

# UK on closure of the OSCE Border Observer Mission

Thank you Madam Chairperson. Ambassador Varga we are grateful to you for briefing the Permanent Council and for your final report on the activities of the OSCE Observer Mission.

As your report outlines, from when the Observer Mission opened in July 2014 to when it closed on 30 September this year, it provided valuable reporting on the situation on the ground at two checkpoints along the Ukrainian-Russian state border, despite severe restrictions placed upon it by its Russian host. To provide just a few examples, in that period the Mission reported 39,487 people crossing the border in military-style outfits, as well as 100 Russian so-called 'humanitarian convoys' crossing in to Ukraine through the Donetsk border check point.

We note that since the Observer Mission closed, the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine observed on 14 October a convoy of 12 covered cargo trucks with Russian Federation license plates in non-government controlled Donetsk region and a convoy of 10 covered cargo trucks with Russian flags in non-government controlled Luhansk region. These convoys cross into Ukraine without Ukraine's permission, or inspection by Ukrainian border guards, violating its sovereignty. This example clearly highlights the importance of comprehensive independent monitoring along the entirety of the Ukrainian-Russian state border outside of government control, which the closure of the OSCE Observer Mission represents a step away from.

The UK continues to deplore Russia's decision to unilaterally close the Observer Mission, which has reduced the reporting that the international community receives on the security situation in eastern Ukraine and hinders the OSCE's ability to provide necessary transparency and confidence building measures in the region.

We remind Russia once again that as a signatory to the Minsk agreements, including the 2014 Minsk Protocol, it has committed to ensuring permanent monitoring of the Ukrainian-Russian state border and verification by the OSCE. We join the many calls made on Russia in this council to engage in good faith in efforts to enhance OSCE monitoring at the border to fulfil this commitment under the Minsk Protocol.

Finally, I would like to pass on the UK's immense gratitude to Ambassador Varga, your team and everyone who has previously worked for the OSCE Observer Mission for your dedication over the last seven years. We recognise the additional challenges the shortened two-month mandate period, as well as the closure of the Mission, resulted in for Mission members in their professional and private lives. We are grateful to the Mission for its professionalism, hard work and reporting, in these very difficult circumstances. We wish you success in your next endeavours.

I take this opportunity to reiterate the UK's unwavering support for Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity, within its internationally recognised borders, including its territorial waters. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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## [Record number of local authorities join Local Land Charges Register](#)

News story

Six more local authorities have migrated onto HM Land Registry's Local Land Charges Register.



In October 2021, Redditch, Bromsgrove, Tameside, Newark and Sherwood, Hambleton and Blackburn with Darwen all joined the Local Land Charges (LLC) Register. This is the highest number of local authorities to have joined in one month.

This significant achievement is a product of acceleration in local authority migrations. These latest migrations also mark the one millionth local land charge added to the register and brings the total number of migrated local authorities to 24.

Mark Kelso, Local Land Charges Programme Director at HM Land Registry, said:

Migrating 6 local authorities in one month is a significant achievement and really shows how the LLC programme is gathering pace. These most recent migrations mean that people buying property in these areas will now have access to instant LLC search results. We are working hard with local authorities across England and Wales to ensure property buyers can obtain the information they need quickly, making the conveyancing process simpler for everyone.

You will now need to get LLC searches from HM Land Registry for the local authority area of:

- Bromsgrove District Council
- Redditch Borough Council
- Tameside Metropolitan Borough Council
- Newark and Sherwood District Council
- Hambleton District Council
- Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council

HM Land Registry is working in partnership with local authorities across England and Wales to migrate their local land charges data to a central, digital register. Once migrated, anyone will be able to get instant online search results using the [Search for Local Land Charges](#) service.

HM Land Registry's business customers can use their existing portal and Business Gateway channels or their usual search providers to access local land charges data for those local authorities which have migrated.

Customers will need to continue to submit CON29 enquiries to the local authority.

For more information, read about the [Local Land Charges Programme](#).

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## [Restoring Your Railway: new winners announced, as government returns lost railway connections to level up communities](#)

- the [Autumn Budget](#) announced 13 bids set to receive up to £50,000 to drive forward restoring rail services and stations
- further funding announced for the first round of projects developed by the Ideas Fund, including £7 million to continue development of the Waterside Line and £5 million for Wellington and Cullompton stations
- comes as services are set to return on the Dartmoor Line for the first time in 50 years, a major success for the [Restoring Your Railway programme](#)

Towns and communities across England and Wales left isolated when their railways were closed are one step closer to having their connections restored, as part of the government's Restoring Your Railway programme.

The Autumn Budget has confirmed that [13 more projects have been awarded up to £50,000 each to progress their plans to reinstate stations and restore lines.](#)

More than 50 years since the railways were radically reshaped during the infamous Beeching cuts of the 1960s, when thousands of miles of both track and stations were closed, this latest investment will kick-start development on more projects that have potential to reinvigorate local economies and level up opportunity across the country.

Projects awarded funding include:

- restoring the Don Valley Line between Sheffield and Stocksbridge in Yorkshire to regular passenger services
- reconnecting the Staffordshire town of Leek to the rail network with the Stoke-Leek line
- restarting the connection between Stockport and Ashton in the north-west
- rebuilding the line between Tavistock and Bere Alston in Devon, connecting Tavistock and Plymouth by rail

Two projects from round one of the Restoring Your Railway Ideas Fund are also being funded to progress with further development work: the Waterside line (Southampton to Fawley via Hythe) and Wellington and Cullompton Stations in Somerset and Devon respectively. Other projects are under consideration as the initial ideas development work is completed and assessed.

Transport Secretary Grant Shapps said:

Our efforts to undo the damage of the Beeching closures are gathering pace, with work on new stations and lines that can level up communities right across the UK.

I share the enthusiasm and ambition of local campaigners across the country pushing for their local lines to be reopened and this additional funding will help progress many more schemes.

With the Dartmoor Line opening in the coming days, we're already laying tracks across the country and connecting communities for the first time in decades.

These latest projects will receive a share of the third round of the Restoring Your Railway 'Ideas Fund', to help progress plans to deliver new routes and improved connectivity, as well as developing plans for new stations. Projects that show strong promise will be funded further, with a focus on accelerating the delivery of schemes to ensure communities see benefits as quickly as possible.

Entries have been specifically judged on their ability to deliver real economic benefits and support left-behind communities, with investment targeted at schemes with the potential to regenerate local economies by opening up access to jobs and education, supporting new housing developments and boosting tourism

Winners announced include the Waterside Line, receiving a further £7 million of investment for development for the next stage in development following success in round one of the Ideas Fund. This scheme could see services reintroduced between Southampton and Fawley, providing faster journey times and help support a shift to more sustainable modes of transport, while supporting employment opportunities and new homes being built locally.

The area saw its rail links cut in 1966 and local roads have since become heavily congested.

The development of new stations at Wellington and Cullompton, following closures in the 1960s, could see stations added to connect communities in Somerset and Devon. With a further £5 million of funding announced, these stations have potential to open up a credible alternative to the car for residents, relieving congestion on the M5 and A38. The stations would also support nearly 10,000 new homes that are planned for the area.

The Beeching cuts saw tracks ripped up or grassed over, iconic viaducts and bridges left without a purpose and communities set adrift. Initially proposed by British Rail chief Dr Richard Beeching in 1963, passenger services were ended on around a third of the rail network, with more than 2,300 stations closed and up to 5,000 miles of track axed across the UK.

Over the past year, proposals from MPs alongside local authorities, communities and campaigners, for the third round of the 'Ideas Fund' were considered by an expert panel, chaired by the Rail Minister Chris Heaton-Harris and including Network Rail Chair Sir Peter Hendy.

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## [Annual oil and gas conference explores low carbon energy opportunities in Ashgabat](#)

World news story

An annual oil and gas conference happening in Ashgabat on 27 and 28 October has brought together over 100 companies and international organisations.



Featuring prominently in this year's discussions are efforts to reduce the environmental impact of energy production and consumption and advancing the transition to cleaner energy production from renewable sources.

Representing the UK government, Baroness Nicholson, Prime Minister's Trade Envoy stressed the importance of clean energy and urged companies to adopt the latest technological achievements on reducing emissions in her pre-recorded speech.

Speaking to the media, the British Embassy's Chargé d'Affaires Mr John Hamilton called on the companies and countries operate in a clean and efficient manner and to commit to net zero. He highlighted the crucial UN climate change conference COP26 in Glasgow where world leaders will meet to agree action to tackle the threat of global climate change.

With COP26 opening in few days-time, leaders stepping up with more commitments has never been more urgent. As the fourth largest emitters of methane according to the International Energy Agency, we hope the government of Turkmenistan will also commit to ambitious 2030 emissions reduction targets and to set out credible implementation plans. Recent announcement made by the government of Turkmenistan to build its first ever hydrogen production plant at an oil refinery in Turkmenbashi was the right step forward in terms of transition to the future of energy with much reduced CO2 emissions, said the British Chargé d'Affaires.

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## [Construction company fails to pay recruitment agencies](#)

News story

The Official Receiver is seeking out creditors of Pazhar Zvezdy Ltd, previously known as ASA UK Development Limited, who may not be aware the company is in compulsory liquidation.



Construction company Pazhar Zvezdy Ltd (Company number 11573761) was wound-up in the public interest in the High Court on 7 September 2021 and the Official Receiver, Catherine Hudson, was appointed as the Liquidator.

The company traded as a residential and commercial construction company and following complaints was the subject of confidential investigations by the Insolvency Service.

Enquiries uncovered that Pazhar Zvezdy Ltd would submit duplicate timesheets on behalf of their workers to multiple construction recruitment agencies contracted for their payroll services. But once the workers received payments, Pazhar Zvezdy Ltd failed to pay the recruitment agencies for their payroll services.

The Official Receiver is aware of multiple creditors who may be owed money in the liquidation and may not know about the company's insolvency as Pazhar Zvezdy Ltd changed its name from ASA UK Development Limited earlier in the same year.

Catherine Hudson, Official Receiver, said:

We are aware of multiple creditors who are potentially owed money in the liquidation. But due to the name change cannot locate details of this company easily.

If you believe you are owed money by Pazhar Zvezdy Ltd or ASA UK Development Limited, we want to hear from you as our job is to realise the assets of the company in the interests of its creditors.

To contact the Official Receiver: [PIU.OR@insolvency.gov.uk](mailto:PIU.OR@insolvency.gov.uk)

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