

News story: Blue Belt publication for schools launched

A [new Government publication](#) has been created to introduce the work of the Blue Belt Programme to secondary school children.

The publication was launched at the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in April 2018, on board the Cefas Endeavour vessel, with the help of local school children from South London.

The [Blue Belt programme](#) supports delivery of the UK government's commitment to provide long term protection of over four million square kilometres of marine environment across the UK Overseas Territories.

News story: Webinar – 2 May – How to source opportunities on Contracts Finder

Join this 30 minute webinar to get an introduction to Contracts Finder; in particular, how to set up contract alerts, respond to bids, manage opportunities, and make the most of the dispute resolution service if you see terms and conditions you feel are unworkable for small businesses.

Presented by Jo Dale from Crown Commercial Service, who will deliver a few slides to introduce Contracts Finder and then open up for your questions.

Press release: Kathryn Cearns OBE appointed as Non-Executive Director

Highways England is responsible for operating, maintaining and improving more than 4,300 miles of motorways and main trunk roads throughout England and is delivering the government's £15billion Road Investment Strategy.

A chartered accountant, Kathryn will join the Board from today (Tuesday 17 April) for three years.

Highways England chairman Colin Matthews said:

I warmly welcome Kathryn to the Board of Highways England. Her strong financial skills and experience will be extremely valuable as we work to achieve the best possible value for taxpayers' money from the government's £15bn investment in England's strategic road network.

Kathryn has extensive senior level experience in both the public and private sectors. Her career has included roles as independent chairman of the Financial Reporting Advisory Board to HM Treasury and as a project director at the UK Accounting Standards Board (now the Financial Reporting Council), as well as working for many years for an international law firm providing finance, audit and corporate governance advice and expertise to leading FTSE companies.

Kathryn holds other non-executive, trustee and advisory appointments, most notably as a member of the External Audit Committee for the International Monetary Fund, a non-executive director for the UK Supreme Court, a non-executive board member and member of the Audit Committee for Companies House and as a trustee for Royal British Legion Industries.

Kathryn will be paid £25,000 for a minimum of 27 days' work per annum, with an additional £3,000 for chairing a board committee. The remuneration for non-executive and senior executive posts is published in Highways England's annual report each year.

General enquiries

Members of the public should contact the Highways England customer contact centre on 0300 123 5000.

Media enquiries

Journalists should contact the Highways England press office on 0844 693 1448 and use the menu to speak to the most appropriate press officer.

[Consultation outcome: Enrolment of SMETS1 meter cohorts with the Data Communications Company](#)

Updated: Government response published.

A number of energy suppliers are installing first generation (SMETS1) smart meters, using their own data and communications systems to provide smart services. While SMETS1 meters support accurate bills and near real-time energy consumption which enable consumers to realise the benefit of smart metering, consumers may lose smart services on switching to another energy supplier.

The government's long-standing policy for resolving this issue is for all significant populations of SMETS1 meters to eventually be operated via the national data and communications provider, the Data Communications Company (DCC).

This consultation considers the business case for certain cohorts of SMETS1 meters – consisting of Aclara, Honeywell Elster, Itron and Landis+Gyr meters – to be enrolled in the DCC. This is based on a cost-benefit analysis and consideration of security and the technical feasibility of enrolment.

A subsequent consultation will consider the remaining SMETS1 meter cohorts (Secure Meters and EDM1 meters) once there is sufficiently mature information from existing and prospective service providers and the DCC.

[News story: United Kingdom and New Zealand to increase cooperation in the Pacific and on global challenges](#)

During the meeting, which took place at the Churchill War Rooms, Mr Johnson and Mr Peters exchanged views on a wide range of foreign policy issues of concern to both countries, including defence and security challenges and the importance of cooperation to preserve and advance the international rules-based system at a time when it is under stress.

The two foreign ministers also discussed a range of bilateral issues, including future negotiations on a bilateral Free Trade Agreement once the UK departs the European Union in March 2019, and Mr Peters reiterated New Zealand's support for the UK following the attack in Salisbury.

Following the meeting;

UK Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson said:

The UK is one of the Pacific's oldest friends and we want to play an even more valuable role as a partner to Pacific Island countries. We have agreed that the United Kingdom and New Zealand will co-host a Wilton Park forum on Pacific climate change issues

in the United Kingdom in December 2018.

Pacific Island leaders have shone a light on the grave impacts of climate change. This forum will further highlight Pacific challenges and priorities, and show how the Pacific can be an early example for how to develop global responses to climate change.

We both agreed that initiatives taken by Heads of Government and Ministers this week will give new energy and focus to the Commonwealth and underline its continued relevance in promoting a more prosperous and sustainable future.

New Zealand Foreign Affairs Minister Winston Peters said:

Secretary Johnson and I discussed the United Kingdom's plans to scale up its engagement in the Pacific. I made it clear that New Zealand welcomes these plans and offered practical support for the UK's efforts, including potentially through regular dialogue on Pacific issues, staff secondments, and practical development cooperation.

One example of collaboration will come in late 2019, when New Zealand is due to open a newly-built High Commission in Honiara, Solomon Islands, on a site shared with the British High Commission.

Our discussions also underlined the ongoing strength of the ties between us, as well as the scope that exists for even deeper cooperation in many areas – whether through policy dialogue on priority issues, secondments and exchanges between government agencies, or practical initiatives to work together domestically and around the world.

Further information