

Research Briefing

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Crown Estate Bill [HL] 2024-25



Summary

- 1 Background
- 2 The bill
- 3 House of Commons stages
- 4 House of Lords stages
- 5 How bills go through Parliament

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Contents

| | |
|---|-----------|
| Summary | 4 |
| 1 Background | 8 |
| 1.1 What is the Crown Estate? | 8 |
| 1.2 Partnership between the Crown Estate and Great British Energy | 12 |
| 2 The bill | 16 |
| 2.1 The aims of the bill | 17 |
| 2.2 The contents of the bill | 17 |
| 2.3 Reaction to the bill | 22 |
| 3 House of Commons stages | 24 |
| 3.1 Second reading | 24 |
| 3.2 Committee stage: A summary | 25 |
| 3.3 Committee stage: Approved new clause (territorial seabed) | 26 |
| 4 House of Lords stages | 28 |
| 4.1 Second reading | 28 |
| 4.2 Committee stage | 30 |
| 4.3 Report stage and third reading | 31 |
| 5 How bills go through Parliament | 41 |
| 5.1 Lords stages | 41 |
| 5.2 Commons stages | 42 |
| 5.3 ‘Ping pong’ | 43 |
| 5.4 Amendments | 43 |
| 5.5 Further information on bill procedure | 44 |

Summary

The [Crown Estate Bill](#) (Bill 176 of 2024-25) will have its report stage and third reading in the House of Commons on 24 February.

The bill started in the House of Lords, where it was introduced on 25 July 2024. It had [second reading](#) in the Lords on 2 September 2024, [committee stage](#) on 14 and 22 October 2024, [report stage](#) on 5 November 2024 and [third reading](#) on 18 November 2024. The bill was amended in the Lords at report stage.

The bill was introduced to the House of Commons on 19 November 2024. It had its second reading in the Commons on 7 January 2025 and committee stage on 6 February 2025. The bill was amended at committee stage.

Following committee stage in the Commons, the bill has seven clauses: three clauses from the original bill introduced to the Lords, three clauses added in the Lords and one clause added in committee stage in the Commons.

The bill, together with its explanatory notes and other documents, are available on the Parliament website: [Crown Estate Bill \[HL\]](#). [The government has also deposited documents in the Lords Library](#) that include an update, in draft, of the framework document setting out governance arrangements between the Treasury and Crown Estate and a memorandum of understanding. Both are written based on the bill as introduced to the Lords. They include more detail about borrowing arrangements than is included in the bill itself.

The bill extends and applies to England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. The management of property of the Crown Estate situated wholly in Scotland is devolved to Scottish Ministers. That property is now managed separately by Crown Estate Scotland. The bill does not affect the management of Crown Estate Scotland's properties.

The bill requires a money resolution as it involves new public spending.

This briefing explains the background to the bill and what the bill would do.

What is the Crown Estate?

The Crown Estate is a major landowner with a “significant and diverse” £14 billion property portfolio including UK buildings, shoreline, seabed, forestry, agriculture and common land.

The Crown Estate traces its origins back for hundreds of years, but it was established in its current form in perpetuity under the Crown Estate Act 1961 (CEA 1961). It is an “independent, commercial business” managed by a board of up to eight Crown Estate commissioners (commissioners), appointed by the King on the advice of the Prime Minister. It is a public corporation.

The Crown Estate’s property, rights and interests belong to His Majesty “in right of the Crown” but all its profits are paid into the government’s current account and can be used for any government spending. The government provides financial support to the Monarch which is known as the sovereign grant. The level of the grant is linked to, but not directly derived from, profits from the Crown Estate.

[In 2023/24, the Crown Estate generated a net revenue profit of £1.1 billion.](#) Over the past decade it has returned £4.1 billion of net revenue profit to the Treasury.

The Crown Estate focuses on activities which align with wider national needs, including energy security and sustainable economic growth. It manages the seabed and much of the coastline around England, Wales and Northern Ireland, playing a [“fundamental role in the sustainable development of this national asset, including the UK’s world-leading offshore wind sector.”](#)

On the day the Crown Estates Bill was introduced in the Lords, [the government announced a partnership](#) between the Crown Estate and Great British Energy to bring forward new offshore wind developments. Separately, the [Great British Energy Bill 2024-25](#), establishing Great British Energy, is going through Parliament.

What would the bill do?

The primary aim of the bill is to remove limitations on the Crown Estate’s borrowing powers and the types of assets it can invest in. [The government says current limitations restrict the Crown Estate’s long term viability](#) (PDF).

The government says [the bill would broaden the scope of activities that the Crown Estate can undertake](#) to “support the delivery of its core purpose across net zero, nature recovery, economic growth and generating returns to the public purse”. It would also [“enable the Crown Estate to invest in capital-intensive projects more effectively”](#).

The bill would make changes to the Crown Estate’s governance, increasing the number of Crown Estate commissioners from 8 to 12 and paying them from the revenues generated by the Crown Estate rather than out of money provided by Parliament.

Amendments made in the Lords, supported by the government, would:

- require the commissioners to review the Crown Estate's impact on achieving sustainable development
- require the Crown Estate's annual reports to include a summary of the partnership with Great British Energy and the benefits derived from it. [This partnership was announced on 25 July 2024](#)
- require three commissioners to have a special responsibility to advise on conditions in Wales, Northern Ireland and England

A government amendment added at committee stage in the Commons, would:

- require the Treasury to approve any disposals of the territorial seabed by the Crown Estate

A clause, introduced by the Lords without government support, was removed from the bill at committee stage in the Commons. The clause related to the environmental impact and animal welfare standards of salmon farms on the Crown Estate in England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

Commons second reading and committee stage

[Second reading of the bill](#) in the House of Commons took place on 7 January 2025. The bill received broad cross-party support in general.

The bill was considered by a [public bill committee](#) over two sittings on 6 February 2025. The committee agreed that the then clause 5 (salmon farms on the Crown Estate) should not stand part of the bill, removing it from the bill. This clause had been added in the Lords but did not have government support.

The government made an amendment adding an additional clause which would require the Treasury to approve any disposals of the territorial seabed by the Crown Estate.

Several opposition amendments were moved and pushed to division but did not pass. These included amendments seeking to: limit the amount the Crown Estate can borrow; require the Treasury's approval if the Crown Estate wishes dispose of assets worth over 10% of the Estate's assets; devolve the management of the Crown Estate in Wales to the Welsh Government; increase the information contained in the Crown Estate's annual report on its activities in England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

What happened in the Lords stages?

There was cross-party support for the bill in principle in the House of Lords. Peers were supportive of the primary aims of the original bill: increasing the Crown Estate's borrowing and investment powers.

Key topics of discussion during the House of Lords stages included:

- limits on the amounts commissioners can borrow and guidance on how they should invest
- devolution of the Crown Estate to Wales
- energy generation and the partnership with GB Energy
- the bill's impact on the sovereign grant, which provides financial support to the Monarch
- the environmental and animal welfare standards of activities on the Crown Estate
- Crown Estate duties and objectives around protecting the seabed, food security, supporting nature prescribing, climate change, nature targets, impact on commercial shipping, commercial fishing and coastal communities.

As discussed above, four clauses were added to the bill at Lords report stage. Three have government support: clause 3 (sustainable development), clause 4 (annual reports) and clause 6 (commissioners with special responsibility). The previous clause 5 (salmon farms on the Crown Estate) did not have government support and was removed at committee stage in the Commons.

1 Background

1.1 What is the Crown Estate?

The Crown Estate is “a major landowner” with a “significant and diverse” £14 billion property portfolio including UK buildings, shoreline, seabed, forestry, agriculture and common land.¹ It is a public corporation.

The Crown Estate traces its origins back for hundreds of years.² It was established in its current form in perpetuity under the Crown Estate Act 1961.³ It is an “independent, commercial business” managed by a board of up to eight Crown Estate commissioners (commissioners), appointed by the King on the advice of the Prime Minister.⁴ The commissioners’ core duty, set out in the Crown Estate Act 1961 is “to maintain and enhance the value of the estate and the income derived from it”.⁵

The Crown Estate aims to:

- responsibly generate value and financial returns for the country;
- be a leader in supporting the UK towards a net zero and energy-secure future;
- take a leading role in stewarding the natural environment and biodiversity; and
- help create inclusive communities, supporting equality, economic growth and productivity.⁶

The Treasury is the Crown Estate’s sponsor department. The Treasury and Crown Estate have a framework document which details their relationship, governance, accountability and the Crown Estate’s board.⁷

¹ Gov.uk, [The Crown Estate](#); Crown Estate, [Integrated annual report and accounts 2023/24](#), July 2024

² For more on the history of the Crown Estate and the sovereign grant see sections 2.1-2.3 of the Library briefing [Finances of the Monarchy](#).

³ HM Treasury, [Framework Document: The Crown Estate](#), June 2023

⁴ Gov.uk, [The Crown Estate](#)

⁵ [Crown Estate Act 1961 s1\(3\)](#)

⁶ Crown Estate, [‘Integrated annual report and accounts 2023/24’](#), July 2024

⁷ [HM Treasury and the Crown Estate: framework document](#) (PDF) (accessed on 15 November 2024)

Finances

The Crown Estate's property, rights and interests belong to His Majesty "in right of the Crown" but its profits are paid into the Consolidated Fund (the government's current account) and can be used for government spending.⁸

In 2023/24, the Crown Estate generated a net revenue profit of £1.1 billion, up from £0.4 billion in 2022/23. Over the past decade it has returned £4.1 billion of net revenue profit to the Treasury.⁹ Profits in 2023/24 were driven by fees for six offshore wind projects.¹⁰

The Crown Estate's net revenue profit is linked to the size of the sovereign grant, a grant that is paid from the public finances to the King to support him in discharging his duties as head of state (see Box 1).

1 The sovereign grant and funding for the Monarch

For centuries, the government has provided financial support to the Monarch. Since 2012/13, this has been known as the sovereign grant, as provided for under the Sovereign Grant Act 2011.

The grant includes funding for:

- the maintenance of royal residences known as the Occupied Royal Palaces, which are used for formal entertaining and ceremonial events;
- royal travel for official engagements in the UK and overseas undertaken by the King and other members of the Royal Family acting on his behalf;
- employment costs for Royal Household staff who support the work of the King as head of state.

The level of the grant is linked to, but not directly derived from, profits from the Crown Estate. From April 2024, it has been set at 12% of Crown Estate profits, down from the 25% that applied in previous years.

The grant is £86.3 million for 2024/25. As a result of a significant rise in Crown Estate profits, the amount of sovereign grant will increase to £132.1 million in 2025/26. This is a rise of £45.8 million, or 53% in cash terms, on the previous year.

For further information and sources, see the Library briefing, [Finances of the Monarchy](#).

⁸ Profits from Crown Estate Scotland are [paid into the Scottish Consolidated Fund](#)

⁹ Crown Estate, [Integrated annual report and accounts 2023/24](#), July 2024, page 2

¹⁰ Crown Estate, [Integrated annual report and accounts 2023/24](#), July 2024, page 7

Limitations on borrowing and investments

The Crown Estate's investment powers are effectively limited to having 'interests in land' at present.¹¹ Its borrowing powers are also limited.¹²

Constraints on borrowing and investing are, according to the Crown Estate, limiting its ability to meet its core duty "to maintain and enhance the value of its portfolio and the revenues derived from it".¹³ Greater investment powers would allow it to use digital technologies to maintain and enhance its assets, for example.¹⁴

The Crown Estate says without more borrowing powers it faces challenges from:

- downward pressure on asset values and revenues payable to HMT [HM Treasury]
- continuing to fund its activities through asset sales – reducing its national footprint
- reduced capacity to meet UK offshore wind deployment targets
- reduced capacity to respond to external economic and market shocks¹⁵

The Crown Estate says extending its borrowing and investment powers, as the bill proposes, will allow it to:

have an even greater impact across our portfolio and ensure we play our part in supporting the UK's transition to a decarbonised, energy secure future; nature recovery; regeneration and economic growth; as well as increasing the profit we return to government for the benefit of the nation's finances.¹⁶

Assets and activities

The Crown Estate's property portfolio is valued at £14 billion and its net assets are valued at £15.5 billion, as shown in the chart below.

The Crown Estate's portfolio includes:

one of the largest rural holdings in the country, an estate across Regent Street and St James's in London, and the seabed around England, Wales and Northern Ireland.¹⁷

¹¹ Investment powers are limited in subsection 3(4) of the Crown Estate Act 1961

¹² Borrowing powers are limited in subsection 3(5) of the Crown Estate Act 1961

¹³ The Crown Estate, Modernisation of The Crown Estate – business case - [Deposited Paper \(DFP2024-0709\)](#)

¹⁴ As above

¹⁵ As above

¹⁶ As above

¹⁷ The Crown Estate, [Our portfolio](#) (accessed on 14 November 2024)



Source: The Crown Estate. [Integrated annual report and accounts 2023/24](#), July 2024, page 51

The Crown Estate focuses on activities which align with wider national needs, including energy security and sustainable economic growth.¹⁸

It manages the seabed and much of the coastline around England, Wales and Northern Ireland, playing a “fundamental role in the sustainable development of this national asset, including the UK’s world-leading offshore wind sector.”¹⁹ The Crown Estate develops, prepares and leases out plots of seabed to offshore wind and other developers.²⁰ It has 36 offshore windfarms across its marine holdings with a combined capacity of 11.8 GW.²¹

Devolution of the Crown Estate in Scotland

The management of Crown Estate assets in Scotland, and their revenues, was devolved to Scotland in the Scotland Act 2016. Management of the Scottish assets came into force on 1 April 2017.

The Scottish Crown Estate includes:

leasing of the seabed out to 12 nautical miles, 37,000 hectares of rural land; rights to most naturally-occurring gold and silver; and approximately half of

¹⁸ Crown Estate Bill [HL], [explanatory notes](#)

¹⁹ The Crown Estate. [The Crown Estate Open Data](#) (accessed on 14 November 2024). [Crown Estate Scotland](#) was formed in 2017 following devolution of the management of Crown Estate assets in Scotland under the [Scotland Act 2016](#).

²⁰ Prime Minister’s Office, [The King’s Speech 2024: background briefing notes](#), 17 July 2024, page 48

²¹ Crown Estate, [‘Integrated annual report and accounts 2023/24’](#), July 2024, page 20

Scotland's foreshore including 5,800 licensed moorings; 750 aquaculture sites; and salmon fishing rights.²²

The property value of the Scottish Crown Estate assets was £653 million at March 2023.²³ Revenue profits are paid to the Scottish Government. The Scottish Government expects around £200 million in Crown Estate revenues in 2024/25.²⁴

Calls for devolution to Wales

Crown Estate assets in Wales are not devolved. The Crown Estate manages assets in Wales.

The Welsh Government, among others, wants the Crown Estate's assets in Wales to be devolved.²⁵ Several members of the House of Lords and House of Commons have spoken in support of devolution to Wales during the bill's passage through Parliament.

The UK Government is against devolving the Crown Estate to Wales, saying "Introducing a new entity would fragment the market, complicate existing processes, and likely delay further development offshore, undermining investment in Welsh waters."²⁶

Lord Wigley currently has a private member's bill in the House of Lords, which would transfer responsibility for the Crown Estate in Wales to the Welsh Government. [The Crown Estate \(Wales\) Bill \[HL\]](#) has little prospect of passing through Parliament. Lords private members' bills do not often make it into law, as Commons private members' bills usually take precedence in the Commons in the limited amount of time allocated for debating private members' bills.²⁷

1.2

Partnership between the Crown Estate and Great British Energy

On the day the Crown Estate Bill was introduced in the Lords, the government announced a partnership between the Crown Estate and Great British Energy to develop new offshore wind developments.²⁸

²² Scottish Government. [Marine planning](#) (accessed on 15 November 2024)

²³ Crown Estate Scotland. Annual Report and Accounts to 31 March 2023, [Table 3](#) (PDF)

²⁴ Scottish Government. Scottish Budget 2024/25, [Table B.02](#) (PDF)

²⁵ Welsh Government, The Welsh Government's response to the final report of The Independent Commission on the Constitutional Future of Wales, 12 March 2024, [Recommendation 8](#)

²⁶ PQ HL189 [on: Crown Estate: Wales]

²⁷ Institute for Government. [Private members' bills](#), 15 October 2024

²⁸ Department for Energy Security and Net Zero. ['New Great British Energy partnership launched to turbocharge energy independence'](#), 25 July 2024.

Background on GB Energy

The government has introduced the [Great British Energy Bill 2024-25](#) (GB Energy bill) to Parliament, which has completed its passage through the Commons and will have third reading in the Lords on 25 February. Details of the bill can be found in the Library briefing [Great British Energy Bill 2024-25](#) (October 2024).

The GB Energy bill would create a new, publicly owned energy company, [Great British Energy \(GB Energy\)](#) designed to drive deployment of low-carbon, ‘clean’ energy (meaning energy not derived from fossil fuels). [It is part of the government's mission to make the UK a clean energy superpower](#) and to decarbonise the electricity grid by 2030, which was included in its [manifesto](#).

GB Energy would be an operationally independent company wholly owned by the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero. Juergen Maier CBE, the former chief executive of Siemens in the UK, has been appointed as [the first chair of GB Energy](#). GB Energy would have its headquarters in Aberdeen with two smaller sites in Edinburgh and Glasgow.²⁹

GB Energy would be provided with an initial £8.3 billion over the course of the current Parliament.³⁰ It is expected that this will “help signal commitment to these technologies and help crowd-in private investment”.³¹ GB Energy was awarded £100 million capital funding in the Autumn Budget 2024 settlement to begin its work, and £25 million to establish it as a company and set up the headquarters in Aberdeen.³²

Provisions in the GB Energy bill would require GB Energy to set out its strategic objectives and agree a framework document with the Secretary of State, which would be laid before Parliament. GB Energy would work towards being a financially sustainable and self-financing organisation in the long term that reinvests its returns into new projects.³³

Aims of GB Energy

Introducing the GB Energy bill at second reading on 5 September 2024, the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, Ed Miliband, said the bill would allow British people to benefit from their own natural resources.³⁴ The aims of GB Energy, he said, were to:

- improve energy security by investing in home-grown energy

²⁹ Department for Energy Security and Net Zero, [Aberdeen to host Great British Energy HQ in UK-wide clean energy drive](#), 24 September 2024

³⁰ [Explanatory Notes to the Great British Energy Bill 005 2024-25](#) (PDF), para 29

³¹ Department for Energy Security and Net Zero, [Great British Energy Founding Statement](#), 25 July 2024, section 4.1

³² HM Treasury, [Autumn Budget 2024](#) (PDF), October 2024 para.4.75

³³ Department for Energy Security and Net Zero, [Great British Energy Founding Statement](#), 25 July 2024, section 5

³⁴ [HC Deb 5 September 2024](#), c455

- create jobs and build UK supply chains
- create wealth for the UK by generating a return on investments³⁵

Functions of GB Energy

The [GB Energy founding statement](#), published in July 2024, sets out five main functions for GB Energy:

- **Project investment and ownership:** GB Energy would invest in and own clean power generation assets, particularly less developed technologies such as floating wind and carbon capture. This would involve GB Energy owning, managing and operating all or part of the projects it invests in. It would work with the [National Wealth Fund](#) (the [UK Infrastructure Bank is becoming the National Wealth Fund](#)) and other stakeholders in developing its investment offer.
- **Project development:** GB Energy would support the development of clean energy technologies in all parts of the UK, both onshore and offshore. This would include upfront development work such as planning permissions, grid access and environmental surveys and land assessments, allowing private sector developers to focus on project construction. In particular, GB Energy would work with the Crown Estate on project development through a new division ‘Great British Energy: The Crown Estate’ (see next section).
- **Local Power Plan:** initially put forward as part of Labour’s manifesto mission to [Make Britain a clean energy superpower](#), the Local Power Plan aims to make the energy system more decentralised and resilient by using more distributed power generation projects, and giving communities a stake in the energy transition. GB Energy would partner with local and combined authorities and community energy groups to roll out small and medium renewable energy projects, using established technologies such as wind and solar.
- **Supply chain:** GB Energy would work with the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ), the Crown Estate, the National Wealth Fund and industry to support clean energy supply chains. This is intended to accelerate the deployment of clean energy and increase jobs in the sector.
- **Great British Nuclear:** [Great British Nuclear](#) is an executive non-departmental public body, set up in March 2023, that supports the development of civil nuclear energy in the UK. The government is exploring how GB Energy can best align with Great British Nuclear.

³⁵ [HC Deb 5 September 2024](#), c456

Partnership with the Crown Estate

[GB Energy would form a partnership with the Crown Estate](#) which was announced by the Prime Minister and Secretary of State on 25 July 2024.

As noted above, [the Crown Estate plays a significant role in the deployment of renewable energy](#), mainly by identifying and leasing suitable seabed sites for offshore wind development and awarding rights for extensions to existing projects. It currently has [11.8 gigawatts of offshore wind capacity](#) operating across its seabed holdings. It also supports other types of marine renewables and carbon sequestration.³⁶

The Crown Estate estimates that the partnership with GB Energy would lead to up to 20 to 30 gigawatts of new offshore wind developments reaching seabed lease stage by 2030.³⁷

The [GB Energy founding statement](#) explains that the Crown Estate would establish a new division called ‘Great British Energy: The Crown Estate’ that would:

- bring forward new offshore wind developments that DESNZ estimates could attract up to £30 billion to £60 billion of private investment
- support new technologies such as floating wind, hydrogen, carbon capture and tidal energy
- invest in ports and the supply chain
- reduce the risks for future developments to allow faster build rates

³⁶ Crown Estate, [Carbon capture](#), accessed 15 November 2024

³⁷ Prime Minister’s Office, [New Great British Energy partnership launched to turbocharge energy independence](#), 25 July 2024

2

The bill

The [Crown Estate Bill](#) (Bill 176 of 2024-25) will have its report stage and third reading in the House of Commons on 24 February.

When the bill – as [Crown Estate Bill \[HL\]](#), Bill 135 of 2024-25 – was introduced to the Commons on 19 November 2024, it contained seven clauses. At committee stage in the Commons one clause was removed (Salmon farms on the Crown Estate) and one was added (Territorial seabed), leaving it with seven clauses again

The bill started in the House of Lords. When it was introduced it had three clauses. Four further clauses were added at report stage in the Lords.

The bill, with its explanatory notes and delegated powers memorandum, is published on the [bill's page on parliament.uk](#). The bill's page includes details of the Lords stages, a Lords Library briefing paper and other relevant material.

Before report stage in the Lords, the government deposited a draft framework document, draft memorandum of understanding and the Crown Estates business case, in the Lords Library.³⁸

The draft framework document and draft memorandum of understanding apply to the bill as introduced to the Lords but may require updating depending on changes to the bill as it goes through Parliament.

The bill extends and applies to England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. The Crown Estate is reserved in relation to Scotland and Wales, and excepted or reserved in relation to Northern Ireland (meaning it is not a devolved matter and the UK Parliament retains responsibility for it).³⁹ However, the Scotland Act 2016 devolved the management of Crown Estate property situated wholly in Scotland, allowing the Scottish Parliament to make legislation affecting it. That property is now managed separately by Crown Estate Scotland. The bill does not affect the management of Crown Estate Scotland's properties.⁴⁰

The bill requires a money resolution because it gives the Treasury power to arrange loans to the Crown Estate out of the National Loans Fund and to provide financial assistance to the Crown Estate (including loans) out of

³⁸ [Deposited Paper \(DEP2024-0709\)](#)

³⁹ Crown Estate Bill [HL] Explanatory notes, 19 November 2024 [para 7](#) (PDF)

⁴⁰ Crown Estate Bill [HL] Explanatory notes, 19 November 2024 [para 8](#) (PDF)

money provided by Parliament. [A money resolution](#) is required if a bill proposes new public spending.

There are no [delegated powers](#) in the bill.

2.1 The aims of the bill

The primary aim of the bill is to remove limitations on the Crown Estate's borrowing powers and the types of assets it can invest in. The government says the current limitations restrict the Crown Estate's long-term viability.⁴¹

The government says the bill would broaden the scope of activities that the Crown Estate can undertake to “support the delivery of its core purpose across net zero, nature recovery, economic growth and generating returns to the public purse”. It would also “enable the Crown Estate to invest in capital-intensive projects more effectively”.⁴²

2.2 The contents of the bill

The bill's long title is as follows:

A bill to amend the Crown Estate Act 1961.

Following Commons committee stage, the bill contains seven clauses. Clauses 1-6 amend the Crown Estate Act 1961.

Clause 1: Power of Crown Estate commissioners to borrow etc

Clause 1 was included in the original bill introduced to the House of Lords.⁴³ It was unamended in the Lords.

Clause 1 would explicitly provide Crown Estate commissioners (commissioners) with powers implied in the Crown Estate Act 1961. It would remove current restrictions on investment and would allow the commissioners to borrow from the Treasury and for Parliament to provide financial assistance to the commissioners.

⁴¹ Crown Estate Bill [HL] Explanatory notes, 19 November 2024 [para 4](#) (PDF)

⁴² [HL Deb 2 September 2024](#) c970

⁴³ [Crown Estate Bill 2024/25 \[HL Bill 5\]](#)

Expressly conferring powers to commissioners

Subsection (2) would allow the commissioners to undertake activities not expressly mentioned in the Crown Estate Act 1961, to carry out their duties.⁴⁴ The bill’s explanatory notes give some potential examples:

- investing in the infrastructure of a port owned by a third party to facilitate the development of part of the seabed that forms part of the Crown Estate, or investing in digital technologies to improve mapping of that seabed;
- carrying out, or permitting the carrying out of, commercial activities on land which forms part of The Crown Estate
- funding or contributing to the funding of research and development⁴⁵

Removing limitations on investment and borrowing

Subsection (3) would remove limitations in the Crown Estate Act 1961 on Crown Estate investments.⁴⁶ It would enable the commissioners to borrow from the Treasury or with Treasury consent. Currently, Crown Estate commissioners can only “borrow for the purpose of discharging or redeeming incumbrances affecting any part of the Crown Estate”.⁴⁷ An incumbrance is a legal claim or liability that limits the owner’s ability to sell or transfer property.

The intention is to enable the Crown Estate to:

- invest to maintain and modernise its estate so it can operate successfully and increase the revenues it generates for the government
- assist with investment in public infrastructure, including further seabed leases for offshore wind⁴⁸

Allowing the Crown Estate to borrow would mean it can invest its cash reserves, which are currently held in case of future financial losses. The government says this is particularly important “for accelerating the pace of our offshore wind deployment.”⁴⁹

The Crown Estate is not expected to start using the new borrowing powers until the end of the decade, because it can initially draw on its cash reserves.⁵⁰

⁴⁴ The commissioners’ core duty, set out in the CEA 1961 is “to maintain and enhance the value of the estate and the income derived from it”.

⁴⁵ Crown Estate Bill [HL] Explanatory notes, 19 November 2024 [para 10](#) (PDF)

⁴⁶ [Crown Estate Act 1961 s3\(4\)](#) provides the current limitations on investments

⁴⁷ [Crown Estate Act 1961 s3\(5\)](#)

⁴⁸ Crown Estate Bill [HL] Explanatory notes, 19 November 2024 [para 11](#) (PDF)

⁴⁹ Prime Minister’s Office, [The King’s Speech 2024: background briefing notes](#), 17 July 2024

⁵⁰ [HL Debate 2 September 2024](#) c970

Treasury loans

Subsection (4) would allow the Treasury to issue loans to the commissioners out of the National Loans Fund or from money provided by Parliament. The National Loans Fund is the government's account that manages the UK's borrowing and lending.

The Treasury will be able to determine the interest rate of the loan and must pay loan payments into the National Loans Fund, which is normal practice.

Subsection (4) would also authorise the Treasury to provide financial assistance to the Crown Estate commissioners from money provided by Parliament.

Framework document and memo of understanding: Borrowing limits

The bill itself doesn't set out borrowing limits for the Crown Estate. It does say, however, that the Treasury must consent to the borrowing. Borrowing limits would be set out in a revised framework document.

The Treasury and Crown Estate have a framework document setting out the governance framework between the two.⁵¹ Following passage of the bill, the framework document would be updated to set out further details on lending from government to the Crown Estate.⁵²

Draft documents, deposited by the government before the Lords report stage, include a draft updated framework document accompanied by a draft memorandum of understanding (MoU) setting out the borrowing principles for the Crown Estate.⁵³

The draft MoU says borrowing by the Crown Estate will be limited to a maximum of 25% loan to value ratio, defined as net debt-to-asset value. This means the Crown Estate can't borrow more than 25% of the worth of their total assets.

Clause 2: Number of Crown Estate commissioners and their salaries and expenses

Clause 2 was included in the original bill introduced to the House of Lords.⁵⁴ It was not amended in the Lords.

Clause 2 would increase the number of Crown Estate commissioners from 8 to 12 and require them to be paid out of the returns generated by the Crown Estate rather than out of money provided by Parliament.

⁵¹ HM Treasury. [HM Treasury and The Crown Estate: framework document](#) (PDF) (accessed on 12 November 2024)

⁵² Crown Estate Bill [HL] Explanatory notes, 19 November 2024 [para 31](#) (PDF)

⁵³ [Deposited Paper \(DEP2024-0709\)](#)

⁵⁴ [Crown Estate Bill 2024/25 \[HL Bill 5\]](#)

The explanatory notes explain that by expanding the number of commissioners the government seeks to:

provide the flexibility required to satisfy best practice standards for modern corporate governance, allowing The Crown Estate's Board to include an appropriate combination of executive and non-executive directors reflective of its increasingly diverse activities, and adopt associated relevant committee structures.⁵⁵

During second reading in the Lords, Lord Livermore explained further:

By expanding the number of commissioners, the board will be able to better reflect the growing breadth of the Crown Estate business and ensure a greater range of expertise and diversity at board level.⁵⁶

Clause 3: Sustainable development

Clause 3 was added to the bill at report stage in the Lords. It was tabled in the name of Baroness Hyman (crossbench) and was sponsored by Lord Livermore for the government.

Clause 3 would require the commissioners to review the impact of their activities on achieving sustainable development in the UK. The member's explanatory statement to the amendment says:

Sustainable development goals as recognised by the United Nations, the Commonwealth and other bodies refer to human development that aims to meet the economic, environmental and social needs of the present while also ensuring the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.⁵⁷

The government says the framework document will be updated, in light of clause 3, to:

- clarify sustainable development “means regard for the impact of the Crown Estate's activities on the environment, society and the economy”⁵⁸
- clarify “that this regard includes, where relevant, consideration of relevant legislation, such as Part 1 of the Climate Change Act 2008, which deals with the targets for 2050, Section 56 of the Climate Change Act 2008, and Sections 1 to 3 of the Environment Act 2021, which deal with specific environmental targets”⁵⁹
- explicitly say that the Crown Estate will include activities in relation to sustainable development in its annual report⁶⁰

⁵⁵ Crown Estate Bill [HL] Explanatory notes, 25 July 2024 [para 14](#) (PDF)

⁵⁶ [HL Deb 2 September 2024](#) c970-971

⁵⁷ Crown Estate Bill [HL] [Baroness Hayman's amendment, After Clause 2 \(amendment number 10\)](#)

⁵⁸ [HL Deb 5 November 2024](#) c1449-1450;

⁵⁹ [HL Deb 5 November 2024](#) c1449-1450

⁶⁰ Crown Estate Bill [HL] – Explanatory Notes, [para 18](#)

Section 3.3 of this briefing has further information on sustainable development.

Clause 4: Annual reports

Clause 4 was added to the bill at report stage. It was tabled in the name of Lord Livermore for the government.⁶¹

The clause would require the Crown Estate's annual reports to report on activities under the partnership between the Crown Estate and Great British Energy and the effects or benefits resulting from the actions taken.

The reporting requirement would only apply in years when a partnership between the commissioners and Great British Energy is operating.

Clause 5: Territorial seabed

Clause 5 was added a committee stage in the Commons. It was a government amendment tabled by Exchequer Secretary James Murray and was approved without division.^{62 63}

The new clause would prevent the Crown Estate from selling the seabed without obtaining consent from the Treasury. There was interest in this during the Lords stages and the Financial Secretary to the Treasury committed to investigate the issue further, given the complexities of the ownership of the seabed.⁶⁴

The Exchequer Secretary to the Treasury, James Murray, says the new clause puts special protections in place for the seabed but doesn't change the Crown Estate's right to agree seabed licences or leases.⁶⁵

Clause 6: Commissioners with special responsibility

Clause 6 was added at report stage in the Lords. It was tabled by Lord Hain (Labour) and sponsored by Lord Livermore for the government, Baroness Smith of Llanfaes (Plaid Cymru), Lord Thomas of Cwmgiedd (Crossbench), Baroness Humphreys (Liberal Democrat).⁶⁶

Clause 6 would make three of the commissioners responsible for advising on conditions in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, respectively.

The government would have to consult with Welsh ministers and the Executive Office in Northern Ireland about the relevant appointments. The Executive

⁶¹ Crown Estate Bill [HL] [Lord Livermore's amendment, After Clause 2 \(amendment number 3\)](#)

⁶² Crown Estate Bill [HL] [James Murray's amendment \(new clause 2\)](#)

⁶³ [PBC 6 February 2025.cc42](#)

⁶⁴ [HL Crown Estate Bill \[HL\] 5 November 2024.c1412](#)

⁶⁵ [PBC 6 February 2025.cc39-40](#)

⁶⁶ Crown Estate Bill [HL] [Lord Hain's amendment, After Clause 2 \(amendment number 11\)](#)

Office in Northern Ireland consists of the First Minister, deputy First Minister and two junior ministers.⁶⁷

Clause 7: Extent, commencement and short title

Clause 7 was included in the original bill introduced to the House of Lords.⁶⁸ It was clause 3 in the original version of the bill.

Clause 7 sets out that the bill would extend to England and Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. As explained in section 1, the bill would not apply to the management of Crown Estate property managed by Crown Estate Scotland under the Scottish Crown Estate Act 2019.⁶⁹

The bill would come into force two months after receiving royal assent.

The final provision, clause 7(4), is a technical [privilege amendment](#) because the bill started in the House of Lords and authorises new public spending. It will be removed in the Commons.

2.3

Reaction to the bill

In the main, the bill hasn't been widely discussed beyond Parliament.

The Crown Estate welcomed the bill and the potential increases to its investment powers. Dan Labbad, Chief Executive of the Crown Estate said the powers would allow the Crown Estate to:

...have an even greater impact across our portfolio and ensure we play our part in supporting the UK's transition to a decarbonised, energy secure future; nature recovery; regeneration and economic growth; as well as increasing the profit we return to government for the benefit of the nation's finances.⁷⁰

The Institute for Government think tank welcomed the bill's provision to increase the Crown Estate's borrowing and investment powers. It also welcomed the partnership between the Crown Estate and Great British Energy. It said the additional powers and the partnership are "sensible moves to speed up delivery of new offshore wind".⁷¹ However, it cautioned that there is a challenge with grid capacity. There needs to be capacity to carry new power and "This is a particular issue for offshore wind, which is generally

⁶⁷ The Executive Office, [Executive Office Ministers](#) (accessed on 27 November 2024)

⁶⁸ [Crown Estate Bill 2024/25 \[HL Bill 5\]](#)

⁶⁹ Crown Estate Bill [HL] – explanatory notes, [para 26](#) (PDF)

⁷⁰ Crown Estate, "The Crown Estate welcomes proposals to modernise investment powers", 17 July 2024

⁷¹ Resolution Foundation. [The Crown Estate's partnership with GB Energy is welcome – the next big challenge is grid capacity](#), 25 July 2024

located far from sources of demand and needs to be carried long distances before it is used.”⁷²

The RMT, the National Union of Rail, Maritime and Transport Workers, called for Crown Estate revenues to be used to improve the pay and working conditions for offshore workers. RMT general secretary, Mick Lynch, welcomed the bill but said Crown Estate profits are currently not being “ringfenced to advance just transition policies.”⁷³

Some groups said the bill, as introduced in the Lords, could do more to address environmental issues. Wildlife and Countryside Link, a group of wildlife and conservation organisations, said the bill is a missed opportunity to ensure the Crown Estate supports the government’s obligations under the Environment Act 2021. It called for the Crown Estate Bill “to be given a nature recovery objective, alongside the ability to invest in the technology, infrastructure and research required to further these aims”.⁷⁴

⁷² Resolution Foundation. [The Crown Estate’s partnership with GB Energy is welcome – the next big challenge is grid capacity](#), 25 July 2024

⁷³ RMT, [Crown Estate profits must be used to boost offshore workers](#), 25 July 2024. Broadly speaking, a just transition aims to ensure that the cost/benefits of a transition to a sustainable economy are shared widely

⁷⁴ Wildlife and Countryside Link, [The Crown Estate Bill – Briefing for Second Reading](#), 28 August 2024

3 House of Commons stages

3.1 Second reading

Second reading of the bill in the House of Commons took place on 7 January 2025.⁷⁵ The bill received broad cross-party support in general.

Chief Secretary to the Treasury, Darren Jones, introduced the bill. He said it would bring the legislation governing the Crown Estate into the 21st Century, allowing it to better compete in the marketplace for investment. He argued that the existing limitations on the Crown Estate's powers means it has to sell assets to generate capital to invest, which is "neither desirable nor sustainable". He went on to outline the provisions in the bill.

Darren Jones welcomed all but one of the clauses added to the bill in the Lords. He said the government would seek to remove clause 5 (salmon farms on the Crown Estate) in committee arguing that the obligation would not be effective or appropriate "given that it relates to a devolved policy area".⁷⁶

Shadow Exchequer Secretary, James Wild, said the Opposition supported the bill's aims but further scrutiny was needed in areas, including "a limit on the level of borrowing, governance, the relationship with Great British Energy and safeguards in relation to the disposal of assets."⁷⁷

James Wild also asked whether the government would be bringing an amendment to restrict the ability of the Crown Estate to sell the seabed.⁷⁸ During the bill's Lords stages, Lord Livermore said that special protections for the seabed might be warranted, and the government would bring an amendment if required.⁷⁹ Exchequer Secretary to the Treasury, James Murray, confirmed that work was ongoing to establish whether the Crown Estate can sell the seabed and an amendment would be brought at committee stage, if required.⁸⁰

Pippa Heylings, for the Liberal Democrats, also supported the bill but wanted further scrutiny on the cap on borrowing, the relationship with Great British Energy, conflicts between competing interests and values of the seabed and

⁷⁵ [HC Deb 7 January 2025 c775](#)

⁷⁶ [HC Deb 7 January 2025 c775](#)

⁷⁷ [HC Deb 7 January 2025 c780-784](#)

⁷⁸ [HC Deb 7 January 2025 c780-784](#)

⁷⁹ [HL Crown Estate Bill \[HL\] 5 November 2024 c1406-1412](#)

⁸⁰ [HC Deb 7 January 2025 c806](#)

coastline, community benefit, devolution in Wales and climate and nature duty.⁸¹

Plaid Cymru MP Llinos Medi said her party would bring forward an amendment to devolve the Crown Estate to Wales.⁸²

3.2 Committee stage: A summary

The bill was considered by a [public bill committee](#) over two sittings on 6 February 2025. The committee had [17 Members](#).

Clause 5 (Salmon farms on the Crown Estate) was removed from the bill. The committee agreed with the government, that it should not stand part of the bill.⁸³ James Murray, Exchequer Secretary to the Treasury, said the government understands the objectives behind the clause but wouldn't support it. He argued that it would duplicate existing protections and would have little positive impact due to the "territorial realities of the bill".⁸⁴ Virtually all salmon aquaculture happens in Scotland and the management of the Crown Estate in Scotland is devolved.

The government also made amendment during Committee which:

- added a new clause 5 which requires the Treasury to approve any disposals of the territorial seabed by the Crown Estate,⁸⁵ which is discussed further below
- removed the privilege amendment inserted by the Lords.⁸⁶ [Privilege amendments](#) are a procedural amendment inserted by the Lords when bill start in the House of Lords and authorise new public spending.

Several opposition amendments were moved and pushed to division but did not pass. These included:

- to limit the amount the Crown Estate can borrow by regulations subject to the [affirmative procedure](#), with the first set of regulations would limiting borrowing to a net debt to asset value ratio of no more than 25%.⁸⁷

⁸¹ [HC Deb 7 January 2025 c786](#)

⁸² [HC Deb 7 January 2025 c791](#)

⁸³ [PBC 6 February 2025_cc36-37](#)

⁸⁴ [PBC 6 February 2025_cc36-37](#)

⁸⁵ [Amendment NC2](#)

⁸⁶ [Amendment 3; PBC 6 February 2025_cc38](#)

⁸⁷ [Amendment 4; PBC 6 February 2025_cc3-9](#)

- to add a requirement for Crown Estate commissioners to seek Treasury approval for the disposal of assets totalling 10% or more than the Crown Estate's assets.⁸⁸
- to add a requirement for the Chancellor to lay any partnership agreement between the Crown Estate and Great British Energy before Parliament.⁸⁹
- to add a requirement for the Treasury to transfer management of the Crown Estate in Wales to the Welsh Government within two years of the commencement of the Crown Estate Act.⁹⁰
- to add a requirement for Crown Estate commissioners to transfer the Crown Estate's net revenues raised in Wales to the Welsh Government.⁹¹
- to add a requirement for Crown Estate annual reports to include separate information on the capital and revenue activities of the Crown Estate in England, Wales, and Northern Ireland.⁹²
- to add a requirement for the Crown Estate to include a list of all lease agreements it has with public bodies in Wales, England and Northern Ireland, including the value.⁹³
- to add a requirement for Crown Estate Commissioners to ensure their activities benefit local communities, including coastal communities, and that 5% of any profits would be transferred to local communities.⁹⁴
- to add a requirement for the Crown Estate to produce separate annual reports for England, Wales and Northern Ireland and lay them before the relevant legislatures.⁹⁵

3.3 Committee stage: Approved new clause (territorial seabed)

The government moved new clause 2 (NC2) which added clause 5 (Territorial seabed) to the bill. The new clause was agreed without division.⁹⁶

The new clause would prevent the Crown Estate from selling the seabed without obtaining consent from the Treasury. There was interest in this during

⁸⁸ [NC3; PBC 6 February 2025_cc39-43](#)

⁸⁹ [NC4; PBC 6 February 2025_cc29-36](#)

⁹⁰ [NC5; PBC 6 February 2025_cc43-50](#)

⁹¹ [NC6; PBC 6 February 2025_cc50-52](#)

⁹² [NC7; PBC 6 February 2025_cc53-56](#)

⁹³ [NC8; PBC 6 February 2025_cc53-57](#)

⁹⁴ [NC11; PBC 6 February 2025_cc25-28 cc57-58](#)

⁹⁵ [NC9; PBC 6 February 2025_cc53-57](#)

⁹⁶ [PBC 6 February 2025_cc42](#)

the Lords stages and the Financial Secretary to the Treasury committed to investigate the issue further, given the complexities of the ownership of the seabed.⁹⁷

The Exchequer Secretary to the Treasury, James Murray, says the new clause would put special protections in place for the seabed but wouldn't change the Crown Estate's right to agree seabed licences or leases.⁹⁸

⁹⁷ [HL Crown Estate Bill \[HL\] 5 November 2024 c1412](#)

⁹⁸ [PBC 6 February 2025 cc39-40](#)

4 House of Lords stages

4.1 Second reading

Second reading took place on 2 September 2024.⁹⁹

Lord Livermore (Labour) for the government explained that the bill has two key objectives:¹⁰⁰

- First, “it broadens the scope of activities that the Crown Estate can engage in”. The bill would allow the Crown Estate to invest more widely in new growth opportunities “for example, investing in the further mapping of our seabed. This will enable it to undertake significant de-risking activity, such as preconsent survey and supporting grid co-ordination, thus increasing the frequency of leasing for offshore wind and supporting the clean energy transition.”
- Second, it will “enable the Crown Estate to invest in capital-intensive projects more effectively”. The bill would do this by empowering the Crown Estate to invest its cash reserves and expand “its ability to use its land and property assets far more efficiently.” Lord Livermore stated that “to reduce the size of its cash holdings and engage in more capital-intensive activity in the long term, the Crown Estate needs the ability to borrow, as its competitors currently can.”

There was broad cross-party support for the bill in principle.

Several members of the Lords raised concerns about aspects of the bill that would become the focus of subsequent stages. Key themes included:

- limits on borrowing powers
- devolution of the Crown Estate to Wales
- sustainable development
- the partnership with GB Energy

Questions were raised about limits on the Crown Estate’s borrowing.¹⁰¹ Lord Livermore said that “limits on overall loan-to-value ratios” would be set out in

⁹⁹ [HL Deb 2 September 2024](#)

¹⁰⁰ [HL Deb 2 September 2024](#)

¹⁰¹ [HL Deb 2 September 2024](#) c988-989 (Lord Howard of Rising) c998 (Lord Holmes of Richmond) c1016 (The Earl of Courtown)

an updated framework agreement between the Crown Estate and Treasury.¹⁰² Baroness Kramer and Earl Russell questioned why an updated framework agreement wasn't made available ahead of second reading.¹⁰³

Some peers questioned how the bill would affect the sovereign grant (see box 1). Some said the bill presents an opportunity to improve the transparency of the grant and how it operates.¹⁰⁴

The partnership with GB Energy was raised (see section 1.2).¹⁰⁵ Some peers wondered why the government hadn't introduced a single bill dealing with the creation of GB Energy and the borrowing and investment powers of the Crown Estate, given the close links between the two.¹⁰⁶ The [Great British Energy Bill](#) is currently in the Lords, having originated in the Commons.

The national grid's capacity to handle new renewable energy was questioned by several peers.¹⁰⁷

Some peers questioned whether the changes the bill makes to the Crown Estate's governance are sufficient to bring it in line with best practice.¹⁰⁸ Some were concerned with how oversight and accountability to Parliament would work.¹⁰⁹ The Earl of Courtown (Conservative) wanted to know how Parliament can "raise legitimate questions and concerns over the management" of the national assets held by the Crown Estate.¹¹⁰ Transparency of the Crown Estate was a concern for some peers.¹¹¹

Several peers called for Crown Estate assets in Wales to be devolved to Welsh ministers, often citing the example of Scotland (see section 1.1). Crown Estate assets in Scotland – agricultural and forestry land, most of the seabed, just under half of the foreshore and some commercial property – were devolved to Scottish ministers in April 2017.¹¹²

The Crown Estate's role in climate change mitigation, as a major owner of land, marine land and property, was discussed.¹¹³ There was also discussion of the Crown Estate's role in protecting the marine environment and

¹⁰² [HL Deb 2 September 2024](#) c1023-1024 (Lord Livermore)

¹⁰³ [HL Deb 2 September 2024](#) c1013-1014 (Baroness Kramer)

¹⁰⁴ [HL Deb 2 September 2024](#) c967 (Earl Russell) c977 (Lord Turnbull) c1013-1014 (Baroness Kramer)

¹⁰⁵ [HL Deb 2 September 2024](#) c974-976 (Earl Russell) c 1000-1001 (Baroness Bennett of Manor Castle) c1014-1015 (The Earl of Courtown)

¹⁰⁶ [HL Deb 2 September 2024](#) c974-976 (Earl Russell) c 1000-1001 (Baroness Bennett of Manor Castle)

¹⁰⁷ [HL Deb 2 September 2024](#) c976 (Earl Russell) c978 (Baroness Young of Old Scone) c981 (Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth) c999 (Lord Holmes of Richmond) c1001 (Baroness Bennett of Manor Castle)

¹⁰⁸ [HL Deb 2 September 2024](#) c972-973 (Lord Young of Cookham) c999-1000 (Lord Holmes of Richmond)

¹⁰⁹ [HL Deb 2 September 2024](#) c1007 (Earl of Devon) c1016-1017 (The Earl of Courtown)

¹¹⁰ [HL Deb 2 September 2024](#) c1016-1017 (The Earl of Courtown)

¹¹¹ [HL Deb 2 September 2024](#) c992-993 (Lord Teverson) c1000 (Baroness Bennett of Manor Castle)

¹¹² Scottish Government. [Marine planning](#) (accessed on 11 November 2024)

¹¹³ [HL Deb 2 September 2024](#) c978-981 (Baroness Young of Old Scone)

biodiversity, particularly while delivering more renewable energy and infrastructure.¹¹⁴

Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick questioned the impact on fishing if the bill leads to more offshore renewables.¹¹⁵

4.2 Committee stage

Committee stage in the House of Lords was held on 14 October and 22 October.¹¹⁶ No amendments were made in committee, but peers discussed several amendments on the themes raised at second reading, some of which were returned to during report stage.

Groups of amendments on the following themes were debated during committee:

- devolution of the Crown Estate in Wales
- Crown Estate borrowing limits and investment guidance
- appointments, governance, parliamentary oversight and reporting
- Crown Estate duties and objectives around protecting the seabed, food security, supporting nature prescribing, climate change, nature targets, impact on commercial shipping, commercial fishing and coastal communities
- energy generation and the partnership with GB Energy
- use of Crown Estate revenues for regional wealth funds and skills training funds
- reports on the bill's impact on the size of the sovereign grant.
- the environmental and animal welfare standards of salmon farms, aquaculture and offshore energy installation and generation on the Crown Estate
- giving Crown Estate Scotland the same freedoms and flexibilities that the Crown Estate will have following the passage of the bill
- ensuring the Crown Estate Bill won't come into force until other events, such as laying of the framework agreement before Parliament, have taken place

¹¹⁴ [HL Deb 2 September 2024](#) c978-981 (Baroness Young of Old Scone) c990-991 (Baroness Hayman) c993 (Lord Teverson)

¹¹⁵ [HL Deb 2 September 2024](#) c1003-1005 (Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick)

¹¹⁶ [HL Deb 14 October 2024:c14-77](#); [HL Deb 14 October 2024:c92-104](#); [HL Dec 22 October 2024](#)

Peers were keen to see a draft framework agreement to understand the limits that would be placed on the Crown Estate's borrowing.¹¹⁷ Lord Livermore said the relevant documents would be published ahead of report stage, which did happen.¹¹⁸

4.3 Report stage and third reading

There was one government amendment, two crossbench amendments (with government support) and a crossbench amendment (without government support) made during report stage. The amendments made introduced clause 3 (sustainable development),¹¹⁹ clause 4 (annual reports),¹²⁰ clause 5 (salmon farms on the crown estate)¹²¹ and clause 6 (commissioners with special responsibility).¹²²

Clause 3: Sustainable development

Baroness Hyman (crossbench) moved amendment 10, which would require the commissioners to review the impact of their activities on the achievement of sustainable development in the UK. The amendment was sponsored by Lord Livermore for the government and was agreed without division.¹²³

Lord Livermore said that in light of the amendment (new clause 3), the framework document would be updated to:¹²⁴

- clarify that sustainable development “means regard for the impact of the Crown Estate’s activities on the environment, society and the economy”
- “make it clear that this regard includes, where relevant, consideration of relevant legislation, such as Part 1 of the Climate Change Act 2008, which deals with the targets for 2050, Section 56 of the Climate Change Act 2008, and Sections 1 to 3 of the Environment Act 2021, which deal with specific environmental targets”
- state explicitly that the Crown Estate’s annual reports will report on its sustainable development activities

¹¹⁷ [HL Deb 14 October 2024](#) c33-34 (Earl Russell) c36-37 (Baroness Kramer) c37 (Baroness Vere of Norbiton)

¹¹⁸ [HL Deb 14 October 2024](#) c39-40 (Lord Livermore); [Deposited Paper \(DEP2024-0709\)](#)

¹¹⁹ Crown Estate Bill [HL] [Baroness Hayman's amendment, After Clause 2 \(amendment number 10\)](#)

¹²⁰ Crown Estate Bill [HL] [Lord Livermore's amendment, After Clause 2 \(amendment number 3\)](#)

¹²¹ Crown Estate Bill [HL] [Lord Forsyth of Drumlean's amendment, After Clause 2 \(amendment number 4\)](#)

¹²² Crown Estate Bill [HL] [Lord Hain's amendment, After Clause 2 \(amendment number 11\)](#)

¹²³ Crown Estate Bill [HL] [Baroness Hayman's amendment, After Clause 2 \(amendment number 10\)](#)

¹²⁴ [HL Deb 5 November 2024](#) c1450

What is sustainable development?

‘Sustainable development’ is a widely used term, often not clearly defined. It is not defined further in the new clause. However, the member’s explanatory statement to accompany new clause 3 noted that, “Sustainable development goals as recognised by the United Nations, the Commonwealth and other bodies refer to human development that aims to meet the economic, environmental and social needs of the present while also ensuring the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.”¹²⁵

The [sustainable development goals \(also called SDGs\)](#) are a plan of action to end poverty, protect the planet and improve the lives and prospects of everyone, everywhere. The 17 SDGs were adopted by all UN member states (including the UK), in 2015, as part of the [2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#).

At report stage of this bill, the government also said that, as part of this new clause, a revised joint Treasury and Crown Estate framework document will

clarify that ‘sustainable development’ means regard for the impact of the Crown Estate’s activities on the environment, society and the economy.¹²⁶

There are already requirements relating to sustainable development ambitions in UK legislation. For example, section 17 of the [Environment Act 2021](#) required the Secretary of State to publish a [policy statement on environmental principles](#). The policy statement is required to contribute to ‘sustainable development’. The statement sets out five environmental principles and guidance on how they should be interpreted and applied by government ministers when making policy. It also defines ‘sustainable development’ as follows:

“Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. It involves trying to achieve environmental benefit alongside economic growth and social progress and should be considered in a global context.”¹²⁷

¹²⁵ [HL Deb 5 November 2024 vol 840](#), column 1454

¹²⁶ [HL Deb 5 November 2024 vol 840](#), column 1450

¹²⁷ HM Government, [Environmental principles policy statement](#), 31 January 2023

2 Climate Change Act 2008 and Environment Act 2021

At report stage in the Lords, the government said it will update the joint Treasury and Crown Estate framework document to “make it clear that this regard [for the impact of the Crown Estate’s activities on the environment, society and the economy] includes, where relevant, consideration of relevant legislation”.¹²⁸ Examples of this relevant legislation include both part 1 and section 56 of the Climate Change Act 2008 and sections 1 to 3 of the [Environment Act 2021](#).¹²⁹

Climate Change Act 2008

The [Climate Change Act 2008](#) sets the UK’s legislative basis for action on climate change.

[Part 1](#) of the act details the UK’s overarching ‘carbon budget’ which includes a headline target of emissions reductions for 2050. It was amended through [The Climate Change Act 2008 \(2050 Target Amendment\) Order 2019](#) to require the UK to reduce its emissions to ensure that the “net UK carbon account” is 100% lower than the 1990 baseline by 2050. This is referred to as the ‘net zero target’. More information on this target and the interim emissions reductions (sequential carbon budgets up to 2050) is set out in the Library briefing on [The UK’s plans and progress to reach net zero by 2050](#).¹³⁰

Part 4 of the act requires the government to adapt to any current or predicted impacts of climate change. [Section 56](#) sets out a specific duty for the Secretary of State to lay a report setting out these impacts before Parliament. This is produced by government and informed by the independent Committee on Climate Change, and [the third Climate Change Risk Assessment \(CCRA3\)](#) was published in January 2022. For more information on risk assessment, adaptation and resilience, see the Library briefing on [Climate change adaptation and resilience in the UK](#).¹³¹

Environment Act 2021

Sections 1 to 3 of the Environment Act required the government to set a series of environmental targets in secondary legislation covering [air quality](#), [water](#), [biodiversity](#), and [resource efficiency and waste reduction](#). Most of these are long-term targets which stretch to 2040 and beyond. A series of non-statutory interim targets which support these longer-term targets were also published by the previous government in its [Environmental Improvement Plan](#) (EIP, January 2023). Many of the interim targets must be met by 2028. Further

¹²⁸ [HL Deb 5 November 2024 vol 840](#), column 1450

¹²⁹ [HL Deb 5 November 2024 vol 840](#), column 1450

¹³⁰ Commons Library research briefing CBP 9888, [The UK’s plans and progress to reach net zero by 2050](#)

¹³¹ Commons Library research briefing CBP 9969, [Climate change adaptation and resilience in the UK](#)

information about these target areas is provided in the Library article, [Are we on target for the environment?](#) 16 July 2024.

The current government has launched a “rapid review” of the EIP. It aims to publish a summary of findings in early 2025, to be followed by publication of a revised EIP in spring 2025.¹³² The government said that along with the review it would, “develop a new, statutory plan to protect and restore our natural environment with delivery plans to meet each of our ambitious Environment Act targets. This will focus on cleaning up our waterways, reducing waste across the economy, planting millions more trees, improving air quality and halting the decline in species by 2030.”¹³³

Clause 4: Annual reports

Lord Livermore moved amendment 3 for the government. It would require the commissioners to report on their activities under the partnership between the Crown Estate and Great British Energy, in the Crown Estate’s annual reports.¹³⁴ See section 1.2 for more on the partnership between the Crown Estate and Great British Energy.

The commissioners would report on the activities undertaken, and the effects or benefits resulting from them.

Amendment 3 was agreed without division.

Clause 5: Salmon farms on the Crown Estate

Lord Forsyth of Drumlean (Conservative) moved amendment 4 to insert a new clause, which did not receive government support. It was sponsored by Baroness Jones of Moulsecoomb (Green), Lord Strathclyde (Conservative) and Lord Sikka (Labour).¹³⁵

Speaking to the amendment, Lord Forsyth of Drumlean said that salmon farming can cause extensive damage if not properly regulated.

The clause would have meant the commissioners must, in carrying out their functions, assess the environmental impact and animal welfare standards of salmon farms on the Crown Estate. If they assess a salmon farm is causing environmental damage or has significant animal welfare issues, they would have had to revoke the licence for the farm.

¹³² [Biodiversity, UIN 8368](#), tabled on 9 October 2024

¹³³ HM Government, [Government launches rapid review to meet Environment Act targets](#), 30 July 2024

¹³⁴ Crown Estate Bill [HL] [Lord Livermore's amendment, After Clause 2 \(amendment number 3\)](#)

¹³⁵ Crown Estate Bill [HL] [Lord Forsyth of Drumlean's amendment, After Clause 2 \(amendment number 4\)](#)

Clause 5 would have applied a similar obligation for assessing applications for licences. The Crown Estate would have had to refuse an application if an assessment found that an application may cause environmental damage or raises significant animal welfare concerns.

As Lord Forsyth of Drumlean noted, the clause would have no effect on Crown Estate Scotland but he hoped that Scotland may follow if clause 5 becomes part of the act.¹³⁶ Virtually all salmon aquaculture happens in Scotland and the management of the Crown Estate in Scotland is devolved.

The government did not support the amendment. Lord Livermore said the amendment would “duplicate protections that already exist in legislation or that are required by regulators as part of the licensing process for aquaculture.”¹³⁷

The amendment was agreed on division, 220 votes for and 139 against.¹³⁸ As discussed above, the added clause was removed at committee stage in the Commons (see section 4.2).

Salmon farming industry in the UK

Within the UK, all marine salmon farming currently takes place in Scotland and Northern Ireland.

The [Scottish Fish Farm Production Survey 2023](#) reported that the total production of Atlantic salmon during 2023 was 150,949 tonnes.

The number of companies authorised and actively producing Atlantic salmon in 2023 was eight. Two companies were active and authorised, although not producing salmon for harvest in 2023. These 10 companies had 213 registered active sites, although only 126 of these sites produced fish for harvest in 2023.

Data for Northern Ireland is not publicly available. There is one salmon farm in Northern Ireland.

Concerns about environmental and animal welfare impacts of salmon farming

Campaign charities, such as Fidra whose [Best Fishes campaign](#) called for “best practice across the Scottish salmon farming industry,” have highlighted concerns about salmon farming. These include diseases and lice on both farmed and wild fish, the chemicals used in fish farms and the impact of organic waste from caged farms on the surrounding marine environment. Other issues raised include high mortality levels in caged fish and the impact of fish farm escapees on declining wild salmon populations. In December 2023, [wild salmon were classified as ‘endangered’ in Great Britain](#) by the

¹³⁶ HL Deb 22 October 2024 [c547](#)

¹³⁷ [HL Deb 14 October 2024](#) c1427-1428

¹³⁸ [Crown Estate Bill \[HL\] Division 2: held on 5 November 2024](#)

International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) due to a 30% to 50% decline in British populations since 2006.

The campaign group Compassion in World Farming has highlighted [a number of welfare concerns over farmed salmon](#). The Marine Stewardship Council (MSC), which certifies fish and shellfish according to its sustainability, [summarised concerns about environmental impacts and welfare](#) as follows:

Salmon farming is a complex process that requires lots of considerations, especially as it happens in a dynamic, diverse and ever-changing environment. Each farm is different. Some have better practices than others, and some are sited in locations that are more suited to fish farming.

However, challenges remain for most farms in some form. Open net pens allow for waste products such as faeces, uneaten feed, and medicinal treatments to enter the sea and affect the seabed. Fish may escape from open net pens, which can cause problems if they breed with wild salmon. Diseases can spread between farmed fish and wild fish. Sea lice, which are small marine parasites, are also passed between farmed salmon in pens and wild salmon. They can cause health problems for fish if they attach in large numbers.

Farmed salmon require feed which includes fishmeal and fish oil, which comes mainly from wild caught fish. Terrestrial ingredients such as soy are also used. These ingredients are not always sustainably sourced.¹³⁹

As a result, MSC does not support further expansion of the industry in Scotland:

The more salmon farms there are in one area, the more impacts could accumulate and affect the environment. Currently, there is no way of measuring what these cumulative impacts are. [...]

We're also concerned about the lack of knowledge of salmon farming impacts on sensitive habitats and species and near Marine Protected Areas (MPAs). There are 103 known active farming sites within MPAs.¹⁴⁰

[Salmon Scotland, the trade body representing fish farmers in Scotland, disputes the concerns:](#)

Farm-raised Scottish salmon has the lowest carbon footprint of any farm-raised animal, while salmon farmers operating in Scotland made up four of the top ten in a global league table of sustainable food producers. Our farms are also among the most highly regulated in the world, with each farm required to operate to an environmental licence, issued by SEPA. This ensures that the operation of the farm does not result in any significant harm to the environment. Our salmon farmers are committed to the highest animal welfare standards anywhere in the world.¹⁴¹

In Northern Ireland there were reports on 1 October 2024 of [around 5,000 farmed salmon escaping](#) due to a tear in their net enclosure, which is

¹³⁹ MSC, [Spotlight on Salmon](#) [accessed on 21 November 2024]

¹⁴⁰ MSC, [Spotlight on Salmon](#) [accessed on 21 November 2024]

¹⁴¹ Salmon Scotland, [Salmon farming get the facts](#) [accessed on 21 November 2024]

reportedly been investigated by Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (Daera).

Scottish Parliament inquiries

The Scottish Parliament Rural Economy and Connectivity Committee (RECC) published a report on [Salmon Farming in Scotland](#) in 2018 setting out a number of concerns. It concluded that “urgent action needed to be taken to improve the regulation of the Scottish salmon farming industry and to address fish health and environmental challenges”.

In 2024 the Rural Affairs and Islands Committee (RAIC) launched [a follow up to the report](#) in which is examining progress in a number of areas including: environmental impacts and regulatory reform, animal welfare, and interactions with wild salmon.

Clause 6: Commissioners with special responsibility

Lord Hain (Labour) moved amendment 11. It was sponsored by Lord Livermore for the government, Baroness Smith of Llanfaes (Plaid Cymru), Lord Thomas of Cwmgiedd (crossbench), Baroness Humphreys (Liberal Democrat).¹⁴²

Clause 6 would mean that three of the commissioners would, alongside their existing responsibilities, be responsible for advising on conditions in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, respectively. Welsh ministers and the Northern Ireland executive office would have to be consulted about the relevant appointment for each area. The Executive Office in Northern Ireland consists of the First Minister, deputy First Minister and two junior ministers.¹⁴³

The amendment was agreed without division.

Amendments not made

Baroness Vere of Norbiton (Conservative) moved amendment 1 which would require the Secretary of State to limit borrowing by the Crown Estate by affirmative regulations, and for the first set of regulations to set the debt limit at 25% of the value of the Crown Estate’s asset.¹⁴⁴ The Baroness argued that “some form of parliamentary oversight is critical” particularly as the salaries and expenses of Commissioners would no longer be paid by money from Parliament, under the bill.¹⁴⁵

The government’s view was that the borrowing limit should be placed outside of legislation. The main control on borrowing in the bill is the need for Treasury consent.

¹⁴² Crown Estate Bill [HL] [Lord Hain's amendment, After Clause 2 \(amendment number 11\)](#)

¹⁴³ The Executive Office, [Executive Office Ministers](#) (accessed on 27 November 2024)

¹⁴⁴ Crown Estate Bill [HL], [Baroness Vere of Norbiton's amendment, Clause 1 \(amendment number 1\)](#)

¹⁴⁵ [HL Deb 5 November 2024](#) c1398

Ahead of report stage, documents detailing the parameters and controls relating to the power to borrow had been deposited in the Lords Library.¹⁴⁶ These documents included a draft memorandum of understanding, the original business case and a draft framework document. The draft memorandum of understanding says that borrowing by the Crown Estate will be limited to a maximum of 25% loan to value, defined as net debt-to-asset value, and that any borrowing within that limit can be undertaken only with Treasury consent.

Lord Livermore added, in addition to the safeguard of Treasury consent “we are retaining the requirement for the Crown Estate commissioners to maintain and enhance the value of the estate, while having due regard to the requirements of good management as set out in the 1961 Act.”

Amendment 1 was pushed to a division but was not agreed.¹⁴⁷

Baroness Humphreys (Liberal Democrat) moved amendment 6, which would require the government to devolve Welsh Crown Estate responsibility to the Welsh Government.¹⁴⁸ Baroness Humphreys said there are “frustrations in Wales, as Scotland is seen to be benefiting from the devolution of Crown Estate powers to the Scottish Parliament, not only through the receipts paid to it but in the control, power and influence that Scotland has over the use of its resources.”¹⁴⁹

Baroness Humphreys said she was seeking more than was being provided with amendment 11, which was later agreed. It became clause 6 in the bill.

Lord Livermore said the government thinks there is “greater benefit for the people of Wales and the wider United Kingdom in retaining the Crown Estate’s current form”. He went on to say that the Crown Estates revenues are paid into the UK Consolidated Fund (essentially, the government’s current account). Spending from this benefits Wales and Northern Ireland, potentially through the block grant or through spending on reserved areas in each country. The block grants are grants the UK government provides to the devolved administrations. Annual changes in these are determined by the Barnett formula. The Library briefing [The Barnett formula and fiscal devolution](#) explains how the formula works.

Amendment 6 was pushed to a division but was not agreed.¹⁵⁰

Other areas for discussion that were not pushed further included:

- calls to give the Crown Estate a new duty to contribute to the government’s climate change and nature targets.¹⁵¹ Such a duty would go

¹⁴⁶ [Deposited Paper \(DEP2024-0709\)](#)

¹⁴⁷ HL Deb 5 November 2024: Division 1

¹⁴⁸ Crown Estate Bill [HL], Baroness Humphreys’ amendment, After Clause 2 (amendment number 6)

¹⁴⁹ [HL Deb 5 November 2024](#) c1433

¹⁵⁰ [HL Deb 5 November 2024: Division 3](#)

¹⁵¹ [HL Crown Estate Bill \[HL\] 5 November 2024](#) c1446-1447 (Earl Russell)

further than the requirement set out in the agreed amendment 11 (new clause 3)

- a requirement to have the Treasury Committee scrutinise the Chair of Commissions before their appointment. The government committed that the Treasury will “work with the Cabinet Office to add the role of chair to the official pre-appointment scrutiny list”¹⁵²
- improvements to the scrutiny and transparency of Crown Estate asset sales¹⁵³
- ensuring Crown Estate Scotland has the same freedoms and flexibilities that the Crown Estate will have following the passage of the bill¹⁵⁴
- a requirement that the commissioners establish a regional wealth fund and a skills training fund using funds from the Crown Estate¹⁵⁵
- a requirement for the Treasury to approve and Crown Estate assets sales valued at over £10 million. While the government was against the amendment,¹⁵⁶ Lord Livermore said that special protections for the seabed might be warranted and the government would bring an amendment if required¹⁵⁷

Third reading

Third reading was held on 18 November 2024.¹⁵⁸

A [privilege amendment](#) was agreed to, which is a technical and procedural amendment added to a bill that starts in the Lords and authorises new public spending.¹⁵⁹

Lord Kennedy of Southwark signified the King's consent.¹⁶⁰ The Monarch's consent needs to be obtained if a bill affects their prerogative or interests or their hereditary revenues (including the Duchy of Lancaster), personal

¹⁵² [HL Crown Estate Bill \[HL\] 5 November 2024](#) c1403-1407 (Baroness Vere of Norbiton) c1410-1412 (Earl Russell) c1411 (Earl Russell)

¹⁵³ [HL Crown Estate Bill \[HL\] 5 November 2024](#) c1406 (Baroness Vere of Norbiton); c1409-1410 (Lord Lansley)

¹⁵⁴ [HL Crown Estate Bill \[HL\] 5 November 2024](#) c1414 (The Earl of Kinnoull) c1415 (Earl Russell) c1416 (Lord Vaux of Harrowden) c1416-1417 (Lord Forsyth of Drumlean and Baroness Vere of Norbiton)

¹⁵⁵ [HL Crown Estate Bill \[HL\] 5 November 2024](#) c1452-1453 (Earl Russell)

¹⁵⁶ HL Crown Estate Bill [HL], Baroness Vere of Norbiton's amendment, After Clause 2 ([amendment number 14](#))

¹⁵⁷ [HL Crown Estate Bill \[HL\] 5 November 2024](#) c1406-1412

¹⁵⁸ [HL Deb 18 November 2024](#) c15-18

¹⁵⁹ [HL Sitting 18 November 2024 - Minutes of Proceedings](#)

¹⁶⁰ [HL Deb 18 November 2024](#) c15

property, or personal interests. This includes the Crown Estate and the Crown Estate commissioners.¹⁶¹

¹⁶¹ UK Parliament, [Erskine May: Queen's consent in respect of her interest](#) (accessed on 29 November 2024)

5 How bills go through Parliament

Bills can be introduced in either the House of Commons or the House of Lords. They can be amended but the entire text must be agreed by both Houses before they can receive Royal Assent and become law. In both Houses, bills go through the same stages although there are slight differences in the practices of the two Houses.

5.1 Lords stages

A bill that is introduced in the House of Lords will go through the following stages:

- First reading sees the formal introduction of a bill, with the name of the bill read out in the Lords chamber. The bill's first reading was on 25 July 2024. There is no debate at this stage.
- Second reading is the first time peers debate a bill. They discuss the purpose of the bill. The bill's second reading was on 2 September 2024. At the end of the debate, peers decide whether it should pass to the next stage. No amendments are made to the bill itself at this stage.
- Committee stage is mostly held in committee of the whole House in the House of Lords. There is detailed line-by-line scrutiny of the bill with amendments. Committee stage for the bill was held on 14 October 2024 and 22 October 2024.
- Report stage allows peers the opportunity to examine the bill along with amendments made at committee stage. Further amendments can be proposed and voted on. Report stage for the bill was held on 5 November 2024.
- Third reading is a 'tidying up' stage where peers can close any loopholes. Peers can propose amendments to be voted on. Third reading for the bill was held on 18 November 2024.

Key differences between the two Houses are that in the Lords, committee stage usually takes place on the floor of the House and a bill can be amended at third reading.

At committee stage, most bills are considered by a committee of the whole House in the House of Lords. Some are referred to the Lords Grand Committee—which all members can attend. However, divisions (votes) are

not permitted in the Grand Committee and any amendments have to be agreed to without a division.

The House of Lords respects the Commons' primacy on financial matters and does not usually amend finance bills (those that implement the Budget) or money bills.

No party has a majority in the House of Lords and government defeats are not uncommon. For bills that have started in the House of Commons, the Lords is essentially asking MPs to think again about the subject of the amendment.

Once all stages are completed in the Lords, the bill is sent to the Commons.

5.2 Commons stages

A bill that is introduced in the House of Commons will go through the following stages.

- First reading sees the formal introduction of a bill, when a clerk reads out the name of the bill in the Commons chamber. The bill's first reading was on 19 November 2024. There is no debate at this stage. Bills cannot be published before their introduction. Government bills are usually published immediately after introduction.
- Second reading debate is the first time MPs debate a bill. They discuss the purpose of the bill. Debates are usually scheduled to take a full day (five to six hours). At the end of the debate, MPs decide whether it should pass to the next stage. Sometimes a 'reasoned amendment', which sets out the reasons to reject a bill, is tabled. If this is agreed to, or if the bill is simply voted down, the bill cannot make any further progress. No amendments are made to the bill itself at this stage. The bill's second reading was on 7 January 2025.
- Committee stage is usually conducted by a small number of MPs (usually 17) in a public bill committee but sometimes bills can be considered in detail in the Commons Chamber by all MPs in a committee of the whole House. The committee debates and decides whether amendments should be made to the bill and whether each clause and schedule should be included. The bill's public bill committee was on 6 February 2025.
- Report stage takes place in the Commons Chamber and involves MPs considering the bill as agreed at committee stage. MPs can also propose further amendments which can be voted on.
- Amendments at committee and report stage can leave out words, substitute words and add words, including whole clauses and schedules.

They can be proposed by backbench and frontbench MPs. The Speaker or the chair of the committee selects and groups amendments to debate.

- Third reading, usually on the same day as report stage, is the final chance for MPs to debate the contents of a bill before it goes to the House of Lords. It's usually a short debate and changes cannot be made at this stage in the Commons. At the end of the debate, the House decides whether to approve the bill and therefore pass it onto the House of Lords.

5.3 'Ping pong'

If the Commons amend a bill that was sent from the Lords, the amendments are returned to the Lords and the House of Lords debates the amendments proposed by the Commons. This is potentially the start of "ping-pong", a process whereby amendments and messages about the amendments are sent backwards and forwards between the two Houses until agreement is reached.

Once agreement has been reached, the bill receives Royal Assent, becoming law when both Houses have been notified that Royal Assent has been granted.

5.4 Amendments

MPs can submit amendments, via the Public Bill Office (PBO), at three different stages of a bill: committee stage, report stage, and when a bill is returned from the Lords. Once the Public Bill Office accepts the amendment, it has been 'tabled'. If an MP wants to amend a bill during committee stage but is not a member of the committee, they will need a committee member to 'move' it for debate on their behalf.

In order to be debated, the amendment must be selected by the chair. Similar amendments may be grouped for debate to avoid repetition. For committee stage, selection and grouping is carried out by MPs from the panel of chairs chosen to chair the committee. If there is a committee of the Whole House, the chair is the Chairman of Ways and Means (the principal Deputy Speaker). For report stage, it is the Speaker.

Amendments might not be selected for debate if they are, for example, outside the scope of a bill, vague, or tabled to the wrong part of a bill. The Public Bill Office can advise on whether an amendment is likely to be selected.

5.5

Further information on bill procedure

The [MPs' Guide to Procedure](#) has a [section on bills](#).

MPs who have questions about the procedure for bills or want advice on how to amend them should contact the [Public Bill Office](#).

The Library can provide information on the background and potential impact of a bill and of amendments but cannot help MPs with drafting amendments.

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