

News story: UKAEA launches National Fusion Technology Platform

More than 80 delegates from key stakeholders across the UK nuclear sector have heard details of multi-million-pound contracts from ITER that they can target with help from UKAEA after the Government's recent £86 million investment in UKAEA at Culham.

John Devine, head of exports and investment on the civil nuclear team at the Department for International Trade, kicked off the event at Corpus Christi College, Oxford, on Tuesday 16 January by saying he was confident in UKAEA's expertise, capability and record, before adding that the event represented an "opportunity for UK technologies and companies to get involved" and "take their expertise to the world."

Ian Chapman, UKAEA CEO, outlined how the two investments – H3AT and FTF – would help in making commercial fusion a reality.

The first centre of excellence – named Hydrogen-3 Advanced Technology (H3AT) – will research how to process and store tritium and helps with ITER's development.

Ian Chapman said:

The main purpose of H3AT is to looking forward to ITER. We want to partner with UK industry to make sure they win these contracts. This will allow the R&D to have other benefits as well as fusion, while these facilities will also help to train the next generation of people who will operate ITER.

Added to that was the Fusion Technology Facility (FTF) for developing thermal hydraulic tests for components under fusion conditions: for example in a vacuum, high heat flux, under a magnetic field. Partnering with UKAEA will support industry with a range of test and design capabilities, preparing them to bid for forthcoming major ITER contracts.

Ian Chapman commented:

We are extremely well placed – through using these processes in JET and the new facilities – to support the supply chain in its bidding for a wide range of projects.

Tom Greatrex, Chief Executive of the Nuclear Industry Association, added:

The level of Government investment seen with the £86 million

National Fusion Technology Platform demonstrates the expertise, confidence and ability of staff at Culham in being at the cutting edge of research. As well as being a world leader in fusion research, we have a similar industrial capability which we have the opportunity to seize. There is a very real sense that the UK can make its mark on the world in helping to develop sustainable nuclear power for the future.

Corporate report: NDA and PHE Epidemiology Governance Group Annual Report 2016 to 2017

Significant epidemiological and radiobiological research involving nuclear industry workers was previously sponsored by parts of the UK nuclear industry.

Nuclear Decommissioning Authority (NDA) now own and manage this work and its assets. Public Health England (PHE) are contracted by NDA to maintain and carry out research on these assets.

The NDA-PHE Epidemiology Governance Group provides Independent governance and oversight of this work.

Statement to Parliament: Secretary of State's oral statement on Transparency of the Parole Board and Victim Support

With permission, Mr Speaker, I should like to make a further statement on the Parole Board's decision to release John Worboys and the government's response to the issues raised by this case.

I know that the victims of these horrific crimes have suffered significant emotional trauma. The prospect of the release of this man is deeply concerning to them, to many members of this House and to the wider public. I believe that I owe it to those victims and to the public to consider all the options open to me as Lord Chancellor and Secretary of State for Justice.

I therefore took the step of seeking legal advice, from specialist Leading Counsel to establish whether there were grounds to challenge this decision in the courts and, therefore, to ask the court to stop the release of Worboys before the decision was reconsidered.

Let me set out my approach to Judicial Review in general. Whatever one's personal feelings about a case, Ministers should not choose to bring a legal challenge that has no reasonable prospect of success. But it is right that public bodies can be held to account for their actions through due process of law – and, specifically, Judicial Review.

There has been significant public debate about the possible basis for a legal challenge in a case such as this. It has been speculated that there are two grounds open to me to challenge such a decision: that a decision was one that no Board could reasonably have taken; or that there were significant procedural failings in the way that that decision was taken.

The bar for a judicial review to succeed is very high. The test for deciding if a decision is unreasonable is not simply that the decision maker – in this case, the Parole Board – could have made an alternative decision – but that no reasonable person would have come to the same conclusion on the facts of the case.

Similarly, on procedure it would be necessary to identify a failing to follow that process by the Parole Board that would have had a material impact on the decision.

Having taken considered and expert legal advice I have decided it would not be appropriate for me as Secretary of State to proceed with such a case. Honourable members will appreciate that I cannot go further and expose detail of the legal advice I have been given.

I know this will disappoint the victims in this case and Members of this House. Given the crimes for which he has been convicted, on a personal level, candidly I share those concerns.

I have taken a close personal interest in this case since assuming office as the Secretary of State for Justice. I believe it is important that all of the victims have clarity as soon as possible which is why I am before the House today.

I can reassure the House, and the public, that Worboys will not be released until his licence conditions have been finalised. I understand that contact and meetings with victims who have chosen to receive the services of the Probation Victim Contact Scheme have taken place this week, and further meetings about his release will take place next week.

This will have given those victims the opportunity to make representations to the Parole Board as to the conditions to which Worboys should be subject on release.

Let me be absolutely clear, Worboys will not be released until their representations have been properly considered and his licence conditions are

in place. Indeed last week I asked for assurances that the views of victims were being taken into account and that robust licensing conditions would be put in place to manage his risk. I am aware that some third parties have indicated they are seeking to bring legal proceedings themselves, and that correspondence has been served on me, as Secretary of State, as a potential "Interested Party" to any litigation.

I fully support the right of victims to take their own legal advice and to challenge the decision. The approach I am taking does not mean that others, who may have significant interest in the case, are precluded from taking action. Each case depends on the circumstances of each individual bringing a claim.

And that is one of the reasons I do not intend to say more on this matter. I would not want to prejudice any legal challenges by commenting further on the facts of the particular case or the legal advice I have received. I will be taking advice on how my department should consequently engage in any proceedings, but it would not be appropriate to comment further at this stage.

It is vitally important that the public and victims have confidence in the justice system that is there to serve them. And this case has exposed some issues with the parole process as a whole. I have already indicated that aspects of the parole process more generally should be examined.

In my statement on the 9 January I said that my Department would review the case for transparency in the process for parole decisions, how victims are communicated with and how they are appropriately engaged in that process.

I now believe that this review should go further. I have therefore expanded the [terms of reference](#) of the review to include consideration of the law, policy, guidance and practice relating to challenges to Parole Board decision-making. I have published these today and have placed a copy in the House library.

In particular, I have expanded the review to include whether there should be a mechanism to allow parole decisions to be reconsidered and how that might be best achieved whilst retaining the independence of the decision making process.

This review remains a priority for me and for government and, despite this significant expansion of the terms of reference, I intend to complete that review before Easter.

I also acknowledge the concerns that the Victim Contact Scheme, operated by the National Probation Service, may not have worked as well as it should have in this particular case.

It is right that as well as looking at the process around parole decisions for all cases that we consider whether existing processes were followed in this instance.

I have therefore asked Dame Glenys Stacey, HM Chief Inspector of Probation,

to conduct a rapid fact-finding exercise to confirm whether the legislative provisions, existing policy and processes relating to victims were adequately followed by the National Probation Service in this case. Her findings will inform the wider review. Mr Speaker, as I have said, I know Members of the House are concerned about this case and about how we deal with the release of offenders. I hope that this has reassured honourable members of the thorough and careful consideration I have made of this difficult case and that we are now giving serious and urgent consideration to ways in which the process can be improved that reassures not only victims of these terrible crimes but the wider public.

Press release: Parole Board welcomes independent review of victim contact and extended terms of reference for review of parole processes

The Parole Board notes the Secretary of State for Justice's decision not to proceed with Judicial Review proceedings. We are glad that the Secretary of State agrees with our suggestion for an independent review on victim contact in the case of John Worboys.

We also welcome the expanded the terms of reference for the Ministry of Justice's review of the parole process to include victim communication, transparency, and how Parole Board decisions could be reconsidered.

We think this is a sensible course of action to take to make sure that the public and especially victims have confidence in the Parole Board's work.

Justice needs to be seen to be done and the Canadian model for victim contact could provide a good starting point.

News story: CC Haulage & Sons Ltd to pay £109,000 for dumping on Devon farms

A Devon haulage and site clearance company faces a bill of more than £100,000

for dumping thousands of tonnes of soil and stone on farmland. The case was brought by the Environment Agency.

CC Haulage & Sons Ltd is a family owned and run company based at Manor Farm, Colebrooke, Crediton. The two directors are Colin Clarke and his wife, Deborah Clarke.

Farmers are allowed to accept up to 1,000 tonnes of non-hazardous waste including soil and stone under a permission known as an 'exemption' that is commonly used on farms to construct hard-standings, bases for buildings and tracks and doesn't need an environmental permit.

In November 2016 the Environment Agency visited Beech Down Farm in Tedburn St Mary where waste was being tipped in a valley. Inquiries revealed that CC Haulage had deposited 7,820 tonnes of waste at the farm. Excessive quantities of waste, much of it from building and construction sites, had also been tipped at 3 other Devon farms at Longdown, Exeter, Yeoford and Crediton.

The offences came to light after the Environment Agency examined waste transfer notes that identified CC Haulage as the source of the excessive amounts of waste material. The company benefitted financially by paying the farmers less to accept the waste than it was charging its clients to take the material away.

The firm's defence said CC Haulage believed the farmers had the necessary permits to accept the waste, but admitted the company should have checked.

Richard Cloke of the Environment Agency said:

Haulage businesses must ensure they comply with the limits and conditions of environmental permits and exemptions.

These are in place to stop the illegal deposit of waste, protect the environment and create a level playing field for the waste industry.

Appearing at Exeter Crown Court, CC Haulage & Sons Ltd was fined £14,000 and ordered to pay £5,000 costs. Judge Geoffrey Mercer also imposed a £90,000 Proceeds of Crime confiscation order at the sentencing hearing on 15 January 2018. The company must pay back this figure from the profits it made from its criminal activities.

Judge Mercer said: "It is not entirely clear to me how the company were unclear about the limits."