

UK Government Minister makes Islands Deal visit

UK Government Minister for Scotland David Duguid this week (Wed 18 Aug) visited the Outer Hebrides to look at tourism proposals for historical St Kilda as part of the Islands Growth Deal.

He met with Iain Buchanan, Chairman and Director of Ionad Hiort, the St Kilda Centre. Through the Outer Hebrides Destination Development programme, the organisation is involved in Slighe Hiort – the St Kilda trail.

Comprising three state-of-the-art visitor centres – one at Uig on Lewis, one on the South of Harris, and another on North Uist – the proposed trail would increase tourism and bring associated revenue and employment prospects to the area.

Minister Duguid said:

After hearing about the St Kilda project last year, visiting the area today has given me a real sense of its potential. Its ambitions encapsulate so much of what the Islands Deal will achieve – to boost the local economy, create employment opportunities and, in the case of this project, put an area of such outstanding Scottish beauty and heritage firmly on the domestic and international tourist map.

Across Scotland we have committed more than £1.5 billion to Growth Deals. The Islands Deal is truly transformational and will bring investment, innovation and jobs to communities across the islands. The UK Government's £50 million investment will help unlock a more prosperous and sustainable future as we build back better and greener from the pandemic.

The St Kilda project, which like all proposals under consideration is subject to full business case approval, aims to put the islands at the forefront of the transition to Net Zero and support thriving, sustainable communities.

Minister Duguid visits the Callanish Standing Stones as part of his visit to the Outer Hebrides

The Heads of Terms agreement for the Islands Deal was signed in March confirming that both the UK and Scottish Governments will each invest £50 million in the future economic prosperity of Orkney, Shetland and the Outer Hebrides. This is anticipated to unlock a further £235 million of investment from project partners, delivering a combined £335 million boost for the

islands.

The 10-year programme of investment has the ambitious target of creating up to 1,300 jobs and tackling the depopulation concerns facing many parts of the islands.

The cluster of volcanic islands is one of only two dozen sites around the world that is a double UNESCO World Heritage site, putting it in the same category as sites such as Machu Picchu in Peru and Mount Athos in Greece.

Uninhabited since 1930, there's evidence of human inhabitants dating back more than 2000 years on St Kilda. It's home to nearly a million seabirds, including the UK's largest colony of Atlantic puffins.

Ionad Hiort Director Iain Buchanan said:

Ionad Hiort the St Kilda Centre will help sustain one of the UK's most peripheral areas with economic benefits spread throughout the Western Isles and Scotland as a whole. We are grateful for Minister Duguid's interest.

Like many UNESCO World Heritage sites, St Kilda represents a precious environment and history of human resilience. This project will allow far more people to access its story through state of the art technology in a setting that shares many of the same characteristics.

Ionad Hiort is deeply appreciative of all the invaluable help and financial support we've received from Highlands & Islands Enterprise, Bòrd na Gàidhlig and Comhairle Nan Eilean Siar over the lifespan of this project to date.

Leader of Comhairle nan Eilean Siar, Western Isles Council, Roddie Mackay, said

St Kilda's position as the UK's only dual world heritage site makes it a globally important tourism asset for the Outer Hebrides. I'm delighted that this is recognised as it's considered for the allocation of Islands Growth Deal funding for the Slighe Hiort proposals, and was very pleased to welcome the Minister to our islands.

The three community-led projects that make up the Slighe Hiort trail will bring to life different aspects of the rich and unique cultural and natural heritage of St Kilda, and enable us to tell the islands' story to a wider audience. This investment will grow our tourism economy, provide rich and varied experiences for our visitors, and distribute economic benefits from tourism across our island communities.

Partners are working towards the development of full business cases for approval by both governments, with the anticipation of funding being approved and released from 2022/23 onwards.

Background

The St Kilda Project is one of 18 proposals being considered for joint funding by the UK and Scottish Governments as part of the Islands Deal programme. Some of the other plans which could receive UK Government investment include:

- The Shell-volution – a new and innovative means of enabling expansion in the low carbon and sustainable mussel farming sector in Shetland, and more widely in Scotland.
- The Orkney Community Vertical Farm – focused on agricultural innovation and creating an islands’ vertical farm.
- Islands Centre for Net Zero – supporting the energy transition for all three island groups and creating sustainable “green” jobs within the islands for 300 people.
- The Outer Hebrides Energy Hub – establishing the initial infrastructure necessary to support the production of Green Hydrogen from renewable energy (Onshore and Offshore Wind).

The full Heads of Terms agreement signed in March further details on the proposed projects and aims of the deal.

[The Geospatial Commission announces transport innovation competition winners and outlines how to “position the UK in the fast lane”](#)

The Geospatial Commission today announces the winners of phase 2 of its £5m Transport Location Data Competition, which was [launched in May](#). Following success in the development of feasibility studies in phase 1, this next phase of the competition will support seven companies to work closely with the public sector to realise their innovative ideas through pilots over the next eight months.

The winners are:

- **Maritime ANalyTics Intelligence System (MANTIS), Emu Analytics Ltd:** AI and visualisation tool to identify evolving ship patterns of movement to inform the planning of future offshore wind farms.
- **Digital Active Travel Augmentation (DATA), Ngenius Ltd:** Software using anonymised location data from CCTV cameras to help Local Authorities manage active travel routes.
- **Optimising Geofencing, Ricardo UK Ltd:** Geofencing optimisation to increase the usage and effectiveness of low emissions zones for air quality improvements.
- **National Freight Model, City Science Corporation Ltd:** Advanced modelling to improve the understanding of freight movements within the UK.
- **ZERO, Dynamon Ltd:** An AI tool to help commercial fleets adopt the optimum zero-emission vehicles and charging infrastructure.
- **Digital twin of the rail network, Hack Partners Ltd:** Using track circuit sensor and location to increase capacity and efficiency of the rail network without compromising safety.
- **Automated Rail Geospatial Observation System (ARGOS), Thales Ground Transportation Systems UK Ltd:** Utilise train location and sensor data to understand track geometry characteristics and detect underlying track faults.

These projects cover a range of modes of transport including on our roads, our rail network, in the maritime environment, and active travel such as cycling and walking. They span four challenge areas where geospatial technology has the potential to revolutionise transport in the UK:

- **Mobility as a service** – to help better integration of transport types.
- **Active travel** – creating safer ways to enable active travel.
- **Supply chains** – helping better distribution, storage, and delivery.
- **Boosting capacity** – increasing efficiency of transport networks.

Positioning the UK in the fast lane

Alongside announcement of our competition winners, the Geospatial Commission has today published its transport findings report: [Positioning the UK in the fast lane – Location data opportunities for better UK transport](#).

The report illustrates the huge potential for location data to support a greener, faster, better transport sector from planning electric vehicle charging points to solving complex last-mile routing challenges.

The report identifies cross-cutting challenges, requiring a system-wide approach and action from a range of stakeholders to truly unlock the potential of location data in the transport ecosystem. The six key transport areas where there is a significant opportunity for increased location data use are:

- Roads
- Road & Rail haulage
- Route optimisation

- Electric Vehicles
- Connected and Autonomous Vehicles
- Drones and Unmanned Aircraft Systems

The report follows research, feasibility studies, and engagement with stakeholders and innovators from industry, academia, and the public sector.

Lord True CBE, Minister of State at the Cabinet Office, said:

The transport sector is a vital cog in the UK economy, connecting people with the goods and services they want, the jobs they need, and the places they visit. The better use of location data will be a fundamental enabler to ensuring our transport networks work better, cleaner, and smoother – such as in the planning, delivery, and maintenance of key infrastructure, optimising routing and navigation systems, and enabling multi-modal transport. I look forward to the Geospatial Commission's work in harnessing the power of location data to bolster our thriving transport sector.

Transport Minister Rachel Maclean at the Department for Transport said:

This report from the Geospatial Commission is a perfect example of the significant benefits of data in delivering tangible transport benefits, from planning where to place new electric vehicle charging points, to making last-mile journeys quicker, easier and more efficient. This is the perfect complement to our upcoming Transport Data Strategy which will help overcome the barriers to data sharing and use, as well as improving the discoverability, accessibility and quality of data.

Simon Edmonds, Deputy Executive Chair and Chief Business Officer, Innovate UK, said :

Following a fantastic response to the Transport location data competition, we're very pleased to continue to partner with the Geospatial Commission to support seven innovative projects to work in conjunction with the public sector to solve a wide range of transport challenges through the use of geospatial technology.

Editors Note:

The Geospatial Commission is an expert committee that sets the UK's geospatial strategy and promotes the best use of geospatial data. Enabling Innovation is a key mission of the [UK Geospatial Strategy](#).

For further information, please contact us at geospatialcommission@cabinetoffice.gov.uk.

Better Care Fund increased to support health and care integration

News story

More than £6.9 billion has been committed to continue driving integration between health and social care and support local recovery from the pandemic.



The Better Care Fund (BCF) has been increased this year to continue driving integration between the health and social care system and support local recovery from the pandemic.

More than £6.9 billion has been committed to help people to stay at home and live independently as far as possible, to minimise the time spent in hospital, and to help them recover after they leave hospital by enabling access to care and support services if needed.

The BCF will be a minimum of £6.9 billion in 2021-22, including £4.3 billion of NHS funding and £2.1 billion from the improved Better Care Fund (iBCF) grant to local authorities and £573 million from the Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG).

The NHS contribution to the BCF is increasing by 5.3% in line with the NHS Long Term Plan settlement, and the iBCF and DFG are being maintained at their 2020-21 levels. This was confirmed in the 2020 Spending Review.

The BCF Policy Framework has now been published for 2021-22 which aims to build on progress during the COVID-19 pandemic, strengthening the integration of commissioning and delivery of services and delivering person centred care.

The response to the COVID-19 pandemic has demonstrated how joint approaches to the wellbeing of people, between health, social care and the wider public sector can be effective even in the most difficult circumstances. By placing Integrated Care Systems (ICS) on a statutory footing, we are embedding more power and autonomy in the hands of local systems, to deliver seamless health

and social care services.

The BCF which started in 2015 to join-up the NHS, social care and housing services so older people, and those with complex needs, can manage their own health and wellbeing, and live independently in their communities for as long as possible.

- The BCF [Policy Framework](#) sets the parameters of the fund for the year ahead
- Further details on the Better Care Fund are available on the [NHS website](#)

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PM call with Prime Minister Scott Morrison: 19 August 2021

Press release

Prime Minister Boris Johnson spoke to Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison about the situation in Afghanistan.



The Prime Minister spoke to Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison this morning about the situation in Afghanistan.

The leaders agreed the immediate priority was to evacuate their nationals and former employees from Afghanistan, and to continue working together to achieve this. Prime Minister Morrison thanked the Prime Minister for the UK's help evacuating 76 Australians on an RAF flight yesterday.

The Prime Minister stressed the need for a concerted international effort to prevent a humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan, including through increasing aid to the region and the resettlement of refugees. The Prime Minister and Prime Minister Morrison updated one another on the work the UK and Australia are doing to this effect.

Finally, looking ahead to the UK-hosted COP26 Summit, the Prime Minister underlined the importance of global action on climate change. This includes setting ambitious targets for reaching Net Zero and increasing climate financing.

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[UK to support Haiti earthquake response with humanitarian assistance and Royal Navy ship](#)

The UK Government has today (Thursday 19 August) announced a package of up to £1 million of initial support to Haiti, as the country recovers from the recent devastating earthquake.

This is in addition to significant UK contributions to the UN Central Emergency Response Fund, the Red Cross Disaster Relief Emergency Fund and the Start Fund, which have allocated funding of £5.8 million, £600,000, and £250,000 respectively.

The Royal Navy ship RFA WAVE KNIGHT will also support the US contribution to the international humanitarian response.

The Wave-class fast fleet tanker – part of the Royal Navy's Royal Fleet Auxiliary (RFA) – will serve as a landing pad for US military helicopters responding to the crisis in Haiti.

Following a request for international assistance from the Haitian Government, the UK will send a team of medical experts and a UK humanitarian expert is deploying from the UN to provide support.

Defence Secretary Ben Wallace said:

Communities in the Caribbean can rely on the Royal Navy to come to their aid when disaster strikes. The Royal Navy has a proud history of supporting British Overseas Territories and other partners in the Caribbean during hurricane season. I'm proud that the UK can now play a part in the US effort to respond to the devastating earthquake in Haiti.

Experts from the UK's Emergency Medical Team (UK EMT) will be deployed to Haiti this week to assess requirements for medical assistance and identify additional support.

The team of 4 medical experts from the UK, Italy and France specialise in emergency medicine, rehabilitation, and logistics, as well as humanitarian healthcare. They are expected to deploy for up to 2 weeks.

UK Minister for the Caribbean Lord (Tariq) Ahmad of Wimbledon said:

It is at times like this that the international community must come together to help those in crisis. The UK's support will add to Haiti's efforts to provide emergency disaster relief to those most vulnerable, including access to vital healthcare and sanitation.

On top of this, a UK humanitarian expert will arrive in Haiti as part of a UN Disaster Assessment and Coordination (UNDAC) mission, to help assess damage and humanitarian needs resulting from the earthquake.

The UK will also support the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA) who will aid the Haiti Civil Protection General Directorate (DGPC) with operations and co-ordination.

Notes to editors

- [UK-Med](#) is a frontline medical aid charity that provides the doctors and nurses for the UK EMT. [Humanity & Inclusion UK](#) is an international disability charity that provides rehabilitation specialists to the UK EMT.
- The UNDAC team is part of the international emergency response system for sudden-onset emergencies. It is designed to assist the United Nations and governments of disaster-affected countries in meeting international needs for early and qualified information during the first phase of a sudden-onset emergency, as well as in the coordination of incoming international relief at national level and/or at the site of the emergency.
- The Caribbean Catastrophe Risk Insurance Facility (CCRIF) has agreed a pay out of approximately \$40 million to Haiti. The UK is a founding donor, and subsidises Haiti's subscription as a leading donor to the Caribbean Development Bank.
- The UK is a longstanding supporter of the CERF. In 2020, the UK was one of the largest donors to the Fund, providing £66m (\$88.6m) to support responses to humanitarian need across the globe.
- The UK supported the establishment of the Start Fund in 2014 and remains a major contributor to it, committing £49.5m from July 2018 until July 2022.
- The FCDO has committed a £6m UK contribution to the DREF (£1.5m per year 2020-2023).

On RFA WAVE KNIGHT/ HMS MEDWAY

- Two British naval ships – RFA WAVE KNIGHT and HMS MEDWAY – are currently deployed to the Caribbean to provide humanitarian assistance and

disaster relief. They have been deployed to the Caribbean since May 2021 to support British Overseas Territories and other partner nations the region throughout hurricane season.

- RFA WAVE KNIGHT arrived off the west coast of Haiti in the early hours of Wednesday (BST). It will allow US helicopters to refuel as they fly to and from the island, extending their range and time available to support the disaster relief efforts.
- The Royal Fleet Auxiliary is the civilian support branch of the Royal Navy, providing vital logistical and operational support to military operations.
- Photography and footage from RFA WAVE KNIGHT is available at www.defenceimagery.mod.uk
- For further updates follow @DefenceHQ/@DefenceHQPress. You can contact the MOD press office on 020 7218 7907.