

Press release: Rosewell Inquiry Review

– Update

The Planning Inspectorate is continuing to make good progress with taking forward the recommendations in the [Independent Review of Planning Appeal Inquiries](#) and have now begun increasing the number of inquiry appeals being placed into this new way of working. There are clear benefits in progressing with implementing some of the recommendations and we thought it would be helpful to all concerned to explain our reasons.

To begin with, there can be little doubt that the principal thrust of the Review – to significantly shorten the time between receipt of an inquiry appeal and its final decision – is a significant improvement. To this end, we have been able to appoint more Inspector resource to inquiry appeals, than was envisaged in March when we announced the “pilot”, which has enabled us to bring most of these appeals into the process.

Some parties to the appeals have questioned why we have imposed inquiry dates when informing them of the ‘Start’ of the appeal and the name of the appointed Inspector. These letters are sent to the appeal parties as soon as possible after receipt of an inquiry appeal and have generally set the inquiry date to be between 13-16 weeks of the ‘Start’ date. This has been a significant innovation of the new process and provides the parties with clarity as to timescales from the outset.

To implement the recommendations of the Rosewell Review we must move away from our “bespoke” arrangements which gave specific provision for the parties to agree an inquiry date after an appeal had been submitted. Instead, now we are taking the lead in setting an inquiry date at the earliest opportunity, and this has led some parties to ask if there could be a degree of flexibility after the date had been fixed, or whether they could be given time to negotiate a new date.

We appreciate that this new procedure, for affected appeals, is very different to the way inquiry appeals were managed previously, and that some of the recommendations may be challenging, for everyone involved in the appeal. But it would be difficult to deny the significant advantages that an early inquiry date – and thus an early decision date – will bring to all concerned with the process. We will of course consider whether wholly exceptional circumstances are demonstrated by the parties to explain the unreasonableness of the inquiry date that has been set, but at the same time momentum must be maintained if the Review is to pay the dividends it promises.

The inquiry dates that are now being set give confidence to expect that those appeals will be decided in accordance with the timescales set out in Recommendation 21 of the Rosewell Report.

Speech: Melanie Hopkins' Remarks at the launch of the Fiji Electrification Trust Fund

I am delighted to be here today to launch Phase 1 of the Fiji Rural Electrification Trust Fund. This is an important week for the country as you host the Annual General Meeting of the ADB, bringing countries from right across Asia to see the front-line climate challenges faced by Pacific countries. During such a high level week, it is all the more important to take time out to visit a smaller island to understand first-hand the challenges faced at community level.

The United Kingdom is serious about the need to tackle climate change and is one of the world's largest funders of international climate finance. The UK has committed over £5.8bn from 2016-2020 on international climate finance.

Fiji also takes a leading role on climate change. When HRH Prince Harry Duke of Sussex visited Fiji last year, he said "We look to Fiji to provide leadership on environmental issues which affect all of us, and that have been affecting you as an island nation for many, many years.

Fiji took on the role of COP23 Presidency in 2017. This was a major area of international leadership at a critical moment. Fiji took on this highly challenging role on behalf of the international community and I'd like to commend the Government for this leadership. The British Government was keen to support Fiji in this and provided over FJD 4.5 million. This not only met the very immediate support needed to assist the COP23 Presidency but enabled more schoolchildren and rural communities to become more involved in the climate debate. As an official COP23 legacy initiative, we were also very pleased to respond to the Government's request to support the FREF and look forward to seeing this very sustainable programme grow. The UK has offered to host COP26 in 2020, which will be a pivotal moment to take stock of global ambition and prepare the world for further action.

The real debate on how to grow sustainably and how we use the planet's resource must begin at home. In the UK, we are proud of our Climate Change Act, which has just celebrated its 10th birthday. Since 1990, we have reduced our emissions by 42% whilst growing our economy by 72%. I commend the increased focus that the Government has placed on climate and oceans, including leading the Ocean and Climate Change Action Group of the Commonwealth Blue Charter, and working towards a plastics free Fiji. It is inspiring to see that today's solution has been based on solar technology, enabling Fiji to move towards a clean, green future.

If we want to achieve real change in tackling climate, innovative partnerships and grass-roots collaboration will be key. We are proud to work

with a variety of actors, including academics, businesses, students and civil society, on our Talanoa Dialogue. I was delighted to learn of the involvement of Viti Renewables, community NGOs and support from the Leonardo di Caprio Foundation in this project. I hope very much that this model of grass-roots involvement can be further developed in the future.

In closing, I would like to express my very best wishes to the community of Vio Island and hope that this helps improve the standard of living for this generation and generations to come.

Vinaka Vakalevu

News story: Cash here to stay as government commits to protecting access

The future of cash will be protected under plans set out today (Friday 3 May), which will ensure the British public continues to have choice over how they spend their money.

The Chancellor, Philip Hammond, will announce plans to help safeguard access to cash by establishing a new group chaired by the Treasury. Bringing together regulators and the Bank of England, the group will set strategy, coordinate work to support nationwide access and help safeguard cash for those who need it.

The announcement will be made during the Verdict of the Pyx ceremony in London, part of a longstanding coin-checking custom dating back to the 12th Century. During his speech the Chancellor will also reiterate that there will be no changes to current coins and notes, with all denominations – from the penny to the £50 note – staying in circulation.

This will complement work to support digital payment methods – including on broadband coverage and open banking – which continue to revolutionise and expand the ways people manage their money.

The Chancellor, Philip Hammond, said:

Technology has transformed banking for millions of people, making it easier and quicker to carry out financial transactions and pay for services.

But it's also clear that many people still rely on cash and I want the public to have choice over how they spend their money.

I'm also setting up a group which brings together the Treasury, Bank of England and the regulators to safeguard the future of cash and ensure its availability for years to come.

Natalie Ceeney CBE, Chair of the Access to Cash review, said:

Cash use is falling rapidly, but digital payments don't yet work for everyone. We need to safeguard the use of cash for those who need it, and at the same time work hard to ensure that everyone can participate in the digital economy.

If we sleepwalk into a cashless society, millions of people will be left behind. I'm delighted to see the Government taking a leadership role on this critical issue – and look forward to seeing action as a result.

The move comes as the Treasury publishes its response to the cash and digital payments call for evidence. The findings show that while the use of cash has declined in recent years, with a rise in digital payment methods, it remains a dominant form of paying for goods for many people across the country.

It is estimated that around 2.2 million people in the UK are still reliant on cash, with the elderly, vulnerable and those in rural communities likely to be hardest hit by a decline.

To make sure cash continues to be available to those who need it, the Government will:

- establish the new Joint Authorities Cash Strategy Group (JACS) – chaired by the Treasury and bringing together the regulators and Bank of England – to provide comprehensive oversight of the UK's cash system
- support the Bank of England's work to develop a new wholesale cash distribution system to ensure cash is being distributed as needed across the country
- develop a new coin checking and validation framework to remove counterfeits from circulation and stop them from ending up in people's pockets
- reiterate that there are no plans to alter the make-up of coins or notes and that current cash denominations will continue in its current form
- continue to support new digital methods of payment while safeguarding access to cash for those who need it Launched at the 2018 Spring Statement, the call for evidence response is part of ongoing work to

modernise UK currency, which includes the previously introduced new £1 coin and polymer banknotes

Today's announcement builds on work to ensure cash remains accessible for those who need it. This includes investing over £2 billion since 2010 in the Post Office network to support customers in accessing banking services. Currently, 99 per cent of personal customers and 95 per cent of small business customers can carry out their everyday banking locally at one of the Post Office's 11,500 branches.

As well as this, LINK – the UK's largest cash machine network – has committed to replace closed ATMs in rural or remote areas when there is no free ATM within 1 kilometre or Post Office branch available. LINK has also recently implemented new 'super premiums' to further safeguard free-to-use ATMs in remote and deprived areas.

[Press release: Highways England unveils self-driving trucks set to speed up roadworks](#)

The dump trucks, which move huge amounts of earth, have the potential to work around the clock, so could help reduce the length of time roadworks are on the ground.

And by being autonomous they reduce the risk of road workers being involved in incidents on site.

Previously tried and tested in Australia, the concept is now being trialled on Highways England's improvement of the A14 between Cambridge and Huntingdon.

Deputy Project Director on behalf of Highways England for the A14 Julian Lamb said:

We're increasingly looking to technological advances to help us safely bring improvements to drivers on England's motorways and major A roads.

Road construction has changed massively over the years and the testing of trucks such as these promises to allow us to work efficiently, speeding up roadworks, giving more protection to road workers, and moving jobs to other skilled areas.

The trial we are leading with our partner CA Blackwell will enable

the construction industry as a whole to be in a more informed position to make key decisions about autonomy on UK construction sites.

Dump trucks are used to transport excavated soil to fill large areas on construction sites.

One autonomous dump truck is being tested in a controlled environment on the A14 scheme. The truck is programmed remotely to follow a pre-determined route and has the capability to detect and avoid obstacles, other vehicles and the like, along the route as it drives.

Highways England has committed £150,000 from its innovation designated fund into the A14 dump truck trial.

The designated funds provide protected money that enable Highways England to provide environmental, social and economic benefits to the people, communities and business alongside the Strategic Road Network both now and in the future.

Niall Fraser, Director of earthworks services supplier CA Blackwell, said:

We are delighted to have received the backing of Highways England and their Designated Funds grant for this trial and are grateful for the support and commitment of our technology providers in making it a reality.

Once testing is complete, Highways England hopes to adopt the technology to modernise UK construction sites.

It is expected to be another two or three years before autonomous dump trucks are in full operation.

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.

News story: BEQ calls for bids for its Bilateral Cooperation Fund 2019-20

The BEQ will run a competitive bidding process in order to ensure we use our allocation for high quality projects that deliver maximum impact and value for money.

The project funds are designated to support links between the UK and Ecuador in a number of priority areas through small-scale, high-impact project interventions (up to USD 15,000).

Proposals should related to one of the following policy areas:

- gender based violence prevention, gender inclusion and women's and girls' empowerment;
- human Rights, media freedom, disability rights;
- environment and climate change;
- crisis Preparedness;
- anti-corruption and transparency.

Who may bid?

In order to be eligible, your organisation or agency must be a legal entity, not-for-profit or commercial company, a registered non-governmental (NGO) or governmental organisation, and must demonstrate:

- proof of legal registration
- previous experience in delivering and managing projects
- preferably previous experience working with international agencies/organisations
- the capacity to deliver at least 85% of the proposed project activity by mid-December 2019

How to bid?

Proposals should be presented using this Concept Bid form (attached below).

Each institution may submit up to a maximum of 3 proposals.

Short-listed applicants will be asked to submit a full Project Proposal Form and an Activity Based Budget by 26 June. The Embassy will only follow up with short-listed applicants and will send them the relevant templates directly.

**Please send all project documents to
BritishEmbassy.Quito@fco.gov.uk**

In the subject line of the email, please indicate "BEQ Projects_NAME OF ORGANISATION" and include the project title.

The deadline for submission of Concept Notes is Friday 31 May, 2019

- 3 May – Call for bids announcement
- 31 May – Deadline for implementers to submit Concept Bid Forms
- 3 – 6 June – Proposals reviewed by the BEQ Projects Board
- 7 June – Follow-up with short-listed proposals
- 26 June – Deadline for implementers to submit Project Proposal Forms and Activity Based Budget
- 3 July – Final review of proposals by BEQ Projects Board
- 5 July – Outcome of successful bids notified to implementers

Bid guidance

- projects are funded for delivery during a single financial year running from 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2020, with no expectation of continued funding beyond this period.
- concept notes must outline how budgets are to be spent, with a clear consideration of providing value for money.

ODT, 62.8KB

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