

[News story: Blue Belt publication for schools launched](#)

A [new Government publication](#) has been created to introduce the work of the Blue Belt Programme to secondary school children.

The publication was launched at the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in April 2018, on board the Cefas Endeavour vessel, with the help of local school children from South London.

The [Blue Belt programme](#) supports delivery of the UK government's commitment to provide long term protection of over four million square kilometres of marine environment across the UK Overseas Territories.

[Consultation outcome: Enrolment of SMETS1 meter cohorts with the Data Communications Company](#)

Updated: Government response published.

A number of energy suppliers are installing first generation (SMETS1) smart meters, using their own data and communications systems to provide smart services. While SMETS1 meters support accurate bills and near real-time energy consumption which enable consumers to realise the benefit of smart metering, consumers may lose smart services on switching to another energy supplier.

The government's long-standing policy for resolving this issue is for all significant populations of SMETS1 meters to eventually be operated via the national data and communications provider, the Data Communications Company (DCC).

This consultation considers the business case for certain cohorts of SMETS1 meters – consisting of Aclara, Honeywell Elster, Itron and Landis+Gyr meters – to be enrolled in the DCC. This is based on a cost-benefit analysis and consideration of security and the technical feasibility of enrolment.

A subsequent consultation will consider the remaining SMETS1 meter cohorts (Secure Meters and EDMI meters) once there is sufficiently mature information from existing and prospective service providers and the DCC.

[Transparency data: CoRWM meeting minutes, 10 January 2018](#)

The committee holds open meetings that members of the public may attend to observe, ask questions, and discuss issues of relevance. For details on how to attend please see the [upcoming meeting dates](#) or email the CoRWM secretariat at corwm@beis.gov.uk.

[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).