

# New Chief Inspector for the Branch

Press release

Andrew Hall has been appointed Chief Inspector of Rail Accidents



Simon E French OBE, the current Chief Inspector of the Rail Accident Investigation Branch, is to retire on 31 March 2022 after nearly 18 years at RAIB.

Following an open competition, Andrew Hall has been selected for the role of Chief Inspector of Rail Accidents, and will take over as from 1st April.

Andrew is a chartered electrical engineer with many years' experience in the rail sector. He has worked at RAIB since 2004 and been the Deputy Chief Inspector at RAIB since 2015.

Published 31 January 2022

---

## New funding to support sustainable future of space

- Space debris is a major threat to the satellite services we rely on
- 13 projects involve industry and academia across the UK

The UK Space Agency is providing £1.7 million for new projects to support sustainable space operations, Science Minister George Freeman announced today.

The 13 new projects will help track and remove dangerous debris in space. They include an AI-based tool which can take autonomous action to avoid a collision and another which will see multiple small spacecraft fired at

debris before taking it into the atmosphere to dispose of it.

The Science Minister, UK Space Agency CEO Paul Bate and representatives from the UK space sector met at the Harwell Space Cluster in Oxfordshire to discuss the sustainable future of the space environment today (Monday 31 January).

Orbital congestion created by space debris is one of the biggest global challenges facing the space sector. There are currently an estimated 330 million pieces of space debris, including 36,500 objects bigger than 10cm, such as old satellites, spent rocket bodies and even tools dropped by astronauts orbiting Earth.

Space debris can stay in orbit for hundreds of years and present a real danger to the rapidly increasing number of new satellites being launched each year which provide vital services, including communications and climate change monitoring.

Science Minister George Freeman said:

Like debris on Everest, the first generation of space exploration and satellite launch has left millions of pieces of dangerous satellite fragments and 4,000 redundant satellites in orbit.

As our reliance on satellites for everyday activity grows, and the UK becomes a leading hub of small satellite design, manufacturing and launch this year via Virgin Orbit in Cornwall, this debris now poses a serious threat to our £16 billion space sector.

That's why we have made debris mitigation and removal – and the long-term importance of space sustainability – key elements of our National Space Strategy.

These projects will help put the UK at the forefront of both protecting the space environment for future activity, and accelerating UK technology leadership.

The UK's National Space Strategy set out a bold vision for the sector and recognises the need for the UK to lead in making space safe and sustainable. The new funding supports the development of underlying technology or data processing capabilities for space surveillance and tracking to support the removal of orbital debris.

In the past two years the UK Space Agency has provided £2.7 million for UK industry and academia to develop new technology for Space Surveillance and Tracking (SST) and debris removal, as well as investing around £16 million on space sustainability through the European Space Agency in 2019.

The UK is the largest contributor to ESA's Space Safety Programme. This new funding comes from a joint call from the UK Space Agency's Space Surveillance and Tracking and National Space Technology Programme.

Managing Director, Astroscale Ltd and Co-Chair of the IOSM Working Group, UKspace, John Auburn said:

We need to act now to build the UK's capability with the right level of UK investment; enhanced UK regulation and policy; supply chain development, and international partnerships. The In-orbit Servicing and Manufacturing (IOSM) working group, part of UKspace, is comprised of more than 65 members.

This rapidly expanding group is driving forward a shared vision to gain first leader commercial advantage in the in-orbit servicing and manufacturing sector. We must accelerate our efforts to secure a safe and sustainable space environment and see it as a natural extension of the Earth's environment. This will help to protect vital services, including those monitoring climate change, weather forecasting, disaster management and digital services for citizens and ensure we can provide them for generations to come.

In 2021 the UK Space Agency worked with the UN Office for Outer Space Affairs (UNOOSA) to support the next stage of international efforts to promote space sustainability and provided funding to research a UK-led mission to remove junk from space.

---

## **UK announces new sanctions against Myanmar ahead of 1-year anniversary of coup**

- new UK sanctions against military regime enforced in joint action with allies
- three individuals targeted for their involvement in undermining democracy and the rule of law
- Foreign Secretary condemns the military coup and calls for return to democracy

Announced on the eve of the 1-year anniversary of the military coup in Myanmar, the UK has designated new sanctions against 3 key members of the regime who have been instrumental in suppressing democracy and stifling opposition voices.

In coordination with the United States and Canada, new sanctions will be brought against:

- Dr Thida Oo, Myanmar Attorney General

- U Thein Soe, Chair of the Union Election Commission
- U Tin Oo, the Chair of the Anti-Corruption Commission

All 3 individuals are responsible for disregarding the Myanmar election results in November 2020 and supporting unsubstantiated claims of electoral fraud in an attempt to legitimise the coup.

The Attorney General and Anti-Corruption Commission Chair are also responsible for stifling pro-democracy groups across the country and overseeing the sentencing of democratically elected leaders, including Aung San Suu Kyi and President Win Myint, on trumped-up charges.

Foreign Secretary Liz Truss said:

Over the last year, the military regime has attempted to terrorise the people of Myanmar into submission. Through fear and violence, they have created division and conflict.

The UK will always defend the right to freedom, democracy and the rule of law. With like-minded nations, we will hold to account this suppressive, brutal regime.

This latest round of sanctions will freeze the assets of these individuals and enforce a travel ban preventing them coming to the UK. They come on top of previous designations on dozens of individuals as well as businesses and business networks to limit the junta's access to finance.

The designations demonstrate the UK's commitment to target the junta's personal, political and financial interests as they continue to perpetrate violence and refuse to engage with the democratic wishes of the people of Myanmar.

The UK is working with international partners to speak out for the Myanmar people, push for the full implementation of the ASEAN Five Point Consensus, stem the flow of arms to the regime and ensure the perpetrators of human rights violations are held accountable.

Since the coup, the UK has also provided £49.4 million to support those in need of humanitarian assistance in Myanmar, deliver health and education for the most vulnerable, and promote rights and freedoms. This funding is delivered through trusted aid agencies and partners, rather than through the junta.

Our humanitarian programmes have reached over 600,000 people, providing lifesaving water, sanitation and food.

---

# Nadine Dorries' Opinion Piece for the Daily Express

This article was originally published in the print version of the [Daily Express](#)

The countdown is on. In exactly six months' time, athletes from all over the world will be heading to the UK for one of the biggest events in the sporting calendar.. The Birmingham Commonwealth Games is officially set to be the most popular in history, with over 1 million tickets sold. And that's not even mentioning the 1.5 billion people who will tune in from around the globe. It's going to be the sporting highlight of what promises to be an incredible summer.

Every now and then, the UK gets to experience a summer like this – one of those rare years when there's a special buzz in the air; when the whole country pulls together, and we let our hair down and celebrate.

For me, 2012 was that kind of year. It was a summer of the London Olympic and Paralympic Games and the Diamond Jubilee, of gold medals and volunteer armies and street pageants. I can still remember that hum of anticipation across the country as we headed into both events – and the sense of achievement when we pulled them both off in style. In the aftermath, 2012 was voted year of the century: Brits said it brought them closer to family and friends, and that it had sparked more national pride in them than any other year in living memory.

2022 promises to be the same.

In fact, we're going one better this time round. It's quite an achievement for a monarch to reach their Diamond Jubilee. But this year, the Queen will be marking her Platinum: 70 years of devoted service to the nation. On the first weekend of June, the entire country will come together to mark the special occasion, with four days of street parties and pageants and a Platinum Party at the Palace.

It will be a nationwide celebration – and each and every one of us will also get to play our own small part in the history books, as we witness a genuinely momentous occasion for the country. No British monarch has ever reached 70 years on the throne.

We'll also have a nationwide celebration of creativity throughout the year, with the Unboxed: Creativity in the UK – a £120 million festival that will inspire the next generation of artists and innovators. And at the end of July, the Birmingham Commonwealth Games will officially open. The Games are on time, and on budget, with over 40,000 applicants to join our army of volunteers. Every time we host such sporting occasions, we prove yet again that we're one of the best countries in the world for major events.

This isn't just about sport. In the West Midlands, we'll be witnessing

levelling up in real time. Birmingham and the wider region are benefitting from a £778 million investment to stage these Games, and a proportion of that money is being used to build world-class sporting facilities for the entire community. I visited the Sandwell Aquatics Centre last week to mark the filling of the official Games pool, and saw the work on the exercise facilities and football pitch that are being built alongside it. Those are the kind of everyday amenities that make a community a great place to live – and they will be there years after the final 2022 medal has been draped over the neck of an athlete.

We've had an incredibly difficult couple of years. We've sheltered and isolated, we've made huge sacrifices to protect others. We've vaccinated and boosted, and as a result, we now have one of the strongest and most open economies in Europe. We've got a lot to be proud of – a lot to look forward to in 2022. It promises to be not just a golden year for the UK, but a platinum one.

---

## [Strategic priorities and cross-sectoral opportunities for the utilities sectors: open letter to regulators](#)

Government recognises the importance of strong and independent economic regulators that can leverage deep sectoral expertise and use regulation consistently and proportionately to promote a transparent and coherent landscape for businesses, investors, and consumers. This experience and understanding are now more important than ever, as we look to seize the new regulatory opportunities open to the UK following our departure from the EU.

Today the government has set out 5 new regulatory principles, in support of the approach set out in our 'Plan for Growth.' The government will ensure the UK is the best regulated advanced economy in the world, and to seize the opportunities of leaving the EU to deliver a better regulatory settlement for businesses, investors, and consumers. Our job is to use regulation to empower people, in their work, their businesses and their personal lives, and our regulators are key to achieving this by embedding the following new principles: A sovereign approach; leading from the front; proportionality; recognising what works; and setting high standards at home and globally.

These new regulatory principles are focused on promoting growth and innovation, and we want to ensure the critical work of the regulators is aligned with this government's economic strategy. We therefore want to use this opportunity to set out our overarching ambitions for the three major

utilities across three outcomes: promoting growth; delivering a fair deal for consumers; and fostering sustainability. We also expect the UK Regulators Network to continue playing a critical role in facilitating greater collaboration across the sectors where appropriate.

To note, this letter is intended to complement existing sector specific guidance to regulators. We have copied Andrea Coscelli to recognise the key role that the CMA have to play in the economic regulation framework.

In the [Plan for Growth](#), the government committed to focus on infrastructure, skills, and innovation to deliver an expanding economy and build back better and greener. We believe that economic regulators are essential to this effort.

## **Competition**

In the [2011 Principles for Economic Regulation](#), the government stated that, in the long run, competitive markets are the best way to deliver services to consumers and provide incentives to invest, improve efficiency and enhance service quality. We stand by this assessment. For the design and delivery of infrastructure, we continue to see competition as the most reliable means of promoting growth, efficiency, and innovation in the regulated sectors.

We are supportive of you removing new strategic investments from the standard price control process, where appropriate, and opening them up for competition as we believe this enables a stable regulatory environment and gives infrastructure providers the confidence to deliver long-term projects in an innovative and efficient way. For example, Direct Procurement for Customers in the water sector has the potential to create new opportunities for investors, promote innovation, and drive down overall net costs for consumers. In other areas, such as offshore electricity transmission, competition has delivered savings of between £680 million and £1.1 billion over 3 tender rounds (see Cambridge Economic Policy Associates, [Evaluation of OFT0 Tender Round 2 and 3 Benefits](#)).

We are grateful for your ongoing efforts to identify opportunities for competition to drive investment, innovation and lower prices for consumers, but believe more could be done. We welcome Ofgem's consultation looking to introduce greater competition in onshore electricity transmission networks and believe Ofcom's formal market review process has proved particularly effective in unlocking competition in their sector. We would like to see Ofwat undertake a similar, high-level, stocktake by Spring 2022, to identify both opportunities and barriers to unlocking more competition in strategic investment. Where appropriate, this will feed into a forthcoming consultation on economic regulation, which we expect to be published in 2022.

## **Investment and Innovation**

Investment plays a vital role in achieving the UK's infrastructure ambitions, with over £13 billion additional investment needed each year across the utilities in order to achieve net zero and increase resilience by 2050 and deploy the latest technology (see National Infrastructure Commission,

[Strategic Investment and Public Confidence](#) p.5). You have played an enabling role in the introduction of cutting-edge products and services in your sectors and expect you to continue do so through innovative regulation. We greatly welcome further exploration of regulatory sandboxes to incubate new business models and services, and encourage the facilitation of schemes to harness the power of industry and customer data to improve market outcomes.

In the [National Infrastructure Strategy](#), we committed to maintaining a clear and enduring economic regulatory framework for investors and businesses; one that can support growth by enabling the major investment needed over the decades to come for the benefit of present and future consumers. In turn, it is essential that regulators ensure that efficient and necessary investments and innovation are incentivised by a reasonable return, subject to the normal risks inherent in markets.

We recognise that regulatory independence and the predictability of the price control process is fundamental to maintaining a stable regulatory environment for investment. We also understand that the regulated sectors are different and require distinct approaches; however, we believe that there are areas where greater regulatory consistency could be beneficial in promoting a transparent environment for companies and investors. We therefore expect you to work together on the common challenges you face in setting the periodic cost of capital. To this end, we welcome the role of the UKRN in facilitating co-operation and increasing consistency via their newly established Weighted Average Cost of Capital (WACC) Taskforce. The government expects the regulators, via the UKRN taskforce, to work towards alignment where clear benefits can be identified. This would include, where appropriate, consistency in three areas with regards to calculation of the WACC:

- where common components of WACC methodologies are not influenced by sector-specific variables, there is a strong case for alignment on methodologies, input data and, ultimately the output used in the WACC calculation itself
- where sectoral circumstances, for example sector-specific financial data, often lead to justified variation in outputs but where there may be greater scope for consistency in methodologies between sectors
- where different sector regulators include components in their WACC methodologies that are not used in other sectors, regulators could examine the case for greater alignment

## **Delivering a fair deal for consumers**

Utilities provide an essential service; therefore regulators must ensure value for money and provide a fair deal for all consumers.

### **Fairness**

The National Infrastructure Strategy committed to taking a long-term approach to investment. Facilitating efficient long-term investment will benefit all consumers through improved services and increased resilience to long-term challenges. Regulators must therefore share the costs of the long-term



investment between the consumers of today and tomorrow at a price they can afford. We would like regulators to work together, through the UKRN, to jointly consider effective means to support long-term investment within and across sectors that delivers improved outcomes for consumers overall. You should aim to identify opportunities where the facilitation of greater coordination and investment across sectors could help to minimise costs or improve services across the whole system. This should complement ongoing work within and across regulators to ensure the general affordability of consumer's essential bills.

In relation to costs and service provision, we expect regulators to ensure the provision of transparent information for consumers to boost engagement, shape understanding and enable informed choices. Where appropriate, we support the implementation of Smart Data Schemes that provide innovative services for consumers, saving them time, money and effort, with a view to increasing coordination across sectors as schemes develop.

## **Vulnerable consumers**

Providing a fair deal for all consumers must include a particular focus on protecting the vulnerable. In most cases, vulnerable consumers face similar issues across all sectors including difficulties with accessing sufficient information, finding the best deals, and making payments. We appreciate the attention you have all paid to these issues to date, and trust that you will continue to focus on improving the experience and support available for vulnerable consumers. The UKRN has an important role in facilitating meaningful co-operation between regulators on cross-cutting initiatives, such as improving the use of data to help identify vulnerable consumers, and we welcome the continuation of an ongoing dialogue between companies, regulators, and the government on these issues.

We are grateful to you and all at your respective organisations for your continuing hard work and dedication and look forward to working with you and supporting you in realising this strategic vision over the coming years.

## **Fostering sustainability**

As set out in the Prime Minister's [Ten Point Plan for a Green Industrial Revolution](#), the government is committed to addressing the climate challenge to deliver a greener, more resilient, sustainable path for the future. With consideration of your duties, we see an important task for regulators in supporting this transition, particularly where the market will not, ensuring that companies have certainty to invest strategically, opportunities to innovate are maximised, and overall costs to consumers are commensurate with the interests of both current and future generations.

## **Resilience**

Society and the economy are particularly reliant on utilities infrastructure services effectively dealing with both acute shocks and longer-term challenges such as the impacts of climate change or emerging technology. As

demonstrated by the development of the National Resilience Strategy , we are committed to improving long-term resilience across the UK. We encourage you all to consider resilience in decisions to support investment and seek opportunities to test, adapt and transform infrastructure to maintain resilience and security of supply and reduce the risks of security compromises whilst also meeting new challenges, including net zero.

## **Net zero**

In 2019, the UK became the first major economy to implement a legally binding net zero target, committing to meet this by 2050. The [Net Zero Strategy](#) emphasises the importance of a net zero aligned regulatory environment. The government recognises that regulators play a key role in incentivising green innovation and investment and providing clear signals to underpin green public and business choices. To this end, we encourage you to consider the impacts of your decisions on emissions and the environment. To support this, we are asking that you review your regulatory framework for its compatibility with our Net Zero Strategy pathways to 2050 and our interim carbon budgets, reporting back by Summer 2022.

Moreover, as outlined in the [Ten Point Plan for a Green Industrial Revolution](#), infrastructure investment is also fundamental to achieving net zero. You will play a critical role in encouraging competition and innovation to secure the new infrastructure investment needed to meet this target, as well as supporting the decarbonisation of existing infrastructure. We encourage the UKRN to play an active role in sharing net zero best practice – including on how to accelerate the deployment of existing technologies and advance the innovation of new ones – promoting a whole-systems approach where appropriate.

## **Environment**

The combined pressures of climate change, urbanisation and population growth are accelerating the decline of biodiversity. The government has committed to halting biodiversity loss by 2030 and expects regulators to challenge companies to take appropriate steps to protect and enhance the natural environment. We support the efforts to extend investment in natural assets and their management, where appropriate, to increase resilience, support environmental protection and better adapt and protect our communities.

Yours sincerely

**Rt Hon Kwasi Kwarteng MP**  
**Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy**

## **Related content and references**

1. [Economic regulation policy paper](#)
2. HM Treasury, [Build Back Better: Our Plan for Growth](#) (2021)
3. Department for Business Innovation and Skills, [Principles for Economic](#)

[Regulation](#) (2011)

4. Cambridge Economic Policy Associates Ltd, [Evaluation of OFT0 Tender Round 2 and 3 Benefits](#) (2016)

5. The National Infrastructure Commission, [Strategic Investment and Public Confidence](#) p.5 (2019)

6. HM Treasury, [The National Infrastructure Strategy](#) (2020)

7. BEIS and 10 Downing Street, [The ten point plan for a green industrial revolution](#) (2020)

8. HM Government, [The Net Zero Strategy: Build Back Greener](#) (2021)

9. Cabinet Office, [Resilience Strategy call for evidence](#), 2021