

Prime Minister's statement to the House of Commons: 16 June 2020

Mr Speaker,

Before I begin, I am sure the whole House will join me in paying tribute to the memory of Jo Cox, who was cruelly murdered four years ago today.

Her sister, Kim Leadbeater, spoke for us all when she urged everyone to remember Jo by pulling together with "compassion and kindness".

I was concerned to learn that the Hon Member for East Dunbartonshire is now in hospital: we send her our best wishes.

Mr Speaker, with permission, I will make a statement about the ambitions of a Global Britain and the lessons of the Covid-19 pandemic.

We are living through a daily demonstration of how events on the far side of the world influence not only British security and prosperity, but something as elemental as the state of our health, and whether we can go to work or buy our daily bread.

This crisis offers vivid proof of the seminal importance of international engagement and exactly why our country must perform its global role.

I have begun the biggest review of our foreign, defence and development policy since the end of the Cold War, designed to maximise our influence and integrate all the strands of our international effort.

The overriding aim is to bring this country's strengths and expertise to bear on the world's biggest problems, seizing the opportunities of Britain's presidency of the G7 next year and the UN climate change conference, COP26, which we will host in Glasgow.

The UK possesses the third biggest aid budget and diplomatic network in the world: we owe it to our people to make best use of these assets, which scarcely any of our peers can match.

The British taxpayer has the right to expect that we achieve the maximum value with every pound we spend.

One cardinal lesson of the pandemic is that distinctions between diplomacy and overseas development are artificial and outdated.

For instance, to protect ourselves against another calamity, the UK will need to work alongside our friends to strengthen international bodies like the World Health Organization, and help vulnerable countries to improve their health systems and achieve greater resilience.

It makes no sense to ask whether this amounts to aid or foreign policy: they

are one and the same endeavour, and they're designed to achieve the same goals, which are right in themselves and serve our national interest.

On 4th June I chaired a virtual summit of the global vaccine alliance, which raised enough money to immunise 300 million children.

I doubt whether any other occasion will save more lives, and avoid more suffering, or produce a better example of the good this country can do by its international engagement – in the true and broad sense – alongside our friends.

And yet today – as anyone with experience of it will know – a dividing line between aid and foreign policy runs through our whole system, with our Department for International Development working independently from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, and our aid budget parcelled out between different arms of Whitehall.

DFID outspends the Foreign Office more than four times over and yet no single decision-maker in either department is able to unite our efforts or take a comprehensive overview.

We give as much aid to Zambia as we do to Ukraine, though the latter is vital for European security.

We give ten times as much aid to Tanzania as we do to the six countries of the Western Balkans, who are acutely vulnerable to Russian meddling.

And, regardless of the merits of these decisions, no single department is currently empowered to judge whether they make sense or not: we tolerate an inherent risk of our left and right hands working independently.

Faced with this crisis today – and the opportunities that lie ahead – we have a responsibility to ask whether our current arrangements, dating back to 1997, still maximise British influence.

Those well-intentioned decisions of 23 years ago were right for their time.

They paved the way for Britain to meet the UN target of spending 0.7 percent of national income on aid, a goal that was achieved by the Coalition Government in 2013 and has been maintained ever since – including this year – and which remains our commitment.

Yet those judgments date from a relatively benign era when China's economy was still smaller than Italy's and the West was buoyed by victory in the Cold War.

We must now strengthen our position in an intensely competitive world by making sensible changes, and so I have decided to merge DFID with the Foreign and Commonwealth Office to create a new department, the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office.

This will unite our aid with our diplomacy and bring them together in our international effort.

DFID has amassed world class expertise and all of its people can take pride in how they have helped transform the lives of hundreds of millions of people around the world.

To select but a few examples, they have striven to protect millions of children across the world from polio – which is now on the verge of global eradication – and they have paved the way for millions of girls to attend school for the first time in countries like Pakistan, as I have seen for myself.

They have done their utmost to ease the suffering in Syria and in Sierra Leone they were central to the defeat of an outbreak of the Ebola virus.

All this amounts to the finest demonstration of British values, following in the great tradition of the country that ended the slave trade and resisted totalitarianism.

And it is precisely that ambition, vision and expertise that will now be at the heart of a new department, taking forward the work of UK Aid to reduce poverty, and that will remain central to our mission.

The Foreign Secretary will be empowered to decide which countries receive – or cease to receive – British aid, while delivering a single UK strategy for each country, overseen by the National Security Council, which I chair.

Those strategies will be implemented on the ground by the relevant UK Ambassador, who will lead all of the Government's work in the host country.

And in this we are following the examples of Australia, Canada and New Zealand, all of whom run their development programmes from their foreign ministries.

And we will align other British assets overseas, including our trade commissioners, who will come under the authority of the UK ambassador, bringing more coherence to our international presence.

Now, amid the pandemic, this House will ask whether this is the right moment to reorganise Whitehall.

In reality, this crisis has already imposed fundamental changes on the way that we operate and if there is one further lesson, it is that a whole-of-government approach and getting maximum value for the British taxpayer is just as important abroad as it is at home.

This is exactly the moment when we must mobilise every one of our national assets, including our aid budget and expertise, to safeguard British interests and values overseas – and the best possible instrument for doing that will be a new department charged with using all the tools of British influence to seize the opportunities ahead.

Mr Speaker, I commend this statement to the House.

[New satellite data made available to help tackle public challenges](#)

News story

The public sector can access new satellite images of the UK to help issues such as town planning and flood mapping.



The first of its kind data archive, launched by the UK Space Agency's Space for Smarter Government Programme (SSGP), has updated its free optical and radar data sets of Britain and Northern Ireland.

The Agency is working to help government departments understand how they can use Earth observation (EO) data and create opportunities for new collaborations with industry and academia, as well as overcoming the cost barriers to test the capabilities of high resolution imagery.

The data, originally made available in March 2019, is intended to benefit the public sector in areas such as planning and development and environmental monitoring, while boosting further growth in the UK's world-leading space industry, which already employs nearly 42,000 people.

Ryan King, UK Space Agency's SSGP Manager said:

Since we first made this kind of data available to the public sector just over a year ago, we have seen 188 expressions of interest across 98 public sector bodies, and nearly 40 collaborations between government, industry and academia. We have already seen this data used for flood mapping, infrastructure monitoring, machine learning and habitat classification to name a few.

Now we have added more available data to provide higher temporal resolution across key urban areas and infrastructure locations such

as London, Liverpool and the North East of England, as well as several stacks of synthetic aperture radar imagery, to enable much more detailed change detection. From this we hope to see the public sector and wider supply chain working together to explore how high resolution satellite imagery can address key current challenges like remote asset management and environmental impacts such as the use of natural resources and changes in land use.

The archive data will be available for up to two years to explore what role high resolution satellite data could have in public sector delivery, and SSGP is developing hands-on training for civil servants on how to process and use the data.

The data has been made freely available to government through the Sentinel Data Access Service (SEDAS portal) hosted by the Satellite Applications Catapult for the purpose of research and development (R&D). Industry and academia can also access the data providing they have a demonstrable public sector sponsor and use case.

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[Return to work plan remains on track](#)

News story

Strict control measures in place as additional work activities launch at Low Level Waste Site.



Vending machines are taped off and not to be used.

The return of LLW Repository Ltd (LLWR) personnel to their workplace is continuing this week after the organisation's Restart Plan got underway without any major hurdles.

Office based workers began to return in small numbers last week to the Repository Site, in Cumbria, and this week additional activities are being introduced. Commissioning work on the Security Enhancement Programme and maintenance of Type B fissile packaging resume.

Returnees face a string of new arrangements and control measures, including limitations on movements during the working day and reduced Site open hours to minimise the potential for cross contamination, strict building occupancy limits and seating plans to accommodate 2m social distancing, single occupancy in toilet facilities and closed canteens and kitchens.

Paul Pointon, Managing Director, said: "As expected, we experienced a few teething problems last week and saw uncertainty from some colleagues about the new arrangements, but these were dealt with as the week progressed.

"Control measures are in place to protect the workforce, to demonstrate we are a 'COVID secure' facility and following Government guidelines.

"The new rules are temporary and remain under constant review, to ensure we align with emerging guidance. For now, around 75% of our people will continue to work from home."

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Places of Worship Protective Security Fund open for applications

The Places of Worship Protective Security Scheme, now in its 5th year, allows places of worship such as churches, mosques, gurdwaras, temples and associated faith community centres to receive government funding to improve physical security. This can include more secure gates, locks, alarms and CCTV in order to deter and prevent hate crime attacks.

The scheme, first introduced in 2016, was simplified and expanded following the Christchurch terror attack in 2019, and the amount of funding available has doubled to £3.2 million from last year.

Since its introduction more than 180 grants have been awarded helping 76 churches, 75 mosques, 23 gurdwaras and nine Hindu temples.

Minister for Countering Extremism, Baroness Williams said:

During this global pandemic, personal faith has been a source of comfort and strength for many.

I would urge all places of worship who feel they are vulnerable to hate crime to apply for the fund, and as a government we will do all we can to make your congregations feel safe and protected.

Groups have until 9 August to make an application. Places of worship across England have been permitted to reopen for individual prayer from 13 June following discussions between the government and representatives of major faiths through the Places of Worship Taskforce, chaired by Communities Secretary Robert Jenrick.

In addition to the Places of Worship Scheme, the Home Office [opened a consultation on 15 March](#) to review what else can be done to protect faith institutions, while ensuring a balance is struck between worshipping openly without fear and providing adequate security measures to protect worshippers. The consultation closes on 28 June, and its findings will be published in due course.

[Jonathan Hall appointed to the Financial Policy Committee](#)

Mr Hall has 25 years' experience working in the financial markets, most recently as Portfolio Manager at Eisler Capital. He will serve a three-year term, which will begin on 1 September 2020. His appointment fills the position previously held by Martin Taylor, who stepped down from the Committee at the end of March 2020.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer, Rishi Sunak, said:

The role of the FPC in enhancing and protecting the stability of the UK's financial system has never been more important, and having highly qualified people on the committee is key. That's why I'm very pleased to welcome Jonathan to the role. His wide-ranging expertise and experience built up over years working in financial markets will be hugely beneficial as we work to open up the economy following the Coronavirus pandemic, underpinned and supported by our world-leading financial system.

The Governor of the Bank of England, Andrew Bailey, said:

Jonathan has a wealth of experience and I look forward to welcoming him to the FPC. As a committee, more than ever as we address the economic challenges of the pandemic, we need to protect and enhance the resilience of the UK financial system. I am certain that

Jonathan's insights from financial markets will prove invaluable to our financial policymaking decisions.

Further information

Jonathan Hall has previously worked as a Portfolio Manager at Eisler Capital, where he helped establish, launch and grow the organisation. Jonathan has also worked as an Advisory Director at Goldman Sachs where he sat on the Board and Executive Committee of ISDA, the Board of Tradeweb, the Financial Stability Board Market Participants Group on reforming Interest Rate Benchmarks, and the Bank of England Working Group on Risk-Free Reference Rates.

Prior to this, Jonathan spent 10 years at Goldman Sachs in London and New York. He became a Managing Director in 2006 and Partner in 2008. Before that, Jonathan worked at Credit Suisse Financial Products in London, Tokyo, Sydney and Hong Kong. Additionally, Jonathan is a member of the Founders Circle of the Institute for the Future of Work (IFOW) and is in the process of completing a PhD in Philosophy of Mind, focusing on belief formation and reasons-responsiveness.

About the appointment process

Jonathan Hall has been appointed following an open recruitment process. As part of this process, HM Treasury recruited an executive search agency. A panel comprising Charles Roxburgh (Second Permanent Secretary, HM Treasury) and Katharine Braddick (Director General Financial Services, HM Treasury) and Richard Sharp (external member of the FPC from 2013 to 2019) interviewed a number of candidates and made recommendations to the Chancellor, which informed his decision.

There were 62 applications, of which five candidates were shortlisted for interview. The gender breakdown of the applicants for this appointment is below:

Application stage	Shortlisted for interview
FPC External Member 18 women, 43 men, 1 undisclosed	2 women, 3 men

About the Financial Policy Committee

- The FPC is the UK's macroprudential regulator: its objective is to protect and enhance the stability of the UK's financial system by identifying, monitoring and addressing systemic risks
- The FPC has thirteen members. Six of them are Bank of England staff: the Governor, four Deputy Governors and the Executive Director for Financial Stability Strategy and Risk
- There are also five external members who are selected from outside the

Bank for their experience and expertise in financial services

- The Committee also includes the Chief Executive of the Financial Conduct Authority and one non-voting member from HM Treasury