

Press release: West Midlands to become UK's first large-scale 5G testbed

The West Midlands has been selected to become the innovative home to the UK's first multi-city 5G test bed. The multi million pound trial of new high speed connectivity will pave the way for the future rollout of 5G across the UK, making the region the first in the UK ready to trial new 5G applications and services at scale.

The Urban Connected Communities Project, the next step in the Government's 5G Testbed and Trials Programme, will develop a large-scale, 5G pilot across the region, with hubs in Birmingham, Coventry and Wolverhampton.

Up to £50m is currently available for the project, subject to further development and approval of the business plan. This includes £25m from the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) and a further £25m match funding from regional partners. An additional £25m may be made available at a later stage.

Minister for Digital, Margot James said:

5G has the potential to dramatically transform the way we go about our daily lives, and we want the citizens of the UK to be amongst the first to experience all the opportunities and benefits this new technology will bring. The West Midlands Testbed, which is the first of its kind anywhere in the world, will be instrumental in helping us realise this ambition.

Following its selection through open competition, the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) will now work with the 5G Testbeds and Trials Team at the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) and industry partners on preparing the formal business case for approval, with the first of a series of projects expected to go live early next year.

The West Midlands Combined Authorities bid has an initial focus on the health, construction and automotive sectors, with its overarching ambition to help drive economic growth and benefit people's lives through participation in new digital technologies and digitally transformed public services.

Subject to formal approval, initial plans include:

- Hospital outpatient appointments and emergency consultations carried out remotely by video link not subject to dropage or latency barriers. As well as being more convenient for patients, this means they can play back their appointment at a later date or share it securely with a family member or carer to help inform their care.
- "Connected Ambulances" – Paramedic crews at an incident could access specialist advice while they are at the scene, eg video conferencing

with consultants or other clinical specialists. Live streaming of patient data from ambulance en route to hospital would help inform the immediate care patients receive on arrival.

- Live streaming of CCTV footage from public transport buses, enabling immediate action against anti-social behaviour. "Intelligent cameras" using artificial intelligence (AI) to identify incidents could provide the opportunity for far greater coverage than is possible at present.

Autonomous vehicles will transform the way we travel, preventing major accidents, improving traffic flow and reducing energy consumption. The WMCA will partner with Jaguar Land Rover to facilitate real world testing of driverless cars.

Andy Street, Mayor of the West Midlands, said:

This announcement is game-changing for the West Midlands economy. This will be the backbone of our future economy and society.

We have been working to put the foundations in place to grow the industries which will create the jobs of the future, particularly around driverless vehicles and life sciences where we have a genuine advantage. To deliver the future of these industries we need the power of 5g.

The potential of this technology is endless – and we will enjoy the benefits first. From monitoring the health of babies and the elderly, to the way out people are linked to the economy of the future, the way companies do business, the way we deliver public services, the experience of travellers on public transport and the way we deliver City of Culture and the Commonwealth Games – everything can be made better thanks to the power of this technology.

DCMS funding for the project will come from the £200 million government has assigned to develop 5G technologies as part of more than £1bn of investment in next-generation digital infrastructure, including via the £31bn National Productivity Investment Fund (NPIF).

The 5G Testbeds and Trials Programme forms part of the Government's Industrial Strategy, aimed at continually driving the UK's connectivity, telecommunications and digital sectors, and investing in the skills, industries and infrastructure of the future.

Notes to Editors

1. The NPIF is designed to bolster UK productivity, which is crucial to raising living standards. Through the NPIF, the Government is investing in the vital infrastructure needed to make it easier for people to connect with others, and work remotely and flexibly.
2. West Midlands Combined Authority have committed an initial £25m of funding to the Urban Connected Communities Project, which Government

will match. This will be subject to approval of the project's business plan. Further public funding will be subject to the development of the project and the parameters of the business case. The total investment made from public funding for the entire project will be matched by commercial funding.

3. In the next phase of the Urban Connected Communities project West Midlands Combined Authority will be looking to develop partnerships with the mobile sector to design and deliver the project.

[Press release: Sir Alan Duncan statement on the United Nations International Commission against Impunity in Guatemala](#)

The Rt Hon Sir Alan Duncan MP, Minister of State for the Foreign and Commonwealth Office said:

The UK is disappointed by the Government of Guatemala's decision not to renew the mandate of the United Nations International Commission against Impunity in Guatemala (CICIG) beyond its current end date of September 2019.

CICIG has made a valuable contribution to the fight against corruption and impunity in Guatemala, strengthening the national institutions of Guatemala in the process. The UK, along with the EU and other international partners, has been a strong supporter of CICIG and we value their work and close cooperation with the Office of the Attorney General of Guatemala.

The UK hopes that CICIG is able to carry out its work fully and independently until the conclusion of its mandate.

We remain committed to supporting the rule of law and strong, independent institutions in Guatemala, which are vital for increasing security and prosperity.

Further information

- Follow Foreign Office Minister Sir Alan Duncan on Twitter [@AlanDuncanMP](#) and [Facebook](#)

- Follow the Foreign Office on Twitter [@foreignoffice](#) and [Facebook](#)
- Follow the Foreign Office on [Instagram](#), [YouTube](#) and [LinkedIn](#)

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Further information

Published 3 September 2018

[Press release: HS2 Phase Two Managing Director update](#)

Paul will be leaving to take on the role of Program Director, leading the programme management team, on the \$40 billion Metrolinx program in Toronto, the largest public transit investment in Canadian history. Paul, along with his family, will move to Canada at the end of the year. Paul joined HS2 Ltd in 2015 and has been responsible for working with central government and local stakeholders to plan and develop the route for Phase Two.

HS2 Ltd's CEO, Mark Thurston, said:

Phase Two has come a long way under Paul's leadership. Phase 2a, the section from Birmingham to Crewe, is already in Parliament and is on course to receive Royal Assent next year. Phase 2b, the section from Birmingham to Leeds and from Crewe to Manchester, is well advanced in terms of its preparation for Parliament, particularly how it integrates with the existing network and the plans of Northern Powerhouse Rail. The working draft environmental statement for Phase 2b will be published later this autumn. We are grateful to Paul for the progress he has made with Phase Two and wish him and his family well in their new adventure.

HS2 Ltd's Chairman, Sir Terry Morgan, said:

Phase Two is critical to HS2's goal of changing the economic

geography of Britain, by bringing the towns and cities of the Midlands and the North closer together. Paul has played a vital part in moving that concept nearer to reality.

Given its sheer scale and duration, changes of personnel and leadership are inevitable in a project such as HS2, particularly given the global demand for talented and experienced engineers such as Paul, but our focus remains on delivering a railway for the long term future of this country. And that we will do.

Paul Griffiths said:

Seeing HS2 move considerably closer to reality has been a privilege and will always have a special place in my career. HS2 is vital for the future of Britain and I will always be proud to have been part of its development.

Paul will leave HS2 Ltd at the end of December and plans are now in train to find his successor.

[News story: Implementing our approach to regulating Technical Qualifications](#)

Ofqual has today (3 September 2018) published the outcomes of a policy consultation on our approach to regulating the new Technical Qualifications which will sit within T Levels, including our [analysis](#) of the responses we received and our [decisions](#) on how to take the proposed rules forward.

We have discussed and agreed these decisions with the Department for Education and Institute for Apprenticeships. The government's [Invitation to Tender](#) for the development, delivery and award of the first three T Levels from September 2020, published earlier today, reflects the feedback we received.

We are now launching a further, [technical consultation](#), to give interested parties an opportunity to feed back on the detail of Ofqual's rules, including drafts of the Conditions and Guidance we intend to apply.

Key areas of comment on the policy consultation, and our decisions relating to these, include:

- assessment availability and retakes. Following feedback, we will amend our approach as set out in the consultation to require an awarding organisation to provide a minimum of one assessment series for the Core

and the Occupational Specialisms; with the option for an additional assessment series, if appropriate.

- results and certification. Taking account of responses received, we will dis-apply our Conditions, meaning awarding organisations will not be required to issue certificates for the Technical Qualifications. Instead, certification will be for the overall T Level. However, a statement of achievement will be implemented for students who do not successfully pass all elements of the T Level, to ensure students are not disadvantaged and that their achievements are recognised.
- setting and marking assessments. Based on feedback received, we will require that the core knowledge and understanding elements are assessed by an examination and marked by the awarding organisation. We would also expect these to be marked by the respective awarding organisation. However, in exceptional circumstances, our rules will allow for centre marking of core skills assessments and Occupational Specialism assessments. We have published further guidance on this today.
- 'working towards' grade. We consulted on setting a requirement for Occupational Specialisms to have a 'Working Towards' grade below Pass. We have taken on board the points raised by respondents. As there is felt to be limited value in this grade, we will not proceed with this proposal.
- Other proposals, including our approach on grading, reviews of marking and accreditation, will be adopted largely as outlined in the consultation. These are described more fully in the decisions document.

Sally Collier, Chief Regulator, said:

Our decisions, along with the government's Invitation to Tender, mark a significant milestone in the delivery of T Levels. We look forward to continuing our collaboration with the Institute for Apprenticeships and Department for Education on this important initiative.

The documents we have published today set out the next stage in how Ofqual will play its part in the development and delivery of high quality, reliable and comparable Technical Qualifications which both learners and employers can trust. The responses we received to our policy consultation will help ensure these qualifications, and the T Levels of which they are part, are valid and robust, and meet the demands of the work place. We have used the consultation feedback to support our draft Conditions and Guidance, which we have set out for further consultation, and we look forward to hearing stakeholders' views.

We are holding three events to support our technical consultation, aimed at awarding organisations interested in developing Technical Qualifications, or other bodies which may have an interest in becoming recognised awarding organisations to develop Technical Qualifications in the future. You can book your place by clicking on the links below. Please note, places are limited.

- 11 September 2018, 10.30am to 4.00pm, Holiday Inn, Regent's Park, [London](#)
- 13 September 2018, 10.30am to 4.00pm, The Midland Hotel, [Manchester](#)
- 19 September 2018, 1.00pm to 2.00pm, [Webinar](#)

Notes for editors

- The Institute for Apprenticeships has overarching responsibility for the T Level programme. Ofqual will regulate the Technical Qualification component. An [exchange of letters](#) between the Rt Hon Anne Milton MP and Sally Collier regarding Ofqual's regulation of Technical Qualifications within T Levels has also been published today.
- The policy consultation ran for 4 weeks between 10 July and 6 August.
- There were 53 responses to the consultation. Additional feedback was received from people participating in 3 consultation events (98 attended) and a webinar (42 attended live).
- The technical consultation will run for 8 weeks until 28 October 2018.