

Diversifying and modernising

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Annual highlights

The 'Annual Report and Accounts 2018-19' records GAD's progress in diversifying and modernising the work of actuaries in government.

Over the past year GAD's focus remained on providing a high-level of service to clients. GAD is highly valued by 90% of our major clients, and this has led to further assignments because of our growing reputation and profile.

We report on different aspects of the department including the fact that we:

- achieved all our financial performance targets during the year
- improved the diversity of our overall portfolio
- continued to invest in data analytics skills to enhance our capability to generate valuable insights
- made significant progress in the transition to more modern, cloud-based actuarial software

Successful year

GAD supported a widening range of government policy-making and implementation. Often this required speed, efficiency and versatility such as with the valuations of public service pensions, which this year required our experts to perform calculations in record time.

We were successfully re-accredited under the Institute and Faculty of Actuaries' Quality Assurance Scheme, with our annual return being described as 'exemplary'.

This year marks GAD's centenary and Martin Clarke is the 9th Government Actuary since the department's inception. He said "This past year has been very successful. The work of actuaries in government has evolved continuously, so the centenary is a chance to celebrate our versatility and look forward to the exciting challenges ahead."

Further detail on our performance is available in the [Annual Report and Accounts 2018-19](#).

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[eAlert: 26 June 2019 – HS2 Woodland Fund and contacting the RPA](#)

Correspondence

This eAlert contains updates on the HS2 Woodland Fund cut-off date, contacting the RPA, the Woodland Management Plan Grant and the Urban Tree Challenge Fund.

[eAlert: 26 June 2019 – HS2 Woodland Fund and contacting the RPA](#)

<https://mailchi.mp/forestry/ealert-forestry-commission-new-blog-hs2-woodland-fund-and-how-to-contact-the-rpa>

Details

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- Don't miss the HS2 Woodland Fund cut off date
- Communications with the Rural Payments Agency (RPA)
- Online Application for Countryside Stewardship Woodland Management Plan Grant
- Urban Tree Challenge Fund

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[Preferred route for A358 Taunton to Southfields scheme revealed](#)

After two rounds of consultation and careful consideration of feedback a scheme to upgrade the route to a high quality dual carriageway has been revealed by Highways England.

The proposal is a modified version of the Pink option presented at consultation in early 2018 and will run from Southfields roundabout to junction 25 of the M5 at Taunton. To improve the affordability of the scheme

we used the previously published Pink option as a basis to develop a modified option, as this had performed the best across our previous assessments.

Project manager, David Stock, said:

The A303 /A358 is a vitally important route to Taunton, Somerset and the south west and that is why we are so committed to finding an appropriate solution to upgrading the section between the A303 and M5.

We received over 2,650 responses during the two consultations and around 60% of people said that the Pink route would best serve their regular journeys. By removing two junctions and the link between them from the original Pink route proposal we have been able to address some of the concerns about the impact of the Pink option on homes, public open spaces and countryside whilst managing affordability.

I am very grateful to everyone who took part in the consultations for helping us shape the proposal and we look forward to working on the more detailed designs for the scheme as the year progresses.

Under the proposal traffic through Henlade will be reduced by almost 90%.

The scheme will also make journeys safer by closing existing road junctions and other private accesses directed onto the A358, where traffic turns across on-coming traffic – replacing them with several slip road type junctions. Improved connectivity and reduced journey times will assist the local and regional economy by making Taunton, Somerset and the south west a more attractive place to work and do business.

The Government's [Road Investment Strategy](#) is committed to upgrading all remaining sections of the strategic A303/A358 corridor between the M3 and M5 to dual carriageway standard.

The plan for the A358 upgrade is to create a free-flowing section of high quality dual carriageway, delivering a range of benefits to drivers including faster and safer journeys. The other two projects on this corridor in the Government's first road investment period are the [A303 Stonehenge](#) and the [A303 Sparkford to Ilchester dualling](#) schemes.

The A358 is currently managed by Somerset County Council and is a mix of single and dual carriageway, carrying more vehicles than it was designed for.

Highways England has started an A358 Community Liaison Forum, with representatives from local groups, business organisations and community representatives, who will be able to feed in to the proposal as more detailed plans are prepared for a further consultation, before final plans are submitted as part of the planning application process.

The ongoing work to identify an affordable solution is delivered while still

meeting the Road Investment Strategy brief, has had an unavoidable effect on the scheme programme. We are now planning to start construction of this route in the second road investment period.

For more information please visit the [scheme web page](#).

General enquiries

Members of the public should contact the Highways England customer contact centre on 0300 123 5000.

Media enquiries

Journalists should contact the Highways England press office on 0844 693 1448 and use the menu to speak to the most appropriate press officer.

SLC Grabs Gold in Global Customer Service Award

The Student Loans Company has won a gold award from the Contact Centre Association (CCA).



The Student Loans Company (SLC) has scooped a prestigious Gold Award from the Contact Centre Association (CCA) for their long-term commitment to continuously improving customer experience.

The company, which employs over 3500 people across five offices in Glasgow, Darlington and Llandudno Junction, and receives nearly 6 million customer calls each year, achieved the Gold Award by meeting the CCA's annual Global Standard© accreditation repeatedly for fifteen years in a row.

CCA is the independent professional body for customer service experience that

is trusted throughout the customer contact sector. Their Global Standard© is an assessment and endorsement designed by the industry and assesses process, implementation and development of customer services for organisations committed to continually improving their customer experience proposition.

Derek Ross, Director of Operations said: "This is a remarkable achievement for the company and for our frontline contact staff; we couldn't be prouder to have received this award. We are always striving to continuously improve our customer experience, and it was fantastic to have our long-term commitment recognised."