

News story: Clean-up work underway in Salisbury in next phase of recovery

Clean-up work is beginning in Salisbury after the appalling nerve agent attack, to bring a small number of potentially contaminated sites back into safe use for the people of the city and its visitors.

This follows the continuing handover of sites from the police investigation to recovery operations, including The Maltings, the cemetery, Zizzi and the Ashley Wood compound. In total nine sites, three of which are in the city centre, have been identified as requiring some level of specialist cleaning.

Today (Tuesday 17 April) a small cordoned area of London Road cemetery was the first area to be reopened to the public after extensive investigations and testing established that it was not contaminated.

All remaining potentially contaminated sites will remain secured and the current scientific assessment is that the remainder of Salisbury is safe for residents and visitors. Public Health England have reaffirmed that the risk to the general public is low.

Work to clean each site will involve a process of testing, removal of items which may have been contaminated, chemical cleaning and retesting. Sites will not be released back into use until test results and the work undertaken has been reviewed and approved by the government's decontamination science assurance group.

The work, which is expected to take a number of months, is being planned and overseen by Defra based on expert advice from Defence Science and Technology Laboratory (Dstl), Public Health England, Department for Health and Social Care, Home Office, and Ministry of Defence (MOD). The clean-up operation will be carried out in partnership with Wiltshire Council with support from the MOD, who are providing specialist teams to carry out work on the sites. Around 190 specialist military personnel from the Army and RAF will support the operation.

Defra's Chief Scientific Adviser Ian Boyd, who is chair of the decontamination science assurance group overseeing the work, said:

Our approach is based on the best scientific evidence and advice to ensure decontamination is carried out in a thorough and careful way. Our number one priority is making these sites safe for the public, so they can be returned to use for the people of Salisbury.

Thanks to detailed information gathered during the police's investigation, and our scientific understanding of how the agent works and is spread, we have been able to categorise the likely level of contamination at each site and are drawing up tailored plans.

Meticulous work is required and we expect it will be a number of months before all sites are fully reopened.

The public will begin to see more activity in the city as the work gets underway. In the coming days residents can expect to see current cordons around the most public sites replaced with secure fencing, backed by police patrols and security guards. At certain points during decontamination, some cordons will be temporarily expanded to allow workers access to the sites with specialist equipment and ensure public safety as work is underway. Wherever possible this sort of disruption will be kept to a minimum.

As work in the city moves from site to site the local authority will keep businesses and the community informed.

The clean-up work goes hand in hand with the [£2.5m already announced](#) to support businesses, boost tourism and meet unexpected costs in recognition of the exceptional response and recovery effort in Salisbury.

Baroness Jane Scott, the Leader of Wiltshire Council, said:

We are pleased that work will be starting to decontaminate the sites affected by the shocking attack in our city. Working together with local and national agencies we are doing all we can to help Salisbury return to normal. Our main concern is to ensure that Salisbury is safe for residents, businesses and visitors and that the city can focus on the future, its recovery and that it will go from strength to strength.

[News story: New UK initiatives to help Commonwealth countries tackle world's greatest environmental challenges](#)

- business ministers announce more than £8 million for innovation technology to tackle global climate change and prepare for natural disasters
- funding to help Commonwealth countries lower greenhouse gas emissions
- new investment for British satellite technology to help Kenya prepare for and respond to natural disasters

Investment in pioneering British technology to help Commonwealth countries reduce greenhouse gas emissions and prepare for natural disasters has been announced today (17 April 2018) as part of this week's Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM).

Energy and Clean Growth Minister Claire Perry has announced £3.5 million of funding to extend the '2050 Calculator', a technology that helps countries develop strategies to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions. Ms Perry has also confirmed £1.2 million to reduce carbon emissions in Pacific countries, supporting the UN's climate change targets set out in the Paris Climate Agreement while helping to deliver on the government's Industrial Strategy [Clean Growth Grand Challenge](#).

Alongside this, Science Minister Sam Gyimah has announced a £3.5 million UK Space Agency International Partnerships Programme in Kenya which uses British satellite technology to help the country plan and respond to disasters, including droughts, floods and famine.

During a speech on accelerating climate action in the Commonwealth, Claire Perry, Minister for Energy and Clean Growth, said:

The UK is leading the world in tackling climate change while growing our national income, ensuring we are best placed to help other countries reduce harmful carbon emissions.

Providing expertise to mitigate global warming and reducing emissions is a crucial priority for Commonwealth nations, and vulnerable Pacific Islands in particular.

Speaking ahead of the Commonwealth Science, Research and Innovation Reception Science Minister Sam Gyimah said:

Reducing carbon emissions is one of the greatest environmental challenges of our time. It's up to us all to protect our planet for generations to come.

The UK is a world-leader in science, research and innovation, and as part of the government's Industrial Strategy and Clean Growth Grand Challenge, we're utilising our world-class science and research expertise to develop programmes and new innovations that will help some of the world's most vulnerable people.

Dr Graham Turnock, Chief Executive of the UK Space Agency, said:

Our International Partnership Programme is already helping more than 30 developing countries tackle big issues and this new project will vastly improve disaster relief in Kenya. IPP puts British innovation on a global stage, showcasing the capabilities of our leading space businesses.

Sam Gyimah is due to outline further details during the Commonwealth Science, Research and Innovation Reception tomorrow at New Zealand House.

The Science Minister is also expected to confirm the launch of the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR): CommonSensing, to improve countries' ability to deal with climate change and reduce disaster risk in Fiji, the Solomon Islands and Vanuatu.

This serves to show the importance of Commonwealth countries working together to reduce carbon emissions and tackle some of the world's greatest environmental challenges.

The Minister will also announce a new Met Office partnership programme, Met Office Climates Services Pilot for Commonwealth Member Countries, which will generate vital information to better tackle climate change across the Commonwealth.

Professor Stephen Belcher, the Met Office Chief Scientist, said:

The Commonwealth brings together a rich heritage and shared cultural values. But these aren't the only common bonds linking member states.

Each is also inextricably connected by the shared impacts of weather and climate. Improving resilience and forecasting will provide a lifeline for vulnerable communities helping them to cope with weather and climate shocks through measures which improve food security and provide protection from extremes of weather.

There can surely be no better aspiration than sharing cutting edge climate science to improve the fortunes and prospects of people in their day-to-day lives.

The [UK's Industrial Strategy](#) is a long-term plan to build a Britain fit for the future through a stronger, fairer economy. Through this we will help businesses to create better, higher-paying jobs – setting a path for Britain to lead in the high-tech, highly-skilled industries of the future.

Notes to editors

2050 Calculator

BEIS welcomes interest from Commonwealth countries and encourage them to contact their local British High Commission or Embassy in the first instance to discuss the programme. The department will also be advertising for a technology company to act as a delivery partner through a competitive process to manage the programme and give training to countries.

UKSA International Partnership Programme

The International Partnership Programme (IPP) is a 5-year, £152 million programme run by the UK Space Agency. IPP focuses on using the UK space sector's research and innovation strengths to deliver a sustainable economic

and societal benefit to emerging and developing economies around the world.

The primary aim of IPP is to deliver effective aid to developing countries, the secondary aim is to provide growth opportunities to UK businesses in new sectors and demonstrate the effectiveness of space solutions to governments around the world.

IPP is part of and is funded from the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy's £1.5billion Global Challenges Research Fund (GCRF).

[News story: Sellafield in conversation](#)

Earlier this month we filmed a series of conversations with a group of employees from across the business. They talked about:

Cleaning up Sellafield

[Cleaning up Sellafield](#)

How Sellafield is changing

[Sellafield is changing](#)

The completion of reprocessing

[Completion of reprocessing](#)

Being nuclear experts

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All views belong to the people who took part in the filming.

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[Press release: Commonwealth unites to end scourge of plastic](#)

Prime Minister Theresa May announced today that New Zealand, Sri Lanka and Ghana have joined the UK and Vanuatu-led Commonwealth Clean Oceans Alliance – an agreement between member states to join forces in the fight against plastic pollution.

The group has pledged to ban microbeads in rinse-off cosmetics and personal care products and cut plastic bag use by 2021, and will work with NGOs and businesses from across the Commonwealth to push for global change and protect

the environment for future generations.

To drive this forward, the Prime Minister has also announced a £61.4 million package of funding to boost global research and help countries across the Commonwealth stop plastic waste from entering the oceans in the first place.

Environment Secretary Michael Gove said:

When it comes to our seas and oceans, the challenge is global so the answer must be too.

Through this ambitious alliance we will build on the UK's world-leading microbeads ban and 5p plastic bag charge to harness the full power of the Commonwealth in pushing for global change and safeguarding our marine environment for future generations.

Developing countries signed up to the Alliance will also be eligible to bid for partnership support to improve waste management systems and implement other initiatives to stop plastic waste from reaching oceans.

In recognition of the passionate response of the UK public to the issue, from later this year the Department for International Development will also match pound-for-pound public donations to tackle the issue of plastic waste in the world's oceans and rivers.

International Development Secretary Penny Mordaunt said:

The scourge of plastics is a global environmental challenge – and one that overwhelmingly impacts the livelihoods and health of the world's poorest people.

We are joining forces with our Commonwealth partners, bringing together global expertise to stop plastics waste from entering oceans – and by matching pound-for-pound the UK public's passionate response to the issue, we can make our shared ambition for clean oceans a reality.

The Department for International Development will also support research into solutions to reduce manufacturing pollution, and carry out waste management pilot programmes to help tackle the waste from cities that too often ends up in the world's oceans and rivers. This will protect the livelihoods and health of those that are affected by plastic pollution – while also providing new jobs in some of the world's poorest countries.

Furthermore, the UK will commit £25 million to help researchers approach the scourge of marine plastic waste from a scientific, technical, economic and social perspective. It will also put £20 million to prevent plastic and other environmental pollution from manufacturing in developing countries.

To further support the work of the CCOA, £16.4 million will be used to improve waste management at a national and a city level.

The Commonwealth Clean Oceans Alliance will work in partnership with businesses and NGOs, including the World Economic Forum, Sky, Fauna and Flora International, the Coca-Cola Company and WWF to share expertise and experience and push for global change.

Jeremy Darroch, Chief Executive of Sky, said:

In January 2017 we launched Sky Ocean Rescue to raise awareness of ocean health and to encourage the public to remove single-use plastic from their lives by making simple, everyday changes.

We strive to be a responsible business and believe through our own behaviours that we can affect real change. So I am delighted to support the UK and Vanuatu Governments' launch of the Commonwealth Clean Oceans Alliance and we look forward to working together to find innovative solutions that will make a significant difference to the health of our oceans for current and future generations.

Welcoming the announcement, Mark Rose, Chief Executive of Fauna & Flora International said:

Urgent and collective action is now needed to reduce the levels of plastic reaching our oceans. Fauna & Flora International applauds the leadership of the UK and Vanuatu and other Commonwealth nations in committing to act together to reduce these threats under the Commonwealth Clean Oceans Alliance.

We are committed to actively support this initiative, and to help to achieve these ambitious aims, building on our long-standing programme of work on marine plastics and our networks across more than 20 Commonwealth countries

The Commonwealth Clean Oceans Alliance will drive action in line with the Sustainable Development Goal 14 to conserve and sustainably use the oceans, and will also sign up to and implement a number of international agreements to protect our oceans, such as the UN Clean Seas campaign, the Global Ghost Gear Initiative and the London Protocol.

Notes to Editors:

Supporting the Clean Oceans Alliance

Poor waste management is a leading cause of plastics in the ocean. This is why the Prime Minister has announced that all developing country members of the Commonwealth Clean Oceans Alliance can bid for DFID partnership support from a new £5 million facility to improve waste management systems and

implement other initiatives to reduce plastics waste.

Up to five developing countries will be supported to help them meet the ambitious political commitments they have made by signing up to the Commonwealth Clean Oceans Alliance.

Defra will also be investing £2.4m to support the development of a new public-private delivery platform to help advance the ambitions set out by the CCOA.

Commonwealth waste management pilots

The Prime Minister has also announced today that DFID will provide up to £3m to support pilot programmes in 2-3 Commonwealth developing countries, to help tackle the waste from cities that too often ends up in the world's oceans and rivers.

This will focus on how to reduce the waste that ends up in the oceans and protect the livelihoods and health of those that are affected by plastic pollution – while also providing new jobs.

The UK will also be supporting six countries across the Commonwealth to develop national litter action plans focusing on plastics entering the oceans, through Defra's £6m Commonwealth Litter programme.

Tackling manufacturing pollution

The Sustainable Manufacturing and Environmental Pollution programme will tackle the problem of pollution and environmental degradation generated by manufacturing processes in DFID priority countries across Africa and Asia.

Over five years (2018-2023) DFID will back a £20 million research programme to generate evidence and practical solutions to address the problem of environmental pollution including plastics from manufacturing sources – a major contributor to waste creation.

Aid Match

The UK public has shown passion and energy in the fight against global plastic waste – which is why from later this year, the UK Government will match pound-for-pound public donations on helping developing countries to reduce plastic waste.

Open to bids from charities from 30 April 2018, the latest £20 million round of UK Aid Match funding will be focused on the priorities agreed by our Commonwealth partners: disability; health; women's empowerment; youth employment; prosperity; modern slavery; girls' education; and oceans and plastics.

For the first time, the public will be able to double their donations to charities tackling the scourge of plastics waste in the world's oceans.

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