

[Press release: UK and China sign Memorandum of Understanding on Medicine and Device Regulation](#)

Dr Ian Hudson, Chief Executive of the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the China Food and Drug Administration (CFDA) during a visit to China this week.

This new signing expands on a previous MoU signed in 2014 which focussed on the exchange of safety information on medicines and medical devices to protect patients in the UK, China, and around the world.

Dr Ian Hudson, Chief Executive Officer at MHRA said:

China is a world leader in the market for raw materials for the pharmaceutical industry and closer collaboration with MHRA will support the promotion of innovation, good practice, and protect UK patients.

We operate in a global environment and formalising our international relationships helps strengthen regulatory systems to protect public health worldwide.

The MoU was signed in Beijing's Great Hall of the People with both Prime Minister Theresa May and China's Premier Li Keqiang present.

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[News story: MOD confirms the death of Captain Dean Sprouting](#)

Updated: Minor amend

It is with regret that the MOD must announce the death of Captain Dean Sprouting of the Adjutant General's Corps at Al Asad Air Base, Iraq, on 31st January 2018. He was serving with Black Watch, 3rd Battalion, Royal Regiment of Scotland. The incident is currently under investigation, but we can confirm that it was not the result of enemy activity.

Lt Col Rob Hedderwick, Commanding Officer, The Black Watch, 3rd Battalion The Royal Regiment of Scotland, said:

It is hard to do justice to a man such as Dean Sprouting with simple words. In no time at all he had become an indispensable part of the battalion, not only for his professional expertise but also for his compassionate manner and camaraderie. His intelligence and sharp wit was apparent from the outset; there was an ever-present twinkle in his eye and he would gladly admit that his youth had been full of adventure.

Dean was simply one of those people whose infectious humour and enthusiasm drew others to him. His professional knowledge was second to none and his sage advice already something I had come to rely on. His loss is keenly felt by us all and our thoughts and prayers are with his wife and children whom I know he cherished more than anything else in this world. I am hugely proud and thankful to have known him. He was a very good man.

Warrant Officer Class One Tam Millsip, Visiting Warrant Officer, 51 Infantry Brigade said:

Dean's warm, personable nature was never diluted while conducting his duties and those who he had dealings with were always left

smiling after Dean imparted his unique wisdom and outlook on life.

Dean was a tremendously entertaining man to be around. He would bring a great deal of joy and laughter to those around him often at the expense of himself; there was never a boring day spent with Dean and my thoughts go out to his family at this very sad time.

Minister for the Armed Forces Mark Lancaster said:

It is with deep regret that the Ministry of Defence confirms the death of Capt Dean Sprouting of the Adjutant General's Corps, who died earlier this week at Al Asad Air Base in Iraq. Our thoughts are with his family and friends at this very difficult time. An investigation is underway to establish the detail but it is not a result of enemy activity.

[Press release: Environment Agency completes £10 million flood storage basin on World Wetlands Day](#)

A £10 million flood scheme which will protect almost 2,000 homes and businesses, hold more than 250 Olympic-sized swimming pools of water during a flood and includes more than 5 hectares of urban wetland habitat, has been officially completed today (Friday 2 February).

The Environment Agency has marked the completion of its Salford Flood Improvement Scheme to coincide with [World Wetlands Day](#).

The Salford scheme delivers on a long-held vision to not only create a flood storage basin in Salford – to reduce the risk of flooding from the River Irwell – but also to provide a boost to local wildlife populations by including a high quality urban wetland habitat.

Wetlands provide many benefits to society and help us to be more resilient to the effects of our changing climate. They provide multiple benefits such as slowing the flow of water, reducing flood risk, filtering water and capturing carbon. Their importance is increasing as a result of climate and land use change.

Emma Howard Boyd, Chair of the Environment Agency, said:

The £10 million Salford flood scheme will reduce flood risk to

almost 2,000 homes and businesses. In addition, we have created more than 5 hectares of urban wetland, bringing attractive landscapes for people and wildlife.

People in the area can also enjoy a new footpath around the site and links to existing footpaths that now provide a green route to and from the centre of Manchester. This excellent partnership project is a fine example of the multiple benefits our work brings to the local community.

In its primary function the multi-million pound scheme will provide increased protection to more than 1,900 homes and businesses across Lower Broughton and Lower Kersal. Lower Broughton was affected by the devastating floods that struck the city on Boxing Day in 2015.

Floods Minister Thérèse Coffey said:

How fitting that on World Wetlands Day a new scheme in Salford is opening that will reduce flood risk to thousands of homes and businesses and deliver a lasting legacy for wildlife in this area with five hectares of new urban wetland habitat.

I am pleased the government has been able to support this scheme as part of the £39.5 million we are investing in Greater Manchester by 2021.

The entire 28 hectare flood basin sits within a meander loop of the River Irwell and will protect surrounding properties by holding up to 650 million litres of water – the equivalent to 260 Olympic-size swimming pools – during flood conditions.

The new defence is an 'offline' storage basin that will work in tandem with the existing flood storage area at Littleton Road, completed in 2005. To create the storage capacity ground was excavated from the site and then reused to build a raised embankment around the periphery to form part of the defence system.

The embankment's south-west corner features an inlet to allow the controlled spill of water into the basin when river levels are high. Water is then stored in the basin during a flood and released by two outlet pipes back into the river once the water level has dropped.

Making the most of every design aspect, the flood embankments have been planted with 10ha of wildflower habitat, to attract pollinating species such as lady birds, moths, butterflies and bees – whose population has dramatically declined across the county in recent years.

The scheme not only brings flood risk and wildlife benefits, but also leisure and amenity benefits to the local community.

With exactly 2.5km of new footpath skirting the periphery, runners and cyclists can enjoy the improved scenery and the links to existing footpaths that now provide a green route to and from the centre of Manchester.

Within the basin area, a number of multi-use sports pitches have been given improved playing surfaces and better drainage systems, making them more resilient to flooding than the pitches that were in place before the scheme.

The two kiosks on site were decorated by renowned Manchester graffiti artist, kELz0, who observed the wildlife on site to create the vibrant designs.

As a longer term, economic benefit, the scheme will help Salford Council's regeneration plans by enabling development in areas previously not viable. More than 90 hectares of development land has been protected as a direct result of the scheme which will allow increased opportunities to develop land within the river corridor.

Throughout the 3-year construction term, the Environment Agency worked closely with Salford City Council, the local community steering group, the Broughton Trust, Salford Friendly Anglers, Kersal Vale Allotment & Horticultural Society and the University of Salford.

Funding for the scheme came from a number of sources. £5m came from Government Grant-in-Aid, £4.1m came from a Government growth fund and the remaining £1.2m came from Salford City Council.

Councillor Derek Antrobus, lead member for planning and sustainable development at Salford City Council said:

The new flood basin realises a long-term ambition of the city council to reduce the risk for local communities.

The council is delighted that it will also provide an excellent amenity and we have invested in the bridge from Kersal Dale so the site is integrated into the walking and cycling route along the Irwell Valley.

The scheme's completion will officially be marked with the unveiling of a plaque by the Environment Agency's Chair, Emma Howard-Boyd and the city's Mayor Paul Dennett.

The government is investing £2.6 billion to better protect over 300,000 properties from flooding by 2021.

The flood basin will be opened to the public once essential work to the path network has been completed. Dependent on dry weather conditions, this is scheduled for early Spring. The flood basin is already fully operational and will be used during a flooding event as required.

Take a tour of the scheme from above by viewing our drone footage of Salford on [YouTube](#).

Miller's Wynd car park improvements #dundeewestend

Residents will recall that, back in November, [I highlighted](#) the poor maintenance of the Miller's Wynd car park – the foliage was very tired and there were dumped items across the car park.

The acquisition by Dundee City Council of the Miller's Wynd car park – from the University of Dundee – has provided much-needed additional free 2 hour parking in this area of Perth Road. However, it is important the infrastructure of the car park is improved and I contacted Dundee City Council seeking improvements.

I am pleased to say that the overgrown foliage has now been tackled and the dumped items removed – see below :



The Head of Roads and Transportation at the council has now advised me :

"I hope to see this car park given a fuller bit of design attention and I will ... arrange for a bit of multi department design, surface, vegetation, seating, recycling, lighting and issues and there will be an element of community co-design.

This all won't happen overnight and it is not best if we do it in uncoordinated manner/piecemeal manner without an end plan."

It has been agreed that at a community walkabout I am participating in soon – along with council officers, community council and ward colleagues – the car park will be visited and plans further discussed. The main purpose of the walkabout is to agree specific actions to improve West End car parking –

hopefully this will result in concrete progress on this long-standing problem.

My speech during the debate on the Restoration and Renewal of the Palace of Westminster, 31 January

John Redwood (Wokingham) (Con): There is good news in this debate, which is that there seems to be universal agreement, from Members in all parts of the House, that where urgent work needs doing to guarantee the future safety of those who work in this place and those who visit, we should press on with it. Indeed, there is a strong feeling that there is a need for greater urgency in such work. From most things that I have read and heard, it seems that rewiring is a very urgent priority, as that is where the worst fire risk seems to come from. Substantial pipe work may also need doing, where pipes need replacing or re-routing as part of a safety plan. These things can all be done through compartmentalising—taking things in stages and linking up as appropriate.

We know we can work alongside builders and maintenance companies, because we are doing that all the time. I pay tribute to those who are working on the Elizabeth Tower at the moment. They are getting on with their work in a way that is not disruptive of our work at all. They must be working in confined and difficult circumstances, but they have so far done it in a way that is entirely compatible with the work of Parliament. So I hope that the Leader of the House would take away the sense that urgent work for the safety of people here in future and for the safety of the very fabric of the building might be accelerated, with options looked at so that we can press on with it in a timely and sensible way.

I find myself having more difficulties about the much bigger scheme being launched any time soon. As we have heard, quite big elements of it have not been properly thought through or costed, which makes taking a decision in principle a bit more difficult. I find myself in that interesting position where many parliamentarians find themselves; having been entirely of the leave faith on the referendum issue, now, showing flexibility and how I am always influenced by the facts, I find myself firmly in the remain camp on this parliamentary discussion.

Let us first address the issue of decanting to an alternative Chamber, which we would have to build. We hear there are problems with the site for one of the potential alternatives. I just do not think our constituents would understand our spending a very large sum on producing a temporary replica of this Chamber for a limited number of years—we are told it will be a short period, but some of us think it will be for rather longer—when there are so

many other priorities. My constituents want us to spend more on health and social care, the military and so forth, and I agree with them.

Andrea Leadsom (The Leader of the House of Commons): For clarity, let me say that what is being talked about is a permanent business contingency in Richmond House that provides a real legacy gain to the parliamentary estate and is a secure gain for all parliamentarians for future generations.

John Redwood: I am grateful for that correction, and I did understand that, but the public are saying that this is really only going to be used for a few years because we will come back to use the main Chamber, and this is a very expensive investment in contingency, particularly as one hopes the contingency never occurs. We know from history that there are other ways of dealing with a disaster contingency, as unfortunately people had to do this during the second world war. We would cross that bridge in the awful event that we needed to do so, but investing a lot of money in such a protection would be a strange thing to do—I rest my case. I do not think my constituents would regard that as something they would want their taxpayers' money spent on at the moment. I agree with them that we need to spend a bit more on health and social care. Those would clearly be the priorities if we had this extra money to spend.

Finally, let me say that I agree with those who think there is something very special about this place and something important about it for our democracy. This is the mother of Parliaments and this building does have great resonance around the world, being associated with the long history of freedom, and the development of the power of voice and vote for all adults in our country. It would be strange indeed to be turning our back on that for a period, particularly when we are going through a big constitutional and political change in order to implement the wishes of the British people as expressed in the referendum. Particularly during this period, it is important that our visitors can come to be reminded of our national story and why we are where we are. All those of us who seek to represent people should be daily reminded of that national story when we come here—

Mark Pawsey (Rugby) (Con): Will my right hon. Friend give way?

John Redwood: No, as I am conscious of time.

We need to be reminded of that story as we go past the memorial to suffragettes, as we go past the statues and paintings of those who made such a contribution to past political battles and debates, those who were part of the story of wresting control from the monarch and establishing the right of many more people to vote and have their voice heard through Members of Parliament. That proud history makes this more than an iconic building, more than a world heritage site; it is a living part of our democracy. Our interaction with it and our presence on this grand political stage is the very essence of our democracy. I do not want us to move away for a few years at this critical moment in our national story.