Accounts (or his or her Deputy), who may be asked general questions about financial control.

Since 1978, evidence has been heard in public unless considerations of national security or commercial confidentiality necessitate all or part of a hearing being in private.⁸ Where evidence is taken in private, as much as possible of it is published later: witnesses mark the passages of the transcript which they suggest should not be published, but the Committee has the final decision.

The Committee usually conducts its questioning by each member asking all his questions in turn, the Chairman first. The National Audit Office supplies a briefing paper for each hearing, and may supplement this with an oral briefing. The C&AG and relevant members of his staff are present when the Committee is deliberating.

When witnesses are unable to answer a question at the hearing, or wish to amplify their responses, the information is supplied in writing later and is published with the transcript of the oral evidence.

All reports and memoranda by the C&AG on which the Committee take evidence are agreed in advance with the Department concerned. This process, which can take some time, is designed to ensure that the Committee is not put in the position of having to arbitrate on disputes on facts. If a conclusion drawn from these facts by the NAO is disputed by the Department, the latter's view is also stated in the C&AG's report or memorandum, so that the Committee is aware of the situation and can enquire further about it.⁹ The lengthy time taken to agree NAO reports can mean that some of their statistics are out of date. The Committee expects the departments to supply up-to-date statistics, which are published at the head of the oral evidence.

Reports by the Committee

The Committee usually reports separately on each subject it has examined, giving rise around 60 reports each Session, each usually based on one days' oral evidence. It is usual for the Committee to authorise the issue of advance copies to the press under Standing Order No. 134, but the Committee rarely holds press conferences.

Where an inquiry is so closely concerned with confidential matters that a public report cannot be made, the Committee addresses a letter to the responsible Government minister instead. Usually, however, the Committee can make its recommendations in a published report without disclosing confidential information.

The Government replies to the reports in batches throughout the Session with the aim of producing a reply within about two months of each report. The replies are produced by the Treasury in collaboration with the departments concerned, and these 'Treasury Minutes' are published as Command Papers.

⁸The First Special Report of the Committee, Session 1977-78, HC 291, announced that the Committee had decided, on a division, to admit the public to its evidence sessions.

⁹See 51st Report of Session 1987-88, HC 477, Appendix 2.

Debates are held in the House of Commons every six months or so to 'take note of the reports and government replies which have appeared since the last debate'. The Chairman opens the debate, and it is replied to by the Financial Secretary to the Treasury. Because the Motion is to 'take note' of the reports rather than approve them, it is usually agreed to without a division. Occasionally, reports are debated on Estimates Days or on other occasions, but the reports are then still included in the annual motion.

Over the years, the Committee has made many recommendations that have had a decisive influence over the accounting procedures and wider financial administration of Government departments and public agencies. The Treasury bring to the attention of Accounting Officers any recommendations accepted by the Government which affect accounting principles and methods maintained in the public sector.

Recent Publications by the Committee

All publications of the Committee of Public Accounts including reports of the Committee, Government responses to reports of the Committee, and minutes of evidence can be found on the Committee's website: www.parliament.uk/pac

Reports, Session 2006-07

First Report	Tsunami: Provision of support for humanitarian assistance	HC 25
Second Report	Improving literacy and numeracy in schools (Northern Ireland)	HC 108
Third Report	Collections Management in the National Museums and Galleries of Northern Ireland	HC 109
Fourth Report	Gas distribution networks: Ofgem's role in the sale, restructuring and future regulation	HC 110
Fifth Report	Postcomm and the quality of mail services	HC 111
Sixth Report	Gaining and retaining a job: the Department for Work and Pensions support for disabled people	HC 112
Seventh Report	Department for Work and Pensions: Using leaflets to communicate with the public about service and entitlements	HC 133
Eighth Report	Tackling Child Obesity—First Steps	HC 157
Ninth Report	The Paddington Health Campus scheme	HC 244
Tenth Report	Fines Collections	HC 245
Eleventh Report	Supporting Small Business	HC 262
Twelfth Report	Excess Votes 2005–06	HC 346
Thirteenth Report	Smarter Food Procurement in the Public Sector	HC 357
Fourteenth Report	Ministry of Defence: Delivering digital tactical communications through the Bowman CIP Programme	HC 358
Fifteenth Report	The termination of the PFI contract for the National Physical Laboratory	HC 359
Sixteenth Report	The Provision of Out-of-Hours Care in England	HC 360
Seventeenth Report	Financial Management of the NHS	HC 361
Eighteenth Report	DFID: Working with Non-Governmental and other Civil Society Organisations to promote development	HC 64
Nineteenth Report	A Foot on the Ladder: Low Cost Home Ownership Assistance	HC 134

Biographies of Members of the Committee

Edward Leigh, Chairman

Gainsborough
Majority: 8003



POLITICAL

Councils, public bodies: Councillor: Richmond Borough Council 1974-78, GLC 1977-81

Electoral history: Contested Teesside, Middlesbrough October 1974 general election. Member for Gainsborough and Horncastle 1983-97, for Gainsborough since 1 May 1997 general election

Commons Career: PPS to John Patten as Minister of State, Home Office 1990; Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department of Trade and Industry 1990-93

Commons Select Committees: Member: Social Security 1995-97, Agriculture 1996-97, Deregulation 1997, Social Security 1997-2000, Public Accounts 2000-01, Chair: Public Accounts 2001-, Member: Liaison 2001-

Commons Backbench committees: Secretary: Backbench Agriculture Committees 1983-85, Conservative Backbench Defence Committee 1983-90; Vice-chair, Conservative Employment Committee 1987-88; Joint Vice-chair, Conservative Party Committee for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs 1997-2001; Conservative Party Committee for Social Security: Vice-chair 1997-99, Joint Vice-chair 1999-2001

All-party groups (office-holding): Chair Street Children Group 2001-; Vice-chair Cafod Group 2002-

Political interests: Defence, foreign affairs, agriculture, families

Party groups: Former Chair Durham University Conservative Association; Member governing council Conservative Christian Fellowship

Current posts: Joint Vice-chair Conservative Party Committee for: Member Select Committee on Liaison 2001-; Chair: Select Committee on Public Accounts 2001-, All-Party Street Children Group 2001-; Vice-chair All-Party Cafod Group 2002-

PERSONAL

Date of birth: 20 July 1950

Educated: Oratory School, Berkshire; French Lycee, London

Further education: Durham University (BA history 1972) (President of Union)

Profession: Barrister; Arbitrator

Career: Member: Conservative Research Department 1973-75, Private Office of Margaret Thatcher as Leader of the Opposition 1976-77; Barrister, Inner Temple 1977-; Fellow, Institute of Arbitrators 1999-

Other organisations: Veteran Member, Honourable Artillery Company

Trusts: Fellow, Industry and Parliament Trust

Miscellaneous: Chair, National Council for Civil Defence 1979-83; Director, Coalition For Peace Through Security 1981-83

Publications: Right Thinking, 1982; Onwards from Bruges, 1989; Choice and Responsibility - The Enabling State, 1990

Honours and decorations: Knight of Honour and Devotion of the Sovereign Military Order of Malta

Recreations: Walking, reading

Supported charities: CAFOD

Languages: French

Richard Bacon

South Norfolk
Majority: 8782



POLITICAL

Electoral history: Contested Vauxhall 1997 general election. Member for South Norfolk since 7 June 2001 general election

Commons Select Committees: Member: Public Accounts 2001-, European Scrutiny 2003-

Political interests: Public expenditure, education, health, agriculture, Europe

Party groups: Former chair Hammersmith Conservative Association; Co-founder Geneva Conservative general election voluntary agency

Current posts: Member Select Committees on: Public Accounts 2001-, European Scrutiny 2003-

PERSONAL

Date of birth: 3 December 1962

Educated: King's School, Worcester

Further education: London School of Economics (BSc (Econ) politics and economics 1986)

Profession: Journalist and Communications Adviser

Career: Investment banker Barclays de Zoete Wedd 1986-89; Financial journalist Euromoney Publications plc 1993-94; Deputy director Management Consultancies Association 1994-96; Brunswick Public Relations 1996-99; Founder English Word Factory 1999-

Other organisations: Member Amnesty International

Recreations: Music, reading, modern painting

Languages: German

Annette Brooke

Mid Dorset and Poole North

Majority: 5482



POLITICAL

Liberal Democrat Spokesperson for Children and Families

Councils, public bodies: Poole Borough Council 1986-2003: Councillor, Chair: Planning 1991-96, Education 1996-2000, Deputy leader ruling Liberal Democrat Group 1995-97, 1998-2000, Sheriff 1996-97,

Mayor 1997-98, Deputy mayor 1998-99, Group leader 2000-01

Electoral history: Member for Mid Dorset and Poole North since 7 June 2001 general election

Commons Career: Liberal Democrat: Whip 2001-03, Spokesperson for: Home Affairs 2001-04, Children 2004-, Education 2005-06, Families 2006-

Commons Select Committees: Member: Public Administration 2001-05, Procedure 2005-06, Public Accounts 2006-

All-party groups (office-holding): Vice-chair Endometriosis Group 2002-; Chair Microfinance/Microcredit Group 2002-; Vice-chair: Children Group 2004-, Parents and Families Group 2005-;

Chair: Breast Cancer Group 2005-, Voice Group 2005-, Adoption and Fostering Group 2006-; Secretary Zimbabwe Group 2006-

Political interests: Young people, home affairs

Countries of interest: Sudan, Ghana

Current posts: Vice-chair All-Party Endometriosis Group 2002-; Chair All-Party Microfinance/Microcredit Group 2002-; Liberal Democrat Spokesperson for Children 2004-; Vice-chair All-Party: Children Group 2004-, Parents and Families Group 2005-; Chair All-Party: Breast Cancer Group 2005-, Voice Group 2005-; Member Select Committee on Public Accounts 2006-; Secretary All-Party Zimbabwe Group 2006-; Liberal Democrat Spokesperson for Families 2006-; Chair All-Party Adoption and Fostering Group 2006

PERSONAL

Date of birth: 7 June 1947

Educated: Romford Technical College

Further education: London School of Economics (BSc Econ 1968); Hughes Hall, Cambridge (Cert Ed 1969)

Profession: Business Partner and Owner

Career: Open University 1971-1991: Counsellor, Tutor: social sciences, economics; Various college posts: Reading, Aylesbury, Poole, Bournemouth; Head of economics Talbot Heath School Bournemouth 1984-94; Partner Broadstone Minerals; Owner Gemini shop Poole 1994-

Other organisations: Trustee Poole Community Family Trust 2001-; Patron Julia's House Children's Hospice 2001-

Recreations: Gym, reading, shopping with daughters

Supported charities: Julia's House, Poole

David Curry

Skipton and Ripon

Majority: 11620



POLITICAL

Councils, public bodies: Vice-President, Local Government Association 1997-;
Director British Association for Central and Eastern Europe 2000

Electoral history: Contested Morpeth February and October 1974 general elections. Member for Skipton and Ripon since 11 June 1987 general election

Commons Career: Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food: Parliamentary Secretary 1989-92, Minister of State 1992-93; Minister of State, Department of the Environment 1993-97; Shadow Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food 1997; Member Shadow Cabinet 2003-04: Shadow Secretary of State for Local and Devolved Government Affairs 2003-04

Commons Select Committees: Member: Agriculture 1998-2000, Public Accounts 1999-2000, Liaison 2000-03, Chair: Agriculture 2000-01, Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Radioactive Waste Policy Sub-Committee) 2001-02; Environment, Food and Rural Affairs 2001-03, Member: Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Radioactive Waste Policy Sub-Committee) 2002, Public Accounts 2004-, Standards and Privileges 2006-

Commons Backbench committees: Chair Conservative Party Committee for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food 1997

All-party groups (office-holding): Chair Homelessness and Housing Need Group 1999-; Vice-chair European Union Enlargement Group 2001-; Chair Community Governance Group 2004-; Vice-chair: Estonia Group 2005-, Housing Co-operatives and Community Controlled Housing Group 2005-, Town Centre Management Group 2006-

Political interests: Agriculture, foreign affairs, urban issues and local government

Countries of interest: Eastern and Central Europe, France

Party groups: Chairman Conservative Group for Europe 2003-06; Executive member 1922 Committee 2001-02

International bodies: Director British Association for Central and Eastern Europe

Other assemblies: MEP for North East Essex 1979-89; Chair Agriculture Committee 1980-84

Current posts: Vice-President Local Government Association 1997-; Director British Association for Central and Eastern Europe 2000-; Chair All-Party Homelessness and Housing Need Group 1999-; Vice-chair All-Party European Union Enlargement Group 2001-; Member Select Committee on Public Accounts 2004-; Chair All-Party Community Governance Group 2004-; Vice-chair All-Party: Estonia Group 2005-, Housing Co-operatives and Community Controlled Housing Group 2005-; Member Select Committee on Standards and Privileges 2006-; Vice-chair All-Party Town Centre Management Group 2006-

PERSONAL

Date of birth: 13 June 1944

Educated: Ripon Grammar School

Further education: Corpus Christi College, Oxford (BA modern history 1966); Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University

Career: Newspaper reporter "Newcastle Journal" 1966-70; "Financial Times" 1970-79: world trade editor, international companies editor, Brussels correspondent, Paris correspondent; Freelance journalist

Publications: The Conservative Tradition in Europe, 1998; Lobbying Government, 1999; The Sorcerer's apprentice: Government and Globalisation, 2000

Honours and decorations: PC 1996

Recreations: Vegetable gardening, sailing

Languages: French

Ian Davidson

Glasgow South West
Majority: 13896



POLITICAL

Councils, public bodies: Strathclyde Regional Council: Councillor 1978-92, Chair, Education Committee 1986-92

Electoral history: Member for Glasgow Govan 1992-97, for Glasgow Pollok 1997-2005, for Glasgow South West since 5 May 2005 general election

Commons Select Committees: Member: Selection 1997-99, Public Accounts 1997-, Scottish Affairs 2005-

Commons Backbench committees: Member, Labour Party Departmental Committees for: Defence 1997-, International Development 1997-, Trade and Industry 1997-

All-party groups (office-holding): Secretary: Japan Group 1998-, Shipbuilding and Ship Repair Group 2000-; Vice-chair: German Group 2002-, Construction Group 2003-; Chair: Bermuda Group 2003-, Namibia Group 2004-; Vice-chair South Africa Group 2005-

Political interests: Local and regional government, Commonwealth, international development, local economic development, defence, co-operative movement, trade and industry, trade unions, shipbuilding, Europe, poverty, Euro (against)

Countries of interest: Africa, Europe, Scandinavia, The Commonwealth, USA, Japan, Germany, British Overseas Territories

Party groups: Former Chair Kelvingrove Constituency Labour Party; Former Executive: Glasgow Labour Party, Strathclyde Regional Labour Party; Member Co-operative Party; Secretary: Tribune Group, Trade Union Group of Labour MPs 1998-2002; Chair Co-operative Parliamentary Group 1998-99; Founder and Chair Labour Against The Euro 2002-; Chair Scottish Regional Group of Labour MPs 2003-04

Current posts: Member Co-operative Party; Secretary Tribune Group; Member Select Committee on Public Accounts 1997-; Secretary All-Party: Japan Group 1998-, Shipbuilding and Ship Repair Group 2000-; Founder and Chair Labour Against The Euro 2002-; Vice-chair: All-Party German Group 2002-, Scottish Regional Group of Labour MPs 2002-, All-Party Construction Group 2003-; Chair All-Party: Bermuda Group 2003-, Namibia Group 2004-; Member Select Committee on Scottish Affairs 2005-; Vice-chair All-Party South Africa Group 2005-

PERSONAL

Date of birth: 8 September 1950

Educated: Jedburgh Grammar School; Galashiels Academy

Further education: Edinburgh University (MA); Jordanhill College

Trade unions: Former chair MSF Parliamentary Group; Secretary: Trade Union Group of Labour MPs 1998-2002

Career: Sabbatical Chair National Association of Labour Students 1973-74; President Students' Association, Jordanhill College 1975-76; Researcher for Janey Buchan, MEP 1978-85; Project manager Community Service Volunteers 1985-92

Other organisations: Chair, COSLA Education Committee 1990-92

Miscellaneous: Chairman, COSLA Education Committee 1990-92; Member, New Europe Advisory Council

Recreations: Family, sport, distance running, swimming, rugby

Philip Dunne

Ludlow

Majority: 2027



POLITICAL

Councils, public bodies: South Shropshire District Council: Councillor 2001-, Conservative group leader 2003-05

Electoral history: Member for Ludlow since 5 May 2005 general election

Commons Select Committees: Member: Work and Pensions 2005-06, Public Accounts 2006-

All-party groups (office-holding): Vice-chair Diabetes Group 2005-; Chair: Corporate Governance Group 2006-, Rural Services Group 2007-; Secretary Identity Fraud Group 2007-

Political interests: Agriculture, business (especially small business), economy, financial services, international affairs

Countries of interest: USA, Hong Kong

Party groups: Conservative Councillors Association 2001-

Current posts: Vice-chair All-Party Diabetes Group 2005-; Member Select Committee on Public Accounts 2006-; Chair All-Party: Corporate Governance Group 2006-, Rural Services Group 2007-; Secretary All-Party Identity Fraud Group 2007-

PERSONAL

Date of birth: 14 August 1958

Educated: Eton College

Further education: Keble College, Oxford (BA philosophy, politics and economics 1980)

Trade unions: NFU 1987-

Profession: Banker/company director

Career: Graduate trainee S G Warburg & Co Ltd 1980-88; Director of corporate development James Gulliver Associates 1988-90; Partner Phoenix Securities and successor 1991-2001; Managing Director Donaldson, Lufkin and Jenette 1997-2001; Ottakar's plc: Co-founder director (non exec) 1987-2006, Chairman (non exec) 1998-2006; Chairman (non exec) Baronsmead VCT 4 plc 2001-; Director Ruffer LLP and successor 2002- (non executive 2005-); Partner Gatley Farms 1987-

Other organisations: Country Land and Business Association, Ludlow Civic Society, Ludlow Rail Users, National Trust

Recreations: Country sports, skiing, travel

Supported charities: Director: Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation 1998-2005, Moor Park Charitable Trust 2001-

Helen Goodman

Bishop Auckland

Majority: 10047



POLITICAL

Electoral history: Member for Bishop Auckland since 5 May 2005 general election

Commons Select Committees: Member: Public Accounts 2005-

All-party groups (office-holding): Chair Play Group 2006-; Treasurer Denmark Group 2006-; Vice-chair: Children Group 2006-, Community and Voluntary Sector Group 2006-

Political interests: Economics, environment, children, international development, human rights

Countries of interest: Denmark, Czech Republic

Party groups: Member National Policy Forum 2005-

Current posts: Member Select Committee on Public Accounts 2005-; Member National Policy Forum 2005-; Chair All-Party Play Group 2006-; Treasurer All-Party Denmark Group 2006-; Vice-chair All-Party: Children Group 2006-, Community and Voluntary Sector Group 2006-

PERSONAL

Date of birth: 2 January 1958

Educated: Lady Manners School, Bakewell

Further education: Somerville College, Oxford (BA philosophy, politics and economics 1979)

Trade unions: FDA branch secretary HM Treasury 1986-88; GMB

Career: Research assistant Phillip Whitehead MP 1979-80; Civil servant HM Treasury, ending as Head of Strategy Unit 1980-97; Adviser Czechoslovak Prime Minister's Office 1990-91; Director of Commission on Future of Multi Ethnic Britain 1998; Head of strategy Children's Society 1998-2002; Chief executive National Association of Toy and Leisure Libraries 2002-05

Other organisations: Member: Amnesty International, Christian Socialist Movement; Chair Camden Co-operative Party 1997-98

Recreations: Cooking, family

John Healey

Wentworth

Majority: 15056



POLITICAL

Financial Secretary, HM Treasury

Ministerial Responsibilities: Enterprise and productivity including small business taxation and support to Chancellor on economic reform; Competition and better regulation; Science policy, including implementation of 10-year science strategy and research and development tax credit; Regional economic policy; Urban regeneration and social exclusion including housing and planning; Environmental issues including transport taxation; Taxation of oil; Excise duties and gambling; Public/Private Partnerships including Private Finance Initiative and Partnerships UK; Office for National Statistics, Royal Mint and Departmental Minister for HM treasury; Working with Chief Secretary with responsibility for Office of Government Commerce and procurement policy; Support to Chief Secretary on public spending including long-term challenges in run-up to Comprehensive Spending Review and selected Cabinet Committees; Assist where necessary on European issues; Working with Paymaster General on Finance Bill

Electoral history: Contested Ryedale 1992 general election. Member for Wentworth since 1 May 1997 general election

Commons Career: PPS to Gordon Brown as Chancellor of the Exchequer 1999-2001; Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Education and Skills (Adult Skills) 2001-02; HM Treasury 2002-: Economic Secretary 2002-05, Financial Secretary 2005-

Commons Select Committees: Member: Education and Employment 1997-99, Education and Employment (Employment Sub-Committee) 1997-99, Public Accounts 2005-, Joint Committee on Tax Law Rewrites Bill 2005-

Political interests: Employment, trade unions, economic regeneration, industrial relations, disability, local and regional government

Current posts: Financial Secretary, HM Treasury 2005-; Member Select Committee on Public Accounts 2005-; Member Joint Committee on Tax Law Rewrites Bill 2005-

PERSONAL

Date of birth: 13 February 1960

Educated: Lady Lumley's Comprehensive School, Pickering; St Peter's School, York

Further education: Christ's College, Cambridge (Scholar; BA 1982)

Trade unions: Member, GMB

Profession: Campaigner

Career: Journalist/deputy editor "House Magazine" 1983-84; Disability campaigner for three national charities 1984-90; Tutor Open University Business School 1989-92; Campaigns manager Issue Communications 1990-92; Head of communications MSF Union 1992-94; Campaigns and communications director TUC 1994-97

Recreations: Family

Supported charities: Rotherham Hospice; Bluebell Appeal for South Yorkshire Children's Hospice

Sadiq Khan

Tooting

Majority: 5381



POLITICAL

Councils, public bodies: Wandsworth Borough Council: Councillor 1994-2006, Deputy leader Labour group 1996-2001

Electoral history: Member for Tooting since 5 May 2005 general election

Commons Select Committees: Member: Public Accounts 2005-

Commons Backbench committees: Chair PLP Departmental Committee for Home Affairs 2006-

All-party groups (office-holding): Chair Citizens Advice Group 2006-; Vice-chair Child and Youth Crime Group 2006-

Political interests: Social justice, crime, international affairs, public services

Current posts: Member Select Committee on Public Accounts 2005-; Chair PLP Departmental Committee for Home Affairs 2006-; Chair All-Party Citizens Advice Group 2006-; Vice-chair All-Party Child and Youth Crime Group 2006-

PERSONAL

Date of birth: 8 October 1970

Educated: Ernest Bevin Secondary Comprehensive, London

Further education: University of North London (LLB law 1992); College of Law, Guildford (Law Society finals 1993)

Trade unions: Member: GMB, UNISON, CWU

Profession: Solicitor

Career: Christian Fisher Solicitors: Trainee solicitor 1993-95, Solicitor 1995-98, Partner 1998-2000; Equity partner Christian Fisher Khan Solicitors 2000-02; Equity partner and co-founder Christian Khan Solicitors 2002-04; Visiting lecturer University of North London and London Metropolitan University 1998-2004

Other organisations: Founder: Human Rights Lawyers Association, Chair: Liberty 2001-04, Legal affairs committee, Muslim Council of Britain 2004-05; Vice chair: Legal Action Group 1999-2004, Law Society 1993-, Fabian Society, Friends of the Earth; Patron Progress 2005-

Publications: Challenging Racism, Lawrence and Wishart 2003, Police Misconduct: Legal Remedies, Legal Action Group 2005; Articles in various publications on legal matters and policing

Awards granted: Windsor Fellowship 1992; Esso Law Bursary 1992; Society of Black Lawyers Bursary 1992; Sweet & Maxwell Law Prize 1993; Spectator Newcomer of Year 2005

Recreations: Playing and watching sports, cinema, family, friends, local community

Supported charities: Founder Human Rights Lawyers Association

Austin Mitchell

Great Grimsby

Majority: 7654



POLITICAL

Electoral history: Member for Grimsby 1977-83, for Great Grimsby since 9 June 1983 general election

Commons Career: PPS to John Fraser as Minister of State for Prices and Consumer Protection 1977-79;

Opposition Whip 1979-85; Opposition Spokesperson for Trade and Industry 1988-89

Commons Select Committees: Member: Agriculture 1997-2001, Environment, Food and Rural Affairs 2001-05, Public Accounts 2005-

Commons Backbench committees: Vice-chair PLP Departmental Committee for Culture, Media and Sport 2005-

All-party groups (office-holding): Vice-chair Electoral Reform Group 2001-; Chair: Consumer Affairs and Trading Standards Group 2001-, Media Group 2001-, Advertising Group 2001-, Photography Group 2001-, Iceland Group 2001-; Vice-convenor Global Security and Non-proliferation Group 2001-; Chair Fisheries Group 2003-; Secretary Financial Exploitation Group 2005-; Vice-chair Far East Prisoners of War and Internees Group 2005-; Chair Council Housing Group 2006-

Political interests: Economics, media, fishing industry, agriculture, poverty, accountancy, legal reform, European Union, electoral reform, constitutional reform, small businesses

Countries of interest: Canada, Iceland, New Zealand, France, Germany, China, Hong Kong, Nigeria

Party groups: Vice-chair Labour Campaign for Electoral Reform; Chair: Labour Euro-Safeguards Campaign, Labour Economic Policy Group

International bodies: Member, Royal Institute of International Affairs

Current posts: Vice-chair: Labour Campaign for Electoral Reform, Labour Euro-Safeguards Campaign; Chair Labour Economic Policy Group; President Debating Group; Vice-chair All-Party Electoral Reform Group 2001-; Chair All-Party: Consumer Affairs and Trading Standards Group 2001-, Media Group 2001-, Advertising Group 2001-, Photography Group 2001-, Iceland Group 2001-; Vice-convenor All-Party Global Security and Non-proliferation Group 2001-; Chair All-Party Fisheries Group 2003-; Secretary All-Party Financial Exploitation Group 2005-; Vice-chair All-Party Far East Prisoners of War and Internees Group 2005-; Vice-chair PLP Departmental Committee for Culture, Media and Sport 2005-; Member Select Committee on Public Accounts 2005-; Chair All-Party Council Housing Group 2006-

PERSONAL

Date of birth: 19 September 1934

Educated: Woodbottom Council School; Bingley Grammar School

Further education: Manchester University (BA history 1956); Nuffield College, Oxford (MA, DPhil 1963)

Trade unions: GMB, NUJ

Profession: University Teacher and Journalist

Career: Lecturer in history, Otago University, Dunedin, New Zealand 1959-63; Senior lecturer in politics, University of Canterbury, Christchurch, NZ 1963-67; Official fellow, Nuffield College, Oxford 1967-69; Journalist: Yorkshire Television 1969-71, BBC 1972, Yorkshire Television 1973-77; Political commentator, Sky Television's Target programme 1989-98; Associate editor, "The House Magazine"

Other organisations: Vice-Chair, Hansard Society

Trusts: Fellow, Industry and Parliament Trust

Miscellaneous: Member: Hairdressing Council, Advisory Council, National Fishing Heritage Centre, Public Accounts Commission 1997-; Vice-President, Federation of Economic Development Authorities (FEDA); President, Debating Group

Publications: New Zealand Politics in Action 1962; Government by Party, 1966; Whigs in Opposition, 1815-30, 1969; Politics and People in New Zealand, 1970; Half Gallon Quarter Acre Pavlova {-} Paradise, 1974; Can Labour Win Again, 1979; Yes Maggie there is an Alternative; Westminster Man, 1982; The Case for Labour, 1983; Four Years in the Death of the Labour Party, 1983; Yorkshire Jokes 1988; Teach Thissen Tyke 1988; Britain, Beyond the Blue Horizon, 1989; Competitive Socialism, 1989; Election '45, 1995; Accounting for Change, 1993; Corporate Governance Matters, 1996; The Common Fisheries Policy, End or Mend?, 1996; Co-author Last Time: Labour's Lessons from the Sixties 1997; Farewell My Lords, 1999; Co-author Parliament in Pictures 1999; Pavlova Paradise Revisited 2002; Yorkshire Sayings, 2005

Honours and decorations: Order of New Zealand 2001

Recreations: Photography, contemplating exercise

Supported charities: Harbour Place, Grimsby

Languages: French

Dr John Pugh

Southport

Majority: 3838



POLITICAL

Liberal Democrat Spokesperson for Health

Councils, public bodies: Sefton Metropolitan Borough Council 1987-2001: Councillor, Group leader 1992-2001, Leader 2000-01 Former member Merseyside Police Authority; Member: North West Arts Board,

Merseyside Partnership

Electoral history: Member for Southport since 7 June 2001 general election

Commons Career: Liberal Democrat Spokesperson for: Education 2002-05, Transport 2005-06, Health 2006-

Commons Select Committees: Member: Transport, Local Government and the Regions 2001-02, Transport, Local Government and the Regions (Transport Sub-Committee) 2001-02, Transport, Local Government and the Regions (Urban Affairs Sub-Committee) 2001-02, Member ODPM/Communities and Local Government 2002-03, ODPM/Communities and Local Government (Urban Affairs Sub-Committee) 2003

Member ODPM/Communities and Local Government 2005-, Crossrail Bill 2006-, Public Accounts 2006-

All-party groups (office-holding): Vice-chair: Burma Group 2002-, European Capital of Culture 2008 Group 2006-, Pro-Life Group 2006-, CAFOD Group 2006-

Political interests: Local and regional government, elderly, education, transport, health

Party groups: Former chair Southport Liberal Democrat Association

Current posts: Vice-chair All-Party Burma Group 2002-; Member Select Committees on: Communities and Local Government 2005-, Crossrail Bill 2006-, Public Accounts 2006-; Vice-chair All-Party European Capital of Culture 2008 Group 2006-; Liberal Democrat Spokesperson for Health 2006-; Vice-chair All-Party: Pro-Life Group 2006-, CAFOD Group 2006-

PERSONAL

Date of birth: 28 June 1948

Educated: Prescott Grammar School; Maidstone Grammar School

Further education: Durham University (BA philosophy 1971); Liverpool University (MA, MEd); Nottingham University (MPhil); Manchester University (PhD)

Profession: Teacher

Career: Head of Philosophy and Religious Studies Merchant Taylors Boys School, Crosby 1983-2001: Teacher, Head of Philosophy

Other organisations: Member Stapledon Philosophy Society, Liverpool University; Supporter: Oxfam, ActionAid

Publications: Christian Understanding of God, 1990

Recreations: Philosophy society Liverpool University, weightlifting, reading, football, computers

Don Touhig

Islwyn

Majority: 15740



POLITICAL

Councils, public bodies: Councillor, Gwent County Council 1973-95: Chair, Finance Committee 1992-94

Electoral history: Contested Richmond and Barnes 1992 general election. Member for Islwyn since 16 February 1995 by-election

Commons Career: Public Interest Disclosure (Private Member's Bill) 1995; PPS to Gordon Brown as Chancellor of the Exchequer 1997-99; Assistant Government Whip 1999-2001; Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State: Wales Office 2001-05, Ministry of Defence 2005-06

Commons Select Committees: Member: Welsh Affairs 1996-97, Armed Forces Bill 2005-06, Public Accounts 2006-

Commons Backbench committees: Hon Secretary, PLP Welsh Regional Group 1995-99

Political interests: Treasury, employment, health, education, local and regional government

Party groups: Member, Labour Leadership Campaign Team (responsible for Devolution in Wales) 1996-97; Member, Co-Operative Party; Chair, Co-operative Parliamentary Group 1999

Current posts: Member, Co-operative Party; Member Select Committee on Public Accounts 2006-

PERSONAL

Date of birth: 5 December 1947

Educated: St Francis School, Abersychan

Further education: Mid Gwent College

Trade unions: Member, TGWU

Profession: Journalist

Career: Apprentice radio and tv engineer; Journalist 1968-76; Editor, Free Press of Monmouthshire 1976-90; General manager and editor in chief, Free Press Group of Newspapers 1988-92; General manager (business development), Bailey Group 1992-93, Bailey Print 1993-95

Other organisations: Past President, South Wales Newspaper Society; Member: MENSA, MENCAP. Amnesty International, Credit Union; President: Home Start, Islwyn Drug and Alcohol Project, National Old Age Pensioners Association of Wales, Caerphilly County Borough Access Group

Trusts: Trustee, Medical Council on Alcoholism

Miscellaneous: Member, European Standing Committee B 1995-96

Honours and decorations: Papal Knight of the Order of St Sylvester; PC 2006

Recreations: Reading, cooking for family and friends, music, walking

Supported charities: St David's Foundation

Alan Williams

Swansea West

Majority: 4269



POLITICAL

Father of the House

Electoral history: Contested Poole 1959 general election. Member for Swansea West since 15 October 1964 general election

Commons Career: PPS to Edward Short as Postmaster General 1966-67; Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department of Economic Affairs 1967-69; Joint Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Technology 1969-70; Opposition Spokesperson for: Industry 1970-71, Higher Education 1971-72, Consumer Affairs 1973-74; Minister of State for: Prices and Consumer Protection 1974-76, Industry 1976-79; Opposition Frontbench Spokesperson for: Wales 1979-80, The Civil Service 1980-83, Industry and Consumer Affairs 1983-87; Deputy Shadow Leader of the House and Campaigns Co-ordinator 1983-87; Shadow Secretary of State for Wales 1987-88; Father of the House 2005-

Commons Select Committees: Member: Public Accounts 1990-, Parliamentary Privilege (Joint Committee) 1997-2000, Standards and Privileges 1997-2003 Chair: Liaison 2001- Chair: Liaison (Liaison Sub-Committee) 2002-

Commons Backbench committees: Chair Welsh Parliamentary Labour Group 1966-67

All-party groups (office-holding): Hon Secretary America Group 2001-

Political interests: Regional policy, industrial policy, employment, microtechnology, public accounting

Party groups: Member: Fabian Society, Co-operative Party

International bodies: Council of Europe and Western European 1966-67; Chair, Welsh Branch of British-Russia Centre 1995-2001; Member, North Atlantic Alliance 1997-2001

Current posts: Member: Fabian Society, Co-operative Party; Member Select Committee on Public Accounts 1990-; Chair Select Committee on Liaison 2001-; Hon Secretary All-Party America Group 2001-;

Chair: Public Accounts Commission 2001-, Select Committee on Liaison Sub-committee 2002-

PERSONAL

Date of birth: 14 October 1930

Educated: Cardiff High School

Further education: Cardiff College of Technology (BSc economics, London 1954); University College, Oxford (BA philosophy, politics and economics 1956)

Trade unions: Member, Association of Teachers at Technical Institutes, affiliated to NUT 1958-; Member, Transport Salaried Staff Association (TSSA)

Armed forces: RAF national service 1956-58

Career: Lecturer in economics, Welsh College of Advanced Technology 1960-64

Miscellaneous: Member: Public Accounts Committee 1990-, Lord Chancellor's Advisory Council on Committee Records 1995-97; Chairman, Public Accounts Commission 1997-

Honours and decorations: PC 1977

Recreations: Golf

Supported charities: Swansea Spastics Society

Freedom: Freeman, City of Swansea

Iain Wright

Hartlepool
Majority: 2033



POLITICAL

Councils, public bodies: Councillor Hartlepool Borough Council 2002-04;
Cabinet member for performance management 2003-04

Electoral history: Member for Hartlepool since 30 September 2004 by-election

Commons Career: PPS to Rosie Winterton as Minister of State, Department of Health 2005-06

Commons Select Committees: Member: Public Administration 2005-06,
Modernisation of the House of Commons 2006-, Public Accounts 2007-

Commons Backbench committees: Hon Secretary/Hon Treasurer PLP Northern Regional Group 2005-

All-party groups (office-holding): Chair Road Safety Group 2006-;
Vice-President Israel Group 2006-

Political interests: Economics, regeneration

Countries of interest: Middle East, China, Latin America

Party groups: Treasurer Hartlepool CLP 2002-04; Board member Labour North 2003-04; Chair Labour Friends of Israel 2005-

Current posts: Hon Secretary/Hon Treasurer PLP Northern Regional Group 2005-; Chair All-Party Road Safety Group 2006-; Vice-President All-Party Israel Group 2006-; Member Select Committees on: Modernisation of the House of Commons 2006-, Public Accounts 2007-

PERSONAL

Date of birth: 9 May 1972

Educated: Manor Comprehensive School, Hartlepool

Further education: Hartlepool Sixth Form College, Hartlepool; University College, London (BA history 1994, MA 1995)

Trade unions: Member GMB

Career: Audit manager Enterprise Risk Services Deloitte & Touche 1996-2003;
Governance manager OneNorthEast (Regional Development Agency) 2003-04

Miscellaneous: Member, European Standing Committee A 2004-05

Recreations: Music (Stone Roses, New Order, Beatles), history, Hartlepool United Football Club

Derek Wyatt

Sittingbourne and Sheppey
Majority: 79



POLITICAL

Councils, public bodies: Councillor London Borough of Haringey 1994-96, Chairman Alexandra Palace and Parks 1994-96

Electoral history: Member for Sittingbourne and Sheppey since 1 May 1997 general election

Commons Career: Adviser on Rugby Union to Richard Caborn, as Minister of State for Sport 2002-

Commons Select Committees: Member: Culture, Media and Sport 1997-05

Commons Backbench committees: Hon Secretary PLP South East Regional Group 2006-

All-party groups (office-holding): Chair: Internet Group 1997-, Rugby Union Group 1997-; Vice-chair: Media Group 2000-, Mobile Communications Group 2001-; Chair British Council Group 2001-; Secretary: Paper Related Industries Group 2001-, Jordan Group 2003-, Community Media Group 2004-; Chair: Olympics and Paralympics Group 2004-, Adventure and Recreation in Society Group 2004-; Vice-chair Design and Innovation Group 2005-; Chair Commercial Radio Group 2005-

Political interests: Venture capital, internet, British Council, foreign affairs, media, money laundering

Countries of interest: Africa, Middle East, China

International bodies: Founder Oxford Internet Institute 2000

Current posts: Member Executive Board, Labour Middle East Council 1997-; Chair All-Party: Internet Group 1997-, Rugby Union Group 1997-; Vice-chair All-Party Media Group 2000-; Chair All-Party British Council Group 2001-; Vice-chair All-Party Mobile Communications Group 2001-; Secretary All-Party Paper Related Industries Group 2001-; Adviser on Rugby Union to Richard Caborn, as Minister of State for Sport 2002-; Secretary All-Party: Jordan Group 2003-, Community Media Group 2004-; Chair All-Party: Olympics and Paralympics Group 2004-, Adventure and Recreation in Society Group 2004-; Vice-chair All-Party Design and Innovation Group 2005-; Chair All-Party Commercial Radio Group 2005-; Hon Secretary PLP South East Regional Group 2006-

PERSONAL

Date of birth: 4 December 1949

Educated: Westcliff County High School; Colchester Royal Grammar School

Further education: St Luke's College, Exeter (Certificate of Education 1971); Open University (BA art and architecture 1978); St Catherine's College, Oxford (research 1981-82); University of California, Berkeley (management 2002)

Career: Director and a Publisher, William Heinemann 1986-88; Head of Programmes, Wire TV 1994-95; Director, Computer Channel, BSkyB 1995-97

Other organisations: Member: RSPB, Amnesty International; Founder: Campaign for Fair Play 1985, Women's Sports Foundation (UK) 1985

Trusts: Trustee Major Stanley's, Oxford University 1993-; Fellow: Industry and Parliament Trust (Motorola) 1998-2001, Parliament Voluntary Sector Trust (Raleigh International) 1999-2001; Trustee: Time Bank 2004, Citizens Outline 2005, Start Here 2005

Publications: 6 books to date including: Wisecracks From The Movies, 1987, Rugby DisUnion, 1995, Co-author Rugby Revolution, 2003

Awards granted: United Nations Commendation (Apartheid in Sport) 1987

Recreations: Reading, sport, writing, travel, jazz

Supported charities: Demelza House Children's Hospice

Fellowships: FRSA

Sportsclubs: Charlton Athletic FC, Penguin International RFC (Executive); Played Rugby for Oxford University, Barbarians and England