

PM re-appoints members of the Security Vetting Appeals Panel: 1 July 2019

The Prime Minister has approved the following re-appointments to the Security Vetting Appeals Panel: Mrs Helen Dearden, Mrs Philippa Hardwick, Mr Stephen Hawker CB and Mr Iain McGrory.

All four members have been re-appointed for a second and final term of four years, effective until 30 June 2023.

Exploring historical coal mining and future development

Britain's coal mining legacy and its implications for brownfield development will be the theme of a talk from the Coal Authority's Commercial Report and Advisory Services team.

The subject will be explored by Helen Bennett, the team's technical leader, when she speaks at the Brownfield Redevelopment: Midlands 2019 conference at the Grand Station in Wolverhampton on Wednesday 3 July 2019.

The one-day event will bring together local authorities, developers, policy-makers, landowners, remediation companies and other stakeholders to explore solutions to key challenges, such as brownfield land availability, managing contamination risks and accelerating the development process.

Helen said:

The rich industrial history of the Black Country and the West Midlands coalfield poses a number of challenges for the brownfield developer, with geological conditions that are unique to this region with respect to coal mining legacy risk.

Due consideration is required at the earliest available opportunity to establish the risks that could be posed by historical coal mining to a future development.

An appropriate scheme of desk-study, investigation and monitoring may be required to understand those features which could require

remediation or long-term management.

Helen studied Applied and Environmental Geology at the University of Leicester, researching and working in the fields of mineral exploration, environmental monitoring and the socio-economic challenges of resource extraction.

She joined the Coal Authority in 2014, managing permit applications for works, and now provides support and advice on mining legacy risks across a range of development and infrastructure projects.

Homeowners could cut mortgage rates, bills and emissions with new green mortgages

Costs to retrofit old homes could also be reduced thanks to £10 million innovation fund



- £5 million fund to increase number of green mortgages will encourage households to upgrade energy efficiency of homes, as part of Green Finance Strategy
- industry encouraged to cut cost of retrofitting older homes with £10 million innovation fund
- government measures to improve energy efficiency of 17 million homes is part of UK's commitment to become a net zero emissions economy

Households could cut mortgage rates, save money on their energy bills and reduce emissions from their homes under plans to roll out green mortgages.

Ahead of the launch of the Green Finance Strategy, the government today announced a £5 million fund to help the financial sector develop green home finance products, like green mortgages. Green mortgages give customers discounted mortgage rates once they have upgraded the energy rating of their home.

Today the government also announced it would offer industry the chance to win a share of a £10 million innovation fund if companies design innovative ways of reducing the cost of retrofitting the UK's old housing stock. This could include assembling parts of buildings like pre-fabricated roofs or facades off-site and quickly fitting them to homes, minimising disruption for homeowners.

It comes just days after the government became the first major economy in the world to pass laws committing the UK to net zero emissions by 2050. Tackling domestic emissions by improving the efficiency of the 17 million homes in the UK with an EPC below Band C will be essential to achieving this.

Energy and Clean Growth Minister Chris Skidmore said:

To fulfil our world-leading commitment to reach net zero emissions by 2050, we need an overhaul of our housing stock to tackle the disproportionate amount of carbon emissions from buildings.

By rolling out more green mortgages and reducing the costs of retrofitting older homes we're encouraging homeowners to improve the efficiency of their homes and save money on their energy bills, helping to ensure everyone has access to a warm and comfortable home.

Currently homes are responsible for 15% of the UK's carbon emissions, and as the UK moves to a net zero economy, the government has committed to making more buildings cleaner, greener and fit for the future.

The modern Industrial Strategy set out a vision to make the UK a global-standard setter for finance that supports clean growth. Through the Green Finance Strategy, the government has committed to accelerate the development of green financial products. Funding will be awarded to innovative projects that incentivise energy efficiency retrofitting through the Green Home Finance Innovation Fund (GHFIF).

The GHFIF will support the development of lending products like equity loans and home improvement loans that will help homeowners make upgrades, for example offering energy efficiency advice, access to trusted installers and preferential mortgage interest rates to support them in making energy improvements to their homes.

Meanwhile the £10 million Whole House Retrofit competition will help to find viable ways of reducing the cost of retrofitting homes at scale and at affordable rates, helping drive down costs for consumers and ensuring everyone has access to a warm home.

Green financial products and reducing the costs of retrofitting aim to offer innovative ways to reduce buildings' emissions and supports householders' efforts to move towards a cleaner, greener economy – a key part of the government's modern Industrial Strategy.

Recognising that finance is the first step in making these changes, government is asking the Green Finance Institute (GFI) to consider finance for buildings. Among the first of the GFI's priorities will be addressing energy efficiency.

Notes to editors

1. BEIS and HMT will publish the Green Finance Strategy on 2 July 2019 alongside the launch of the Green Finance Institute. The Strategy will set out our green finance objectives and ambitions and will also form our response to the Green Finance Taskforce, which published its report last year.
2. We have already taken decisive action following the Green Finance Taskforce, for example:
 - The Chancellor announced last year the establishment of a new Green Finance Institute with an ambitious mandate to accelerate green finance investment.
 - Amended pensions regulations to strengthen and clarify investor duties.
 - Sought further evidence on improvements to EPCs through a Call for Evidence.
 - In January 2019, the government and UK100 delivered its first Investing in Local Energy conference to help attract private investment into local projects.
3. Bids are welcome from any organisation or consortium from across the UK, including SMEs, large enterprises, academia, financial, research, public and third sector organisations. If you are interested in entering the competition or would like more information, please read the online [Whole House Retrofit Competition](#) guidance.
4. Improving energy efficiency and tackling fuel poverty is a priority for the government, which is why in the Clean Growth Strategy set out our aspiration to improve as many homes as possible to EPC Band C by 2035. The Buildings Mission set out our ambition to halve the cost of retrofitting existing buildings to the same standard as new builds by 2030.
5. The government's ['Simple Energy Advice'](#) service offers a free, unbiased source of energy efficiency advice as well as guidance on boilers and heating systems and potential sources of funding and grants.
6. The newly created Green Finance Institute (GFI), backed by seed funding from the UK Government and City of London Corporation, will focus on

mobilising capital towards zero-carbon and climate-resilient outcomes. As the UK's principal forum for collaboration between government and the private sector with respect to green finance, it will convene coalitions of experts to unlock the barriers to greater green investment.

Joint press release on the occasion of the 24th Budapest Pride Festival

On the occasion of the 24th Budapest Pride Festival, we convey our support to members of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) community and their right to equality, freedom from discrimination, and the right to assemble and express themselves peacefully and lawfully. We note the important advocacy work of LGBTQ civil society organizations. Respect for the rule of law and for human rights are the foundations upon which democratic states are built.

International human rights law is grounded on the broad premise that all individuals are entitled to the same rights and freedoms without discrimination. On this is based our unshakeable view that human rights apply equally to every human being, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity. We reject and condemn acts of violence and discrimination in all regions of the world committed against individuals based on their sexual orientation or gender identity.

We welcome positive developments at the international, regional, and national levels in the fight against violence and discrimination targeting LGBTQ individuals and communities. We encourage further steps in every country to ensure the equality and dignity of all human beings irrespective of their sexual orientation or gender identity, and stress the need for elected leaders and governments to show respect for and protect the rights of LGBTQ persons.

Celebrating diversity is a sure way to promote respect for human rights. Budapest Pride has the longest history of such events in East-Central Europe, and we support its role in promoting equality of treatment for all LGBTQ persons, and contributing to the creation of a more inclusive society.

New noise systems to stop 'silent'

electric cars and improve safety

From 1 July 2019 all manufacturers must install an acoustic sound system in new types of quiet electric and hybrid electric vehicles to improve road safety.



- from 1 July 2019, manufacturers must fit acoustic sound systems to new types of quiet electric vehicles to prevent them being too silent, improving safety
- vehicles will now have systems to produce a sound when they are reversing or driving below 20 kilometres per hour (km/h, about 12mph) providing greater confidence to vulnerable road users
- new regulations will help ensure future transport is safe and accessible for everyone, a key Future of Mobility: Urban Strategy pledge

The government has further cemented its position as a global leader in the transition to zero emission transport, by securing new regulations to make electric vehicles safer and provide greater confidence to vulnerable road users.

From 1 July 2019, all manufacturers must install a system in new types of quiet electric and hybrid electric vehicles. Sound generators will produce a specified level of noise when they are reversing or running below 20 km/h (about 12mph). The sound generated will be similar to that made by a conventional engine and can be temporarily deactivated by the driver if judged necessary.

The new regulation to make acoustic systems within electric vehicles compulsory will allow those who are visually impaired to hear vehicles more easily. The news comes ahead of the one year anniversary of the government's [Road to Zero strategy](#), which has helped to achieve record levels of ultra-low emission vehicles on UK roads.

Michael Ellis, Roads Minister, said:

The government wants the benefits of green transport to be felt by everyone, and understands the concerns of the visually impaired about the possible hazards posed by quiet electric vehicles.

This new requirement will give pedestrians added confidence when crossing the road.

The regulation will apply to all new types of 'quiet' electric and hybrid vehicles from 1 July 2019, and to all new quiet electric and hybrid vehicles registered from July 2021.

In March 2019 the government outlined the ambition for all future transport to be safer and more accessible in the [Future of Mobility: urban strategy](#). The Department for Transport will convene a roundtable with accessibility groups to discuss the government's commitment to making transport accessible for all, including the requirement announced today (1 July 2019).

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