

Minister for Asia travels to Cambodia to build ties with new ASEAN Chair

Press release

Amanda Milling has completed a two-day visit to Cambodia to build closer ties with the country as it takes over as Chair of ASEAN for 2022.



Minister Milling visits the Royal Academy of Cambodia in Phnom Penh.

Minister for Asia, Amanda Milling, has completed a two-day visit to Cambodia to build closer ties with the country as it takes over as Chair of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) for 2022.

Milling is the first Minister from an ASEAN Dialogue Partner to visit Cambodia since the country took over from Brunei as Chair earlier this month. She is also the first UK Minister to visit the country since the UK secured Dialogue Partner status with ASEAN in 2021.

Minister for Asia Amanda Milling said:

Cambodia will be a vital partner for the UK in 2022 as we seek an ever-closer relationship with our ASEAN friends.

Coming to Phnom Penh as my first visit of the year demonstrates our commitment to boosting ties and working with Cambodia to solve some of the region's biggest challenges from building back better from COVID-19 to resolving the crisis in Myanmar and climate change.

The Minister held talks with senior members of the Cambodian government. She met Foreign Minister Prak Sokhonn, who is also the new ASEAN Special Envoy to Myanmar, for a discussion on forging closer cooperation on shared challenges and working together to further UK-ASEAN relations.

Discussions also took place with Minister for Education Hangchuon Naron on

improving girls' education and Minister for Environment Samal Say to build on progress made at COP26 in Glasgow.

The Minister also met Dr Sok Touch, President of the Royal Academy of Cambodia and Dr Kin Phea, Director of the Institute of International Relations for a discussion on ASEAN and wider regional issues.

While in Phnom Penh, the Minister hosted a roundtable with human rights organisations, met British businesses working in the country and met opposition politician Kem Sokha.

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[Hundreds of thousands of pupils benefit from tutoring](#)

Hundreds of thousands of children across the country benefited from catch up tutoring in the first term of the academic year, [new figures](#) from the Department for Education reveal today (Tuesday 11 January).

Over 300,000 tutoring courses began last term, nearing the total figure for the previous academic year, keeping the [National Tutoring Programme](#) on track to deliver the ambitious target of two million courses this academic year.

Of the 302,000 courses which began last term, an estimated 230,000 were provided through the new, school-led tutoring pillar, showing that the introduction of greater flexibility for schools in providing tutoring is proving powerful in making sure the programme is reaching as many young people as possible.

The government's ambitious education recovery plan includes investment of almost £5 billion, including £1.5 billion for tutoring, but the best way for young people to catch up on any missed learning is to make sure they are in school, learning face to face, and last week saw millions of children across the country return to classrooms to be with teachers and friends.

Schools Minister Robin Walker said:

We are now seeing the real reach and impact of the unprecedented investment this government is making in supporting children's education recovery. Every pupil – wherever they live – should be supported to get back on track and reach their potential, and that's what this tutoring programme is doing.

We know there is still work to do, but it's hugely encouraging to

see so many students from all backgrounds have been directly reached through the government's tutoring programme, and I encourage all schools to take advantage of it.

A further 52,000 courses began through Tuition Partners and an estimated 20,000 pupils have started packages through the Academic Mentor pillar of the programme. The government is working closely with Randstad and the sector to make sure these numbers continue to rise and tutoring continues to reach the students who need it.

As schools manage the higher than expected absence among staff and pupils, the National Tutoring Programme will continue to offer access to tutoring through all three strands for the remainder of this academic year to ensure schools have greatest possible flexibility in offering pupils the support they need, including access to online tutoring.

The Department has also today published [research](#) conducted with primary and secondary schools to understand how schools have responded to the impacts of the pandemic.

According to the research, schools faced complex challenges in the autumn 2020 term, relating to pupils' academic progress, wellbeing, and behaviour, as well as managing ongoing to Covid-19 restrictions. Schools responded to these by employing varying strategies targeting specific groups, such as those who had fallen behind in their learning, disadvantaged pupils, pupils with SEND, or transition year groups.

Evidence suggests that small group tuition can boost progress by an average of two months in secondary schools and four months in primary schools. By providing high-quality tuition to pupils through the NTP, we want to extend this catch-up opportunity to pupils whose education has been impacted the most by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The £5 billion investment in education recovery is in addition to the significant increases in core schools funding being delivered over the next three years, including a boost of £4 billion – or five per cent per pupil in real terms – next year alone.

[People to have their say on Arundel bypass as updated A27 plans go on show](#)

The A27 connects many coastal communities and serves a combined population of more than one million people; it is essential to those who live and work in the area. The plans will help improve journeys for tens of thousands of drivers using the A27 around Arundel, the only section of single carriageway

between Worthing and the New Forest. The plans will also protect Arundel's historic town centre and draw long distance traffic away from other, less suitable roads through the South Downs National Park.

The grey route, which was chosen in October 2020, includes creating a new dual carriageway to join up the two existing sections either side of Arundel and will help to reduce journey times, improve reliability and make the road safer.

National Highways Arundel Bypass senior project manager Andrew Jackson said:

We have worked hard on these plans since the announcement of the grey route in 2020. These plans will tackle one of the biggest traffic bottlenecks in the South-East and will improve journeys for thousands of drivers on the A27, not only in and around Arundel but along the whole south coast.

As well as being a traffic bottleneck, the existing A27 between the Crossbush and Fontwell East junctions experiences an above average number of accidents compared with other rural A-roads.

Arundel is a special place and has a unique cultural heritage which is rightly protected. We have worked hard on the plans over the past 15 months and assessed the route in greater detail so that people can see and understand all the factors that needed to be assessed and how the scheme has been designed to fit into the landscape. There is now much more detail available – I encourage people to look at the detailed consultation brochure and the flythrough to get an in-depth overview of where the main improvements have been made.

The whole point of this statutory consultation is to talk to people and hear feedback on our plans. All the information is available online to allow people to better understand how the scheme will affect them and my team and I will be out at public events over the coming weeks ready to answer people's questions.

The plans for upgrading the A27 at Arundel will also feature a combination of improvements along the existing road through the South Downs National Park and Arundel.

The grey route features new bridges spanning the River Arun, over the Arun Valley Railway and over Binsted Rife, as well as a new junction at Crossbush, finally putting an end to the 'road to nowhere' junction.

Under the plans, around 8km (4.9 miles) of new dual carriageway will be created to the south of the existing A27, from Crossbush to Fontwell roundabout. Around 6.6km (4.1 miles) of the existing A27 will be de-trunked.

National Highways is holding 12 information exhibitions at venues across the area in addition to six 'live chats' throughout January and February so that

people can examine the proposals and put any questions directly to project team. Documents will also be available to view at several locations in the area.

You can find details of the proposals, document inspection locations and feedback forms at our [A27 Arundel bypass virtual exhibition](#) from today until the consultation ends on 8 March 2022.

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

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

[Slough Borough Council: Commissioner appointment letters](#)

Copies of letters from Max Soule, Deputy Director, Local Government Stewardship at Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities to:

- Max Caller CBE confirming his appointment as Lead Commissioner at Slough Borough Council
- Margaret Lee confirming her appointment as Finance Commissioner at Slough Borough Council
- Gavin Jones confirming his appointment as Assistant Commissioner at Slough Borough Council

The letters confirm the commissioners' roles and responsibilities, established by the Directions issued under section 15 (5) and (6) of the Local Government Act 1999.

[Office of Tax Simplification advertises new part time vacancies](#)

News story

The OTS is looking for tax professionals to join its team.



The OTS is currently looking to recruit 2-3 part time tax professionals who have current or recent private sector experience to join the team.

You can find out more about these posts and apply [here](#).

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