

[News story: Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman of Saudi Arabia's visit, March 2018](#)

His Royal Highness Mohammed bin Salman is visiting the UK for the first time since he became Crown Prince in June 2017 and since Saudi Arabia started a major programme of domestic reforms. Saudi Arabia is amongst the largest political, diplomatic and economic power in the Middle East, and the visit will usher in a new era in our bilateral relations with one of our oldest friends in the region.

The Crown Prince's visit builds on the Prime Minister's visit to Saudi Arabia in [November 2017](#). It will help to enhance our co-operation in tackling international challenges such as terrorism, extremism, the conflict and humanitarian crisis in Yemen and other regional issues such as Iraq and Syria.

Saudi Arabia has also set out Vision 2030, a roadmap to open up the country's economy over the next 15 years. This will provide opportunities for British businesses in sectors including education, entertainment and healthcare where they have world-class expertise. It also includes plans for Saudi Arabia to become a global investment powerhouse and the Crown Prince's visit will help explore ways in which Saudi Arabia can build on its investment in the UK in sectors such as infrastructure.

British Ambassador Simon Collis talks about the ties between our two countries

[Saudi Crown Prince Visit](#)

[Britain's relationship with Saudi Arabia begins a new chapter](#)

Find out more about the Crown Prince's visit

- [Prime Minister Theresa May looks ahead to the visit](#)
 - [Saudi reformer Mohammed Bin Salman deserves our support: Foreign Secretary's article](#)
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Russia's starting 11

To mark 100 days to the World Cup in Russia the we've laid out a 'starting 11' of major concerns Russia needs to give the red card before kick off.

The issues include:

1. Stop annexing foreign territory
2. Stop interfering with foreign elections
3. Stop hacking foreign governments & businesses
4. Stop institutionalised doping in sports
5. Stop human rights abuses
6. Stop decriminalising domestic abuse
7. Stop supporting Assad in Syria
8. Stop the stamping out of democracy in Russia
9. Stop abuses against LGBT Russians
10. Stop political assassinations at home and abroad
11. Stop imprisoning those opposed to Putin

We're also calling on the Russian government to make changes in all the areas before the kick off of the first match in the 2018 World Cup.

The Party have also called for FIFA and the international football community to do more to fight against human rights abuses.

[Go to Source](#)

Author:

Press release: Sandwell Valley Park remains open during construction works

Access preparation for the construction of phase 2 of the Environment Agency's Perry Barr and Witton Flood Risk Management Scheme started late January and will continue for the next couple of months. The main construction for the scheme will begin late spring/early summer and will reduce the risk of flooding to 1,400 properties in the area.

Over the next few weeks park visitors will see tree felling operations and some movement of HGVs through the access routes by Forge Mill Farm and the railway bridge by the RSPB centre. Any HGV movement will be carried out within normal working hours Monday to Friday. Priority will be given to park users, to keep disruption to a minimum. Both Forge Mill Farm and the RSPB will remain open during construction, and a path between the 2 buildings will

remain available throughout the construction of the scheme. Handsworth Golf Course will be modified to support the scheme, but it will remain open as usual.

Recent Environment Agency drop-in sessions updated the public about progress of works, and received valuable feedback from local community members and representatives of user groups in the park. Another drop-in session is being planned in the near future. Staff will be on hand to answer questions and confirm information such as timescales, footpath closures and traffic management. Attendees will also be able to view the plans and get an overview of the programme as a whole.

Rachel Kelly, Environment Agency project lead for the scheme said:

This is a very exciting scheme that is going to reduce the risk of flooding for 1,400 properties in the area. We have been working closely with our partners and the local community to ensure that we minimise disruption to the park users and keep the community informed as we progress through the construction phase.

Councillor David Hosell, cabinet member for highways and the environment, said:

Council officers have worked hard with the Environment Agency to ensure that the scheme has minimal effect on visitors to the Valley.

We are delighted that part of the scheme and work in the Country Park will include new fencing for improved animal pens at Forge Mill Farm, extending it as a visitor attraction. There will also be improvements to the entrance into the park for pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders entering from the Old Newton Road.

More information about the Perry Barr and Witton Flood Risk Management Scheme is available [online](#). Alternatively contact the Environment Agency project team at witton.frms@environment-agency.gov.uk.

Along with flood defences and flood management schemes, knowing your flood risk is also important when protecting your family and property from flooding. People can check their risk and register to receive free flood warnings by visiting the Environment Agency's [flood information pages](#) or calling Floodline on 0345 988 1188.

Task Force on Land Supply holds eleventh meeting

The Task Force on Land Supply (Task Force) held its eleventh meeting today (March 6). The meeting mainly discussed the possibility of developing the River Trade Terminal (RTT) site for alternative use. The Task Force was also briefed on the planning of transport infrastructure to support development needs.

The Task Force Chairman, Mr Stanley Wong, said the RTT, occupying an area of 65 hectares, is a privately-run terminal dedicated for river cargo. In 2017, the utilisation rate of the RTT was only 24 per cent of its capacity; it handled only 3 per cent of Hong Kong Port's total throughput. Members generally agreed that it would be worthwhile to explore the alternative uses of the sizeable RTT site to better meet the prevailing needs of the community.

Mr Wong said, "Given that Tuen Mun West is predominantly industrial in character, an option discussed by the Task Force is to accommodate industrial and brownfield-related operations at the RTT site. The Task Force also discussed the possibility of using the site for housing development, but this would be more challenging in terms of ensuring compatibility with the adjoining industrial uses; whether the transport infrastructure could support some 20 000 residential units as roughly estimated; as well as the impact of air pollution and noise problems caused by the industrial facilities nearby."

Mr Wong added that the Task Force noted the proposed Lung Kwu Tan reclamation at the coastal area to the north of Castle Peak Power Station as recommended under the recently completed "Technical Study on Reclamation at Lung Kwu Tan". The Task Force agreed that the proposed Lung Kwu Tan reclamation would provide an opportunity to rationalise the industrial uses along the entire western coastal area of Tuen Mun, and to explore holistically the possibilities of converting the RTT site and other land in the vicinity to residential use. This comprehensive and thorough examination of the potential of the RTT site and adjoining land for housing development would achieve better economy of scale in development. It would also address the problem of land use compatibility, provide more space for better planning of the community, and facilitate strategic planning of transport infrastructure to expand the transport infrastructure network and create capacity to support the future development at the surrounding areas of RTT as well as northwest New Territories. As it would take time to conduct detailed study of the various issues pertinent to the proposal such as land use compatibility, transport and infrastructural constraints and land ownership issues, the proposal of developing the RTT site could only be regarded as a medium to long-term land supply option.

As regards the transport infrastructure to support development needs, the Task Force Vice-chairman, Dr Greg Wong, said that whilst transport infrastructure planning is neither the Task Force's purview nor a land supply option, it is highly relevant to increasing land supply and the various land

supply options discussed by the Task Force. On request, the Government briefed the Task Force on the current approach to transport infrastructure planning and the “capacity-creating” approach advocated in the “Hong Kong 2030+: Towards a Planning Vision and Strategy Transcending 2030” study.

Dr Wong said, “The ‘capacity-creating’ approach represents a paradigm shift from the traditional demand-led approach. Under the ‘capacity-creating’ approach, population and employment forecasts, traditional volume/capacity ratios and the economic internal rate of return (EIRR), etc. would no longer be the only key criteria for assessment on transport infrastructure planning in future. Rather, through creating development capacity for Hong Kong in an optimal manner in tandem with enhancement of infrastructural as well as environmental capacity, we would not only cater for foreseeable land use demand, but also the potential demand and unforeseen circumstances, hence creating capacity for contingency. Nevertheless, the provision of capacity for contingency in transport infrastructure projects would inevitably involve additional resources and costs. For example, more resources are needed to develop or resume adjacent land lots to provide space for additional transport infrastructure such as extra traffic lanes and grade-separated interchanges.”

Dr Wong added that the Task Force supported the “capacity-creating” approach in transport infrastructure planning, and considered that subject to wide community support, the Government could be more forthcoming in adopting this approach in conducting transport model runs and assessing the traffic forecasts, hence promoting infrastructure-led development.

Mr Wong said the Task Force had discussed more than 10 land supply options at the past 11 meetings. The Task Force is consolidating the relevant information on these options in full steam to prepare for the public engagement targeted for launch in April. Mr Wong stressed that the public engagement is an interactive process, and welcomes other suggestions from different stakeholders during the public engagement.

The discussion papers of this meeting have been uploaded onto the Development Bureau’s website (http://www.devb.gov.hk/en/boards_and_committees/task_force_on_land_supply/index.html).

[Mr Redwood’s intervention during the statement on the National Planning Policy Framework \(NPPF\)](#)

Rt Hon John Redwood MP (Wokingham) (Con): Wokingham Borough Council, the unitary authority in my area, has issued a very large number of planning

permissions—well above its five-yearly amounts under the plan—but the build rate has not always been high enough. Will the Secretary of State help such local authorities through experiments to find ways of increasing the build rate so that homes are built where they are agreed to be built, rather than granting on appeal houses elsewhere where there would not be the same infrastructure contribution and the same ability to fit in with the plan?

The Secretary of State for Communities, Local Government & Housing (Mr Sajid Javid MP): My right hon. Friend raises a real and important issue, which he knows I have discussed with his local authority. The measures subject to the consultations that we are announcing today will certainly help with that problem. I hope that my right hon. Friend the Member for West Dorset will provide further help when he reports back on the work that he is doing.