

# Scotland Office Minister inspired by island innovation ahead of Levelling Up Islands Forum

Levelling up was top of the agenda as UK Government Minister for Scotland Iain Stewart visited innovative island businesses and community projects on a five-day visit to Skye, Lewis and Harris, ahead of the inaugural Islands Forum later this year.

Starting his visit in Skye, Minister Stewart met with the Staffin Community Trust and local fishermen to discuss plans to redevelop Staffin Harbour and consider ways the UK Government could support the project. He then headed to Skye's largest town, Portree, to host a roundtable discussion with representatives from local community groups, where he invited views on how levelling up could enhance the area.

The Minister then made his way to Harris where he paid a visit to the Harris Distillery. He enjoyed hearing about how the island-based enterprise has grown through training and employing young people from the local area, meaning they don't have to leave the island for work.

In Lewis, Minister Stewart's busy itinerary included meeting Comhairle nan Eilean Siar – Western Isles Council – to talk about how levelling up could benefit the local community. He visited the headquarters of Gaelic Media Service MG Alba to learn about how they are creating premium Gaelic language content, and also paid a visit to Charles Macleod butchers, makers of the world-renowned Stornoway Black Pudding, to discuss their success in exporting from the island.

He also met with Lewis-based Horshader Community Trust, a charity taking forward green initiatives including decarbonising transport and nurturing trees to create woodland. The trust has received more than £70,000 from the Community Renewal Fund to help local residents gain new skills, support the development of two green projects, and work with business partners to strengthen the island's renewable energy sector.

Minister Iain Stewart said:

It was a pleasure to visit Skye, Lewis and Harris. From discussing plans to regenerate Staffin Harbour, to seeing how the Horshader Community Trust is making Lewis more sustainable, to hearing how the Harris Distillery is supporting jobs for young people, it's clear these islands have talent, innovation and resourcefulness in droves.

It's also clear that the Islands Growth Deal and investment through the UK Government's Levelling Up Funds are making a real difference in these places, for the benefit of people who live here.

However, while our island communities have unique strengths, they also face unique challenges. Infrastructure, transport and depopulation are issues that islands often have to contend with, and must be addressed for our rural areas to truly thrive.

The Islands Forum was set up to discuss these problems. It will give a platform for those who understand remote communities and their needs best, putting islands at the heart of our Levelling Up agenda which has so far resulted in more than £2 billion being invested directly in Scottish projects.

The UK Government's first [Islands Forum](#) will take place in Orkney later this year. The forum will put islands at the heart of the Levelling Up agenda, with island communities across the UK invited to discuss common challenges including connectivity, infrastructure and demographic trends.

---

## [Dstl and UKSA plan closer collaboration](#)

### News story

The Defence Science and Technology Laboratory (Dstl) and the UK Space Agency will investigate ways to collaborate more closely.



Dstl Chief Executive Paul Hollinshead (left) and UK Space Agency's Chief Executive Paul Bate at Portsmouth West.

The initiative follows the first visit by the UK Space Agency's Chief Executive Paul Bate to Dstl's space facilities at its Portsmouth West site

near Portsmouth, where he met Dstl Chief Executive Paul Hollinshead and senior members of its Space Systems Programme.

The 2 organisations are responsible for separate but complementary UK government activities in space under the National Space Strategy. Dstl's [Space Systems Programme](#) has expanded significantly in recent years, supporting UK Space Command and the Ministry of Defence (MOD) more generally with research and development (R&D), particularly in space domain awareness (SDA) and intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance (ISR).

The [first satellite launch from the UK](#) later this year by Virgin Orbit from Spaceport Cornwall has resulted in increased contact across many levels of both organisations, which is expected to continue as the UK grows its commercial satellite launch market and builds additional capabilities.

There are benefits to working together to develop new technologies and deepen the specialist expertise found across Dstl and the UK Space Agency, which were discussed at the meeting.

Dr Paul Hollinshead, Dstl Chief Executive, said:

This is an ideal time to deepen the collaboration between two of the UK's leading space research organisations. Many of the space innovations being developed today will have dual-use application for both the defence and civil sectors.

Pooling our expertise could widen the adoption of these technologies to bring them into use faster and cheaper while fuelling the growth of our specialist suppliers.

Dr Paul Bate, CEO of the UK Space Agency, said:

It was a privilege to visit the advanced facilities at Dstl and discuss areas of mutual collaboration, to inform the development of new space capabilities.

The National Space Strategy recognises the huge potential for dual-use applications in areas such as secure communications and Earth observation, and we value the support of our defence partners in the preparations for the first satellite launches from the UK.

We also share a common desire to inspire the next generation to reach for the stars and support the talent of tomorrow.

Published 4 August 2022

---

# Overspeeds in weather-related Blanket Emergency Speed Restrictions

## News story

Overspeeds in weather-related Blanket Emergency Speed Restrictions on Western and Wales routes, 18 and 19 July 2022.

**NOTICE TO TRAIN CREWS**  
**BLANKET SPEED RESTRICTION**  
**IMPOSED**

Depot: \_\_\_\_\_ Date/Time: 19:00 Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> July 2022

Routes: **ALL LINES ON WESTERN ROUTE NORTH AND EAST OF COGLOAD JUNCTION (TAUNTON)**

THE FOLLOWING BLANKET SPEED RESTRICTION HAS BEEN IMPOSED ON  
MONDAY 18<sup>th</sup> JULY 2022 BETWEEN LOCATIONS SHOWN BELOW  
FOR THE TIME PERIOD 12:00 TO 22:00 MONDAY 18<sup>th</sup> JULY 2022.  
DURING THIS PERIOD THE SPEED OF ALL TRAINS MUST NOT EXCEED: -

30  
60

MPH OR

THIRTY OVER SIXTY

Has this speed been imposed as a result of severe or adverse weather conditions? **YES**

Lines of Route:	<b>ALL LINES</b>
At or between:	PADDINGTON TO COGLOAD JUNCTION (VIA FORDGATE & ATHELNEY) INCLUDING ALL WESTERN ROUTE LINES NORTH AND EAST OF COGLOAD JN (TAUNTON) TO REGIONAL BOUNDARIES WITH NORTH WEST & CENTRAL / WALES & WESSEX <small>(Across Western Route/Wales/Wessex) Not for Main Road/Blackdown/Wickhampton/Exeter 1/2/3/Wickhampton/Wickhampton</small>

Extract from the BESR notices issued by the Western route (courtesy of Network Rail)

During 18 and 19 July 2022, a number of trains were involved in incidents relating to the Blanket Emergency Speed Restrictions (BESRs) which had been imposed due to the extremely hot weather.

RAIB has identified that two of these incidents led to overspeeding and took place on the Western Route during 18 July. A further two incidents involving overspeeding and two incidents where drivers had not clearly understood BESRs occurred on the Wales route on 19 July.

We have undertaken a [preliminary examination](#) into the circumstances surrounding this incident. Having assessed the evidence which has been gathered to date, we have decided to publish a [safety digest](#).

The safety digest will be made available on our website in the next few weeks.

Published 4 August 2022

---

# Matthew Lawson, British Ambassador to North Macedonia presents credentials

World news story

Matthew Lawson presented his Letters of Credence to the President of North Macedonia, Stevo Pendarovski on 27 July 2022.



Matthew Lawson with President Stevo Pendarovski.

On Wednesday (27 July), Mr Matthew Lawson presented his Letters of Credence to Mr Stevo Pendarovski, accrediting him as Her Majesty's Ambassador to North Macedonia.

Following the Audience, HM Ambassador Lawson said:

I was honoured to present my Credentials to President of North Macedonia, Stevo Pendarovski this morning. During my ambassadorial mandate I look forward to building further on the excellent relations between the United Kingdom and North Macedonia.

The United Kingdom is a proven friend of the Republic of North Macedonia and a strong supporter of the strategic goals for the country's progress. Together with our partners in the Government, the Parliament, civil society and business sector, we will work on strengthening trade between the United Kingdom and North Macedonia, and support key areas such as good governance, transparency and accountability, security sector reform, judiciary, diversity, freedom of expression and socio-economic development.

Follow British Embassy Skopje on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).

Published 4 August 2022

---

# Guidance to support public sector investments in location data

[The Geospatial Commission today publishes appraisal guidance](#) to help public sector organisations make more effective cases for investing in location data.

Location data is a strategic national asset, delivering significant value for people, organisations and wider society. It supports key government priorities such as Net Zero, Levelling Up and had an important role in managing the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. Public sector investments have previously struggled to understand, assess and articulate the economic, social and environmental value of location data coherently, constraining their ability to unlock funding.

By providing a more structured and practical approach to assessing value that is based on best-practice methods, existing research and the experiences of stakeholders, we aim to drive greater consistency in the way that these benefits are routinely captured, improving the quality of investment cases presented to decision makers.

Thalia Baldwin, Commissioner of the Geospatial Commission said:

Linking data to location improves analysis, decisions and outcomes. It is vital that the public sector invests to maintain our strategic national geospatial assets. Our guidance will support organisations to make a coherent and persuasive case for improved geospatial data.

The seven-step framework presented in the guidance sets out an approach to understanding, assessing and articulating the value of a location data project, from the inception stage to the presentation of benefits. Many of the principles set out in this guidance are also relevant for data investments more generally and support commitments to improve the use of digital and data, as set out in the [National Data Strategy](#) and the [Roadmap to Digital and Data 2022-2025](#).

David Henderson, Chief Geospatial Officer at Ordnance Survey said:

We all know the practical value of maps and location data in supporting our everyday life. But expressing that value in a way that supports future investment in geospatial data and services by government and business remains a challenge. This work provides a valuable foundation on how to express those benefits and a more

consistent approach to making the case for geospatial data.

The guidance was developed in conjunction with Frontier Economics, with contributions from a wide range of location data users and suppliers. It includes case studies where the framework has been applied to past investments, acting as a helpful reference and learning tool for users.

Sarah Snelson, Director of Public Policy Practice at Frontier Economics said:

Geospatial data has the potential to unlock a variety of important use cases across the UK economy but there are challenges to valuation that can inhibit their application. We have worked closely with stakeholders to develop a practical valuation approach that public sector organisations can apply. We are excited to see how the framework is used.