

Press release: Business Secretary announces founding partners of £65 million battery technology research institute

- The flagship Faraday Battery Institute will bring together the best minds from 7 founding partner universities and industry to make UK global leader in battery research and technology.
- The Faraday Battery Institute, with £65 million from the Industrial Strategy Challenge Fund, is part of government's £246 million investment in battery technology through the Industrial Strategy.

Business Secretary Greg Clark has today (Monday 2 October) announced the consortium of UK universities that will form the Faraday Battery Institute, a new £65 million research institute responsible for building the UK's status as a global leader in battery research and technology.

The Institute will bring together the expertise and insight from its 7 founding partner universities, industry partners and other academic institutions to accelerate fundamental research to develop battery technologies. Ensuring the UK is well placed to take advantage of the future economic opportunities from emerging technology.

The universities forming the institute are:

- Imperial College London
- Newcastle University
- University College London
- University of Cambridge
- University of Oxford
- University of Southampton
- University of Warwick

Announcing this major investment in the UK's research base Greg Clark said:

Through the Faraday Research Challenge we are cementing our position as the 'go-to' destination for battery technology so we can exploit the global transition to a low carbon economy.

The Faraday Battery Institute will have a critical role in fostering innovative research collaboration between our world-leading universities and world-beating businesses to make this technology more accessible and more affordable.

We have huge expertise in this area already and the Faraday Battery Institute collaboration between our 7 founding universities provides a truly unique opportunity for us to bring together our

expertise and an effort in this area behind a common set of strategic goals to ensure the UK exploits the jobs and business opportunities.

With £65 million of funding through the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC), the Institute will invest an initial £13.7 million to set up a headquarters.

EPSRC Chief Executive Professor Philip Nelson said:

Climate change and moving towards low carbon economies mean the demand for clean energy production and effective energy storage, in the UK and globally, is rising.

The Faraday Institute will bring leading academics in the field of battery development together to explore novel approaches that will meet these challenges and accelerate the development of new products and techniques

EPSRC is pleased to be helping establish the Institute, and the drive to keep the UK a prosperous and productive nation.

The Business Secretary confirmed in July that the government would be making an investment of £246 million, over 4 years, in the Faraday Research Challenge to ensure the UK builds on its strengths and leads the world in the design, development and manufacture of electric batteries.

The Faraday Research Challenge is divided into 3 streams – research, innovation and scale-up which is designed to drive a step-change in transforming the UK's world-leading research into market-ready technologies that ensures economic success for the UK.

The Faraday Research Challenge is just 1 of 6 areas that the government, together with business and academia, identified through its flagship Industrial Strategy Challenge Fund (ISCF) as being one of the UK's core industrial challenges and opportunities, where research and innovation can help unlock markets and industries of the future in which the UK can become world-leading.

As part of cementing the UK as a global leader in autonomous and battery vehicles, the government will unveil shortly the winners of its first £55 million Connected and Autonomous Vehicles (CAV) testing infrastructure competition.

This follows the government opening its £100 million CAV test bed competition in April, inviting proposals for how to create a cluster of excellence in driverless car testing, along the M40 corridor between Coventry and London, to accelerate the development of this technology, grow intellectual capital and attract overseas investment in the UK.

Notes to editors

The Institute will host its administrative offices at Harwell Science and Innovation campus.

Government announced in April its first £1 billion of investment through the fund in cutting-edge technologies to create jobs and raise living standards. Other areas receiving government support through the ISCF in 2017 to 2018 include cutting edge healthcare and medicine, robotics and artificial intelligence, and satellite and space technology.

[News story: Government appoints Small Business Commissioner to champion voice of small business](#)

The appointment of the father-of-three from Birmingham marks an important step toward ensuring small businesses have the support they need to thrive and grow – a central tenet of the Government’s Industrial Strategy.

As Commissioner, Mr Uppal will lead an independent office tasked with empowering small businesses. The role will be crucial to supporting small businesses resolve disputes with larger businesses and will help drive a culture change in payment practices.

Mr Uppal and his team will provide general advice and information to small businesses on matters such as resolving disputes, including signposting small businesses to existing support and dispute resolution services, which will be delivered through the commissioner’s website. His priorities will reflect his 20-year experience as a small business owner in the real estate sector, where he saw how even sound businesses could struggle when faced with a culture of late payment by customers.

Mr Uppal said:

“Running your own business can be a very lonely experience and my priority will be ensuring small firms feel supported as well as helping to create an overall impression that business isn’t necessarily cut throat.

“In fact, successful businesses are built on integrity, entrepreneurial spirit and trusting relationships and I want to highlight that Britain can be the best place in the world for new entrepreneurs to establish and grow their own businesses.”

Business Secretary, Greg Clark, said:

“Small businesses are the backbone of our economy, providing jobs and opportunities across the country. I am delighted to announce Paul Uppal as the first Small Business Commissioner. His extensive experience as a small business owner makes him perfectly suited to champion the interests of small business and bring about a change in culture that will create a level playing field for everyone.

“Small businesses are the backbone of our economy, providing jobs and opportunities across the country. Supporting Britain’s 5.5 million small businesses is at the heart of this Government’s Industrial Strategy, and his ambition to tackle unfair payment practices will help support our goal to create an economy that works for all. I wish Paul luck in his new role, and I look forward to working with him in the future.”

The appointment of the SBC builds on the Government’s programme of support for small business, since 2010 including:

- British Business Bank programmes supporting £3.4 billion of finance to over 59,000 smaller businesses;
- over 50,000 Start-Up Loans worth almost £340 million;
- a network of 39 local growth hubs which make it easier for start-ups and existing businesses to access the support they need; and
- an additional business rates package, announced at the Spring Budget, providing £435m of further support for businesses facing significant bills in England.

The office of the Small Business Commissioner is expected to be operational by the end of 2017.

[News story: Chief Executive announcement](#)

The SSR0 Board has extended its appreciation to Marcine for her leadership of the organisation, which included successfully setting up the organisation after it was established by parliament. Marcine leaves the organisation in a strong position. Neil Swift (the SSR0’s Chief Operating Officer) has been named as Interim Chief Executive.

[Press release: Angler to pay £1,800 after unsuccessful appeal](#)

On 29 September 2017 at North Staffordshire Justice Centre, George Holland of Coppice Gardens, Stone, was ordered to pay fines and costs totalling £1,855.81 after a successful prosecution by the Environment Agency. Mr Holland was fined £660 for threatening behaviour, ordered to pay costs of £1,129.81 and a victim surcharge of £66.

Mr Holland was originally called to court on 24 April 2017 and was proved guilty in absence for 4 offences. However, the case was reopened under a statutory declaration application from the defendant where he proceeded to enter a not guilty plea.

Mr Holland faced charges of wilfully obstructing a constable in the execution of his duty, fishing without a rod licence, failing to state his name when addressed by an Environment Agency enforcement officer and using threatening, abusive or insulting words or behaviour causing that person to believe that imminent violence will be used against him.

Magistrates heard the case and again found Mr Holland guilty of all charges and issued a fine of £660 for threatening behaviour. While found guilty, he did not receive a further penalty for the additional charges. Mr Holland did not attend court on 29 September, so was again proved guilty in absence.

The offences took place on 23 August 2016 at Isaak Walton Fishery, Chebsey.

Andrew Eardley of the Environment Agency said:

It's good to see the courts taking instances of threatening behaviour against enforcement officers seriously and offenders being prosecuted. Thankfully cases where an angler is threatening are very rare; most anglers found without a licence, while not happy, admit they have been caught out.

The majority of anglers fish legally and purchase a rod licence. With an annual licence costing £30 it seems ridiculous that anglers risk a significant fine, and the very small minority feel it acceptable to threaten an enforcement officer.

Money from rod licence sales is invested in England's fisheries and is used to fund a wide range of projects to improve facilities for anglers including protecting stocks from illegal fishing, pollution and disease; restoring fish stocks through re-stocking; eradicating invasive species; and fish habitat improvements. Rod licence money is also used to fund the Angling Trust to

provide information about fishing and to encourage participation in the sport.

You need a valid Environment Agency rod licence to fish for salmon, trout, freshwater fish, smelt or eel in England. [Buying a rod licence](#) is easy.

Anyone witnessing illegal fishing incidents in progress can report it directly to the Environment Agency hotline on 0800 80 70 60. Information on illegal fishing and environmental crime can also be reported anonymously to Crime stoppers on 0800 555 111 or [online](#).

[Press release: Views sought on reward and return schemes for drinks containers](#)

The government today [invited views](#) on how reward and return schemes for drinks containers could work in England by issuing a call for evidence.

More than eight million tonnes of plastic are discarded into the world's oceans each year, putting marine wildlife under serious threat.

Up to 80% of this is estimated to have been originally lost or discarded on land before washing out to sea, and plastic bottles are a particular concern – with figures showing just 57% of those sold in the UK in 2016 collected for recycling.

This compares to a record 90% of deposit-marked cans and bottles that were returned to dedicated recycling facilities in Denmark, and a return rate of almost 80% of beverage containers in South Australia, both of which have a form of deposit return scheme.

To improve these numbers and increase recycling, Environment Secretary Michael Gove has asked organisations and individuals to share their views with the government on the advantages and disadvantages of different types of reward and return schemes for plastic, metal and glass drinks containers that could help reduce the number of bottles entering our waterways.

The call for evidence opens today for four weeks and ministers have asked the Voluntary and Economic Incentives Working Group, set up as part of the [Litter Strategy](#), to accelerate its work and report back early in the New Year.

Environment Secretary Michael Gove said:

We must protect our oceans and marine life from plastic waste if we are to be the first generation to leave our environment in a better

state than we found it.

That means tackling the rise in plastic bottles entering our waters by making it simpler and easier to recycle and dispose of them appropriately.

Today we are launching a call for evidence to help us understand how reward and return schemes for plastic bottles and other drinks containers could work in England.

This approach has already seen great success in other countries such as Denmark in curbing plastic pollution and we want to hear people's ideas on how we could make it work in England.

This adds to the progress we have already made in cleaning up our oceans by significantly reducing plastic bag use and drawing up one of the world's toughest bans on plastic microbeads.

The evidence submitted will be examined by the government's working group which includes brand and retail giants such as Coca Cola and Tesco.

This builds on successful waste initiatives already launched by the government, including the [5p plastic bag charge](#) which has seen enormous success in changing consumer behaviour by reducing use by 83 per cent.

Some nine billion fewer carrier bags have been distributed since the charge was introduced, with more than £95million raised donated to environmental, educational and other good causes.

In addition, legislation for the government's [ban on microbeads](#) – welcomed by campaigners as one of the toughest in the world – will be introduced later this year and we are now assessing how best to tackle other sources of microplastics from polluting the seas.