

Press release: HS2 launches public consultations on plans to extend the railway north

Construction of the Phase One route between Birmingham and London is now well underway with 7,000 jobs already supported through the project. When construction peaks, as the full network progresses, that figure is forecast to rise to 30,000.

HS2 destinations on the Phase 2b route will benefit significantly from the jobs and business growth that HS2 will bring to the region. Around 2,000 companies have already been awarded contracts working on the project, and we expect that number to increase significantly as plans for Phase Two of the railway progress.

This morning 2 new public consultations were launched on the Phase 2b route, which will serve communities between the West Midlands, Manchester and Leeds. The 10 week consultations, which close on 21 December, will give communities the opportunity to formally respond to HS2 Ltd's designs and proposed mitigation measures for the Phase 2b route. Responses are invited from the public on HS2 Ltd's:

- working draft Environmental Statement, which describes the design of the railway and reports on the impacts of its construction and operation, alongside the measures proposed to reduce and monitor these impacts; and
- the working draft Equality Impact Assessment Report, which considers the potential effects of the construction and operation of the railway on people with protected characteristics.

The public consultations will be supported by [a programme of community events](#), which will see teams from HS2 Ltd visit locations across the eastern and western legs of the Phase 2b route to talk to people about the design plans and the benefits that Britain's new high speed railway will bring.

Leonie Dubois, HS2 Ltd's Head of Consultation and Engagement, said:

HS2 is coming to the north and it will reap significant benefits as a result. High speed rail will play a crucial role in rebalancing Britain's economy; driving business growth, stimulating investment and creating jobs right across the country.

Through the public consultations, we are providing a more detailed account of how we propose to build the railway and minimise its impacts during construction and operation. We actively encourage people to have their say on the plans we have published today.

Residents and businesses across the Phase 2b route are invited to view the

latest designs and respond to the public consultations. [A new online resource](#) has been created to help people find information about HS2 in their local area.

Press and media enquiries

For enquiries during office working hours, Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm
020 7944 6149

For enquiries outside of these hours and at the weekend
020 7944 0550

The press and media enquiries line is for accredited journalists only

[Press release: Chief Inspector sets out vision for new Education Inspection Framework](#)

Summary:

- Amanda Spielman proposes 4 new inspection judgements
- schools will no longer receive a separate grade for outcomes for pupils
- focus will be on the substance of education and a broad curriculum
- more involvement for classroom teachers
- consultation on draft framework to be launched in January

Her Majesty's Chief Inspector, Amanda Spielman today announced details of planned changes to the way Ofsted inspects schools, colleges, further education institutions and early years settings from September 2019. These changes will move Ofsted's focus away from headline data to look instead at how schools are achieving these results, and whether they are offering a curriculum that is broad, rich and deep, or simply teaching to the test.

Speaking to school leaders at the annual SCHOOLS NorthEast summit in Newcastle, Ms Spielman said that these changes will be designed to allow teachers and leaders to focus more of their time on the real substance of education.

Read the [Chief Inspector's full speech at the SCHOOLS NorthEast summit](#).

Ms Spielman acknowledged that the current inspection model has contributed to

excessive workload in some schools, much of which falls on classroom teachers. She said that when it comes to assessing a school, Ofsted should complement, rather than intensify, performance data. It should reward school leaders who are ambitious for their pupils, rather than those who jump through hoops. Therefore, the new framework will place greater emphasis on the substance of education, and actively discourage unnecessary data collection.

Ms Spielman said:

For a long time, our inspections have looked hardest at outcomes, placing too much weight on test and exam results when we consider the overall effectiveness of schools. The cumulative impact of performance tables and inspections, and the consequences that are hung on them, has increased the pressure on school leaders, teachers and indirectly on pupils to deliver perfect data above all else.

But we know that focusing too narrowly on test and exam results can often leave little time or energy for hard thinking about the curriculum, and in fact can sometimes end up making a casualty of it. The bottom line is that we must make sure that we, as an inspectorate, complement rather than intensify performance data.

Because our curriculum research, and a vast amount of sector feedback, have told us that a focus on performance data is coming at the expense of what is taught in schools. Our new focus will change that, bringing the inspection conversation back to the substance of young people's learning and treating teachers as experts in their field, not just data managers. I don't know a single teacher who went into teaching to get the perfect progress eight score. They go into it because they love what they teach and want children to love it too. That is where the inspection conversation should start and with the new framework we have an opportunity to do just that.

Ms Spielman announced that Ofsted will consult on the introduction of a new judgement for 'quality of education'. This will replace the current 'outcomes for pupils' and 'teaching, learning and assessment' judgements with a broader, single judgement.

This new judgement will allow Ofsted to recognise primary schools that, for example, prioritise phonics and the transition into early reading, and which encourage older pupils to read widely and deeply. And it will make it easier for secondary schools to do the right thing, offering children a broad range of subjects and encouraging the take up of core EBacc subjects at GCSE, such as the humanities and languages, alongside the arts and creative subjects.

At the same time, Ofsted will challenge those schools where too much time is spent on preparation for tests at the expense of teaching, where pupils'

choices are narrowed, or where children are pushed into less rigorous qualifications purely to boost league table positions.

The Chief Inspector also announced the 3 other inspection judgements that Ofsted will consult on:

- personal development
- behaviour and attitudes
- schools' leadership and management

The 'personal development, welfare and behaviour' judgement in the current framework will be split into 2 distinct areas. This change recognises the difference between behaviour and discipline in schools, and pupils' wider personal development and their opportunities to grow as active, healthy and engaged citizens.

An overall effectiveness judgement will continue to be awarded, and all judgements will be made using the current 4 point grading scale.

Responding to the suggestion that these changes should be postponed for a year, Ms Spielman said that she was confident that this will be the most researched, evidence-based and tested framework in Ofsted's history, and that to delay would let children and teachers down. She also addressed concerns that Ofsted will have a preferred approach to the curriculum.

Ms Spielman said:

We are not talking here about an Ofsted-approved approach. We are talking about an approach that leaves plenty of space for diversity, but nevertheless makes it possible to recognise and discourage things that just aren't good enough. Our curriculum research showed quite clearly that it's possible to acknowledge a range of successful curricular approaches – approaches that cross any perceived ideological divide.

She continued:

With teacher workload and retention such pressing issues, I am firmly of the view that a focus on substance will help to tackle excessive workload. It will move inspection more towards being a conversation about what actually happens in schools. Those who are bold and ambitious and run their schools with integrity will be rewarded as a result.

And we know from talking to you, as well as from our research, that this is the right way to go. One year of delay in this framework is the equivalent of more than 8 million child years of delay and half a million teacher years of delay. In the middle of a teacher recruitment crisis, the changes to inspection simply can't wait.

Ms Spielman said the new framework will make it easier to recognise and reward the good work done by schools in areas of high disadvantage. By shifting the focus away from outcomes, Ofsted hopes to reverse the incentive for schools to put overall results ahead of individual children's needs. These changes will empower schools to always put the child first and make teaching in high disadvantage schools even more rewarding. In turn, this will encourage the best teachers to work in the schools that need them most, rather than those where their career may feel safest.

In January, Ofsted will launch a consultation on the new inspection framework. Unlike previous consultations, views will also be sought on each individual inspection handbook. Ofsted will consider all responses carefully before finalising the framework. Further details of the consultation and how to respond will be published early next year.

Notes

The 4 judgements inspectors make under the current education inspection framework are:

- effectiveness of leadership and management
- quality of teaching, learning and assessment
- personal development, behaviour and welfare
- outcomes for children and learners

[Press release: Defra approves sale of Sequoia for use only in greenhouses](#)



Sequoia contains the active ingredient Sulfoxaflor which was approved by the EU in 2015 following assessment by the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA).

The Government's decision follows a full assessment by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) and the UK Expert Committee on Pesticides (ECP).

A Defra spokesperson said:

The Health and Safety Executive and the Expert Committee on Pesticides recommended that Sequoia should be authorised for use in greenhouses as they assessed the risk to bees and pollinators to be low. In line with commitments to be led by the science, Ministers have accepted this recommendation.

Both organisations concluded Sequoia used in greenhouses meets the requirements for authorisation as the risk to pollinators is low.

Our priority is the protection of people and the environment which is why decisions on the use of pesticides are based on a careful scientific assessment of the risks.

This decision is consistent with the EU's recent decision on neonicotinoids, which bans the outdoor use of neonicotinoids while allowing continued use in greenhouses. Further information is [online](#).

Published 11 October 2018

Press release: University laundry merger broken up by CMA

The decision by the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) comes following an in-depth investigation into market leader JLA's takeover in May 2017 of its closest competitor Washstation. The 2 firms supply managed laundry services to higher education providers including universities, colleges and student accommodation providers.

The merger was investigated by a CMA group of independent panel members which today published its final decision. The group found a substantial loss of competition resulting from the merger and that customers may be expected to pay more for, or receive lower quality, managed laundry services.

Findings show that other firms offering laundry services to higher education providers are not currently able to compete effectively with JLA / Washstation. The investigation also found that any future growth by these smaller rivals would be unlikely to offset the loss of competition resulting from the merger, either sufficiently or quickly enough. Additionally, it was found that companies providing laundry services in other sectors, such as healthcare or leisure, would find it difficult to enter the higher education sector and compete effectively against JLA / Washstation in the foreseeable future.

In order to address the loss of competition resulting from the merger, the

CMA has decided that JLA must sell Washstation's higher education business to a new owner to be approved by the CMA.

Stuart McIntosh, Inquiry Chair, said:

Our decision will preserve competition and choice for universities and other providers of student accommodation.

The CMA thoroughly monitors mergers across the UK. Where it finds concerns it will take action, and has the ability to reverse completed mergers to ensure that customers are not worse off.

Full information on the merger investigation can be found on the [case page](#).

Notes for editors

1. The CMA is the UK's primary competition and consumer authority. It is an independent non-ministerial government department with responsibility for carrying out investigations into mergers, markets and the regulated industries and enforcing competition and consumer law.
2. JLA and Washstation are both UK companies predominantly active in the UK.
3. JLA acquired Washstation in May 2017. In December 2017, the CMA called in the merger for investigation. At the end of the initial (phase 1) review, JLA offered no undertakings to address the competition concerns found in the CMA's phase 1 decision, and the CMA therefore referred the case for an in-depth [\(phase 2\)](#) investigation on 16 April 2018.
4. On 10 August 2018 the group of independent panel members [published its provisional findings](#) and [notice of possible remedies](#) and invited views. The group considered responses to its provisional findings and proposals on remedies.
5. The CMA's functions in phase 2 merger investigations are performed by inquiry groups chosen from the CMA's panel members. The appointed inquiry group are the decision-makers on phase 2 investigations.
6. The CMA's panel members come from a variety of backgrounds, including economics, law, accountancy and/or business; the membership of an inquiry group usually reflects a mix of expertise and experience.
7. The members of this inquiry group are [Stuart McIntosh \(Inquiry Chair\)](#), [Anne Fletcher](#), [Ulrike Hotopp](#) and [Sheila McClelland](#).
8. Media enquiries to the CMA should be directed to press@cma.gsi.gov.uk or 020 3738 6460.

[Press release: Foreign Secretary](#)

pledges to do everything possible to protect wild animals

In the last five decades, the world has lost nearly 60 percent of its vertebrate animals. In case you believe that is just another statistic, think about what it means.

The magnificent wildlife that humanity has inherited – the animals that enliven our imaginations, enhance the beauty of the world and provide livelihoods for millions of people – are disappearing with terrifying speed. We have lost two thirds of Africa's elephants since the 1970s. We are down to the last 80,000 giraffes and the final 20,000 lions. The world's tiger population has dropped by 95 per cent in the last century.

If we go on like this, our grandchildren may only know of these animals from David Attenborough documentaries.

So today, I will open a conference in London attended by 80 countries on how to combat the illegal wildlife trade. The criminal gangs who smuggle horns and tusks pose one of the greatest threats to the survival of wildlife. They target some of the poorest countries in the world, spreading corruption and depriving governments of desperately needed revenues that could be used for schools and hospitals.

The World Bank estimates that governments lose as much as \$15 billion (£11 billion) every year because of illegal logging. And the same criminal networks that traffic the body parts of wild animals may also deal in guns and drugs and people.

This week, I have joined Penny Mordaunt, the International Development Secretary, to announce a new British initiative to target the traffickers by helping countries in Africa and Asia to launch investigations and seize assets. We are sending more British diplomats to Africa, including experts on combating the illegal wildlife trade.

Last year, our Parliament passed the Criminal Finances Act, strengthening the British Government's powers to combat money laundering and freeze unexplained wealth. Since then, we have placed another law before Parliament that would ban domestic ivory sales.

We will also contribute £250 million to the United Nations Global Environment Facility by 2022. As part of this, the Global Wildlife Programme has worked with Kenya on a new law imposing tougher punishments for wildlife crimes, including life imprisonment for anyone caught smuggling the body parts of an endangered species.

We are using our aid budget to help the UN Office of Drugs and Crime to strengthen the ability of developing countries to enforce their laws against the wildlife trade and improve their investigative skills.

When laws are enforced and smugglers prosecuted, wildlife populations can and do recover. The number of wild tigers in Nepal, for example, has doubled in the last nine years.

The London conference will be the biggest international gathering of its kind ever held. My aim is for Britain to do everything possible to protect wild animals for the sake of our grandchildren. If we failed to act, quite simply we would never be forgiven.