

**THEHOUSE** What is the committee's remit?

Unlike other committees, we are reactive to what Government wants to do in relation to regulations, in particular deregulation. It was set up following the 2006 Act which allowed Government to make primary legislation by order. These are minor changes to legislation that perhaps aren't worthy of troubling the whole of the House.

**THEHOUSE** How does it relate to business?

It cuts across all departments and there is a particular relationship with BIS – it has a mandate for deregulation of mandatory burdens. We have an appetite to do more and stretch the boundaries of what the committee do. The Confederation of British Industry has written to everyone on the committee and I will be meeting with them about how we can encourage more use of the regulatory reform order procedure more frequently.

**THEHOUSE** What activity has there been since you took over as chair?

We have done two reports, into regulation of veterinary surgeons and hallmarking, since I became chairman in December. There have only been six reports since 2010.

**THEHOUSE** Is the committee keen to become more active rather than reactive?

When I became chairman I was keen to find out what else the Government is looking at. There



# JAMES DUDDRIDGE

Chairman of the Regulatory Reform Committee

Interview: Tony Grew

is quite a broad range of activities across a number of departments, such as making small changes to the 2005 Gambling Act, patent infringements for clinical trial, changes to social work pilots and the need for Ofsted regulation and at fire and rescue services allowing mutual organisations to provide fire cover. I think the Government will find it useful to use the Committee more so the message is: we are open for business we would like more

deregulation and the committee is quite bullish about doing that.

**THEHOUSE** What approach did you take when you became chair?

I did not want a revolution, I wanted to listen to the committee get their feedback and make the appropriate changes slowly rather than do anything radical myself on day one. We are open to reviewing ideas and we will want to review the

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totality of functions rather than organically encouraging bits of deregulation on an ad hoc basis.

**THEHOUSE** How do you interact with departmental select committees?

We do have to consider the overlap with other committees who have a remit to look at regulation within their department. We need to be careful that we don't duplicate and tread on the toes of other committees, but there may be some we can work together with.

**THEHOUSE** Has your workload increased since you took over as chairman?

There are more days when I am doing something to do with the committee than not. You perhaps don't appreciate when you look down the order paper and see how infrequently we meet that there is a lot of work behind the scenes for some quite short meetings.

**THEHOUSE** Are you looking forward to the liaison committee?

On Tuesday we questioned the Deputy Prime Minister. A number of MPs think that ministers are collectively responsible to parliament and the public and not to just the PM. Just because the PM has a little local difficulty with the coalition is it right that he unilaterally suspends collective responsibility? I can understand why that happens for pragmatic reasons but it is legitimate for parliamentarians to probe that. We can't become a pick and mix coalition. ■