

Catching up

Published: January 13, 2026, 1:55 pm

As some will have noticed, it is not quite normal service on the blog this week. I admit I am taking a quiet week to think about a range of issues and as such am paying less attention to current events.

A small part of this may be reaction to [losing Hector](#) last week - some sleep was lost in his final days and I need to catch up. During this week I have also to do the parental taxi service run for a son returning early to prepare materials for university freshers week. And then there is also quite simply a lot to think about.

Over the last couple of weeks I have technically started my work at both Sheffield (one day a week) and Copenhagen Business School via the [Corporate Accountability Network](#), where I will also be working a day a week for four years on [sustainable cost accounting](#). New work on the Green New Deal is also under way. Add these together and there is a lot of groundwork to lay.

I am aware that accounting is not the topic that turns on most people on this blog. I actually think that a shame since almost no decisions are made without data and one of the recurring themes of the work that I will be doing is that we do not have information fit for decision making purposes now, whether that relates to corporate risk, climate change, tax or the obligations of a company to society at large.

The first five of a series of publications on this theme were written over the summer and are now being edited. If all goes to plan these Briefings - which have a focus on audit reform but which will address many issues in accounting as well - will be somewhat greater in number than that and will appear this autumn in anticipation of the government producing its proposals on this issue so that those who want to critique them have an alternative perspective to consider.

New work on [hollowed out firms](#) is also under way, including early work on academic papers on the accounting dimensions of this issue and how it can be that companies are able to pay out more in dividends than they earn without their auditors apparently expressing concern.

And in the meantime discussions on sustainable cost accounting suggest that it is being noticed. The awareness that the sustainability reporting being proposed at COP 26 will fall far short of real need is increasing as investors realise that knowing how much carbon a company produces does not indicate how the problem will be solved, or what the cost of doing so might be. Despite this the government seems wedded to this approach that will fall so far short of investor needs, and those of society. I am being encouraged to write an alternative accounting standard on this issue and that is requiring some thought.

Add on to that the work that is being planned to take forward ideas on [funding the Green New Deal](#) and I can more than entertain myself for week or so without obsessing about the failings of the UK government, legion as they might be. But I will be back on that theme soon.