

Business Secretary selects Sir Andrew Mackenzie for new UKRI Chair

- Business Secretary Kwasi Kwarteng names Sir Andrew Mackenzie FRS as the preferred candidate for chair of UK Research and Innovation (UKRI)
- Sir Andrew will be tasked with driving forward the government's ambitious research and innovation agenda

Business Secretary Kwasi Kwarteng has selected leading businessman and scientist Sir Andrew Mackenzie as the preferred candidate for chair of UKRI.

Sir Andrew has an impressive background in both science and business. Building upon a successful early career as an academic geochemist, he moved into industry and was Chief Executive of BHP, a world-leading mining company, from 2013 to 2020. He is now Company Chair of Shell.

Business Secretary Kwasi Kwarteng said:

Sir Andrew's impressive track record at the top tier of business will offer UKRI the strong, commercially-minded leadership it needs to cement our position as a global science superpower. I look forward to working closely with Sir Andrew as we unleash the firepower of UKRI to drive an innovation-led recovery across the United Kingdom.

I'd also like to thank the outgoing chair, Sir John Kingman, for leaving an excellent legacy to build upon as we move forward.

Sir Andrew MacKenzie said:

The COVID-19 pandemic has underscored our dependence on research and innovation, and the exceptional contribution the UK has made to solutions the world can embrace. Meanwhile we continue to address the enormous challenge of climate change which will define our generation and the world we leave for our children.

I am honoured to be offered the opportunity to help guide the work of UKRI and steward the extraordinary talent available in our universities, research institutions, charities, business and governments across the UK.

Last year, Sir Andrew was knighted for his services to business, science, technology, and Anglo-Australian relations. He was elected as a Fellow of the Royal Society (FRS) in 2014.

Sir Andrew will be tasked with keeping the UK at the forefront of research

and innovation to tackle the biggest industrial and societal challenges facing the world today and to help create the successful British companies of the future.

Sir Andrew will also work with UKRI's Chief Executive, Chief Finance Officer, and councils to oversee the organisation's funding programmes and research infrastructure.

UKRI aims to create an outstanding research and innovation system that gives everyone the opportunity to contribute and benefit. It is the UK's primary public funding body for research and innovation, with a budget of £7.9 billion for the 2021 to 2022 financial year.

Sir Andrew is due to succeed the current UKRI Chair, Sir John Kingman, who announced his intention to step down in September last year. Sir Andrew is expected to take over this summer.

The post of UKRI chair could be subject to a pre-appointment hearing by the House of Commons Science and Technology Select Committee. The Committee will consider this in due course.

[Government launches second Animal Welfare Bill to protect pets, livestock and wild animals](#)

- Animal Welfare (Kept Animals) Bill to enhance protections for kept animals in Great Britain
- New powers to tackle puppy smuggling and livestock worrying also brought forward
- Bill delivered as part of Government's flagship [Action Plan for Animal Welfare](#)

New powers to crack down on puppy smuggling and increased protections for farm animals will be brought in under new legislation set to be introduced by the Government in Parliament today (8 June).

The new Animal Welfare (Kept Animals) Bill will improve welfare standards through a wide range of measures for pets, farmed and kept wild animals, including through a ban on keeping primates as pets.

The UK has long history of leading the way on animal welfare and now that we have left the EU, the Government is committed to improving our already world-leading standards by delivering a series of ambitious reforms, outlined in the [Action Plan for Animal Welfare](#).

The Animal Welfare (Kept Animals) Bill will raise animal welfare standards in five key areas:

- **Puppy smuggling:** The Government will introduce new powers to tackle the unethical trade of puppy smuggling by reducing the number of pets (dogs, cats and ferrets) that can travel under pet travel rules. It will also include powers for the Government to bring in further restrictions on the movement of pets on welfare grounds, for example by increasing the minimum age of imported puppies and restricting the import of pregnant dogs and dogs with mutilations such as cropped ears and tails.
- **Live exports:** Live animals can endure excessively long journeys during export, causing distress and injury. EU rules prevented any changes to these journeys, but the UK Government is now free to pursue plans which would see a ban on the export of live animals for slaughter and fattening. We will become the first European country to end this practice.
- **Banning keeping primates as pets:** Primates are highly intelligent animals with complex needs and require specialist care. The Government will deliver on its manifesto commitment to introduce a ban on keeping them as pets, ensuring that all primates being kept privately in England are being kept at zoo-level standards and that those unable to meet the standards are phased out.
- **Livestock worrying:** The Bill will give new powers to the police to provide greater protection to livestock from dangerous and out of control dogs. The Bill will also extend this protection to other species such as llamas, ostriches and game birds.
- **Zoos:** The Zoo Licensing Act will be amended to improve zoo regulations and ensure that zoos are doing more to contribute to conservation.

Environment Secretary George Eustice said:

The Kept Animals Bill will bring in some of the world's highest and strongest protections for pets, livestock and kept wild animals.

As an independent nation outside the EU we are now able to go further than ever on animal welfare by banning the export of live animal exports for slaughter and fattening, prohibiting keeping primates as pets and bringing in new powers to tackle puppy smuggling.

This builds on the launch of our Action Plan for Animal Welfare and Animal Sentience Bill last month as part of our work to build on

our status as a world leader on animal welfare.

Today's announcement is the second piece of legislation introduced in the last month aimed at driving better standards of animal welfare. It follows the Government's decision to formally recognise animals as sentient beings in domestic law through the [Animal Welfare \(Sentience\) Bill](#) which was introduced to Parliament on 13 May.

As well as the new Kept Animals Bill, the Government will also announce a series of further reforms this year related to microchipping, pet theft, farm animal welfare and tackling wildlife crime, as laid out in our Action Plan for Animal Welfare.

Welcoming action on illegal puppy smuggling, James Russell, President of the British Veterinary Association, said:

Every day veterinary practices see the devastating consequences of illegal pet smuggling. Puppies that have been poorly bred and taken away from their mothers at a very young age often suffer from disease, other health problems, and poor socialisation leading to heartache and financial costs for new owners. We welcome changes to the law that will stop criminal gangs abusing pet travel rules for profit.

We're also delighted to see that the Government has moved a step closer to a ban on the import of cropped and docked dogs, putting an end to the alarming trend of ear cropping that vets have been campaigning on.

Owen Sharp, Dogs Trust Chief Executive said:

We are thrilled to see the commitments being made by the Government in the Kept Animals Bill and are hopeful for the impact the bill could make to dog welfare. We are particularly encouraged by the measures set out to crack down on puppy smuggling, an issue we have been campaigning on for over six years.

We have seen firsthand the devastating impact of this cruel trade, having rescued over 1.5 thousand illegally imported puppies, who have had the most traumatic start to their young lives and have come into our care in horrific conditions.

We will continue to work closely with the Government to be the voice for dogs and ensure all proposed legislation involving dogs effects real change.

RSPCA Chief Executive Chris Sherwood said:

This bill marks a crucial milestone in animal welfare as we are set to become the first country in Europe to ban the live export of animals for slaughter and fattening.

We are also thrilled to see measures to crack down on the import of puppies – a cruel trade where criminals get rich selling sick and dying puppies to unsuspecting families, which has boomed during lockdown. Any steps to restrict the import of dogs with cropped ears will also send a powerful message against the painful and unnecessary mutilation of dogs for fashion and the ban on keeping primates of pets means these amazing animals will no longer be kept in homes where they simply cannot be cared for properly.

This is a really important time for animal welfare and, if we get it right, we can make real and lasting changes to the lives of animals here and abroad.

To encourage higher standards abroad, later this year the Government will be introducing further legislation on international animal welfare and conservation work. It will build on recent animal welfare achievements including increasing the maximum custodial penalty for animal cruelty offences [from six months to five years](#).

Since 2010, the Government has also brought in mandatory microchipping for dogs to help reunite lost dogs with their owners and has introduced additional protection for service animals by introducing [‘Finn’s Law’](#). Last year, the Government introduced [Lucy’s Law](#) to tackle puppy farming by banning the commercial third-party sales of puppies and kittens. In 2019, the Government also outlawed the use of [wild animals in circuses](#).

[Government sets out marine commitments to mark World Ocean Day](#)

Under UK leadership, 80 countries have now signed up to an international target to protect at least 30 per cent of the world’s ocean by 2030.

Today on World Ocean Day (8th June 2021), countries from all four corners of the world – from India to Guyana, South Korea to Austria have pledged to support the ‘30by30’ commitment which is being championed by the UK-led

[Global Ocean Alliance](#) and the High Ambition Coalition for Nature and People, co-chaired by the UK, Costa Rica and France.

This next milestone follows a successful meeting of the G7 Climate and Environment ministers, during which all members agreed to champion the global '30x30' target to conserve or protect at least 30 per cent of the world's land and at least 30 per cent of the world's ocean by 2030, as well as committing to '30x30' domestically.

Environment Secretary, George Eustice, said:

The UK is a global leader in marine protection, and we are leading the way internationally to deliver healthy and sustainable seas. We must strike a balance in supporting sustainable industries while increasing protections for our seas to ensure a healthy, resilient and diverse marine ecosystem and we will work with others as we develop future protections.

The UK has also [launched plans to increase protections for England's waters](#) through a pilot scheme to designate marine sites in England as "Highly Protected Marine Areas". The selected sites would see a ban on all activities that could have a damaging effect on wildlife or marine habitats.

This follows the independent Benyon Review, which recommended that Highly Protected Marine Areas would have an important role in helping the marine ecosystem recover. The review was commissioned in 2019 to look at how these areas could be introduced and the Government has today published its response to the review. As well as helping drive marine recovery, the review also highlighted other potential benefits of the sites, including increased tourism.

The sites to be piloted could be in or outside of existing Marine Protected Areas where they would benefit from a substantially higher level of protection. They will be identified by Natural England and the Joint Nature Conservation Committee with input from stakeholders with a formal consultation set to launch next year.

Tony Juniper, Chair of Natural England, said:

I am delighted that the Government has committed to implement Highly Protected Marine Areas with a number of pilot sites. Natural England's evidence based advice has been instrumental in determining the need for special protection for our most vulnerable marine wildlife.

We look forward to working closely with Defra to identify pilot sites and use this great opportunity to explore how highly protected areas can mitigate the impact of human activities on the ocean, support its recovery to a more natural state, and enhance vital marine ecosystems.

This comes as Defra and the Ocean Conservation Trust publish the results of the largest ever survey in England and Wales on public attitudes to our oceans. The survey finds that 85% of people consider marine protection personally important to them. Of those who had visited our coastlines last year, 80% said it was good for their physical health and 84% said it was good for their mental health.

The findings also show that when asked about the greatest threats to the marine environment, participants were most concerned about pollution, with overfishing, climate change and loss of marine habitats also ranking highly.

Professor Michel Kaiser, HPMA Review Panel member and Chief Scientist and Professor of Fisheries Conservation at the Lyell Centre, Heriot-Watt University said:

The implementation of a trial of HPMA provides a landmark opportunity to understand how marine habitats and life will respond in the absence of damaging activities, setting our ambition for healthy oceans of the future.

Joan Edwards, Director of Policy and Public Affairs at The Wildlife Trusts, said:

This new type of marine protection will be the gold standard for rewilding parts of the sea. It's a fantastic step-forward, one which The Wildlife Trusts and over 10,000 of our supporters have been waiting for – we're absolutely delighted!

The removal of all harmful activities – from fishing and trawling to construction – has never been attempted in UK waters before. This is an historic moment and we're certain that HPMA will help our seas become healthier and that degraded underwater habitats will be better able to recover.

This special form of protection is vitally needed. Decades of overexploitation and pollution have left our precious seas damaged and the wealth of wildlife that once lived there is much diminished. Existing Marine Protected areas are limited in their ability to restore nature as they only go as far as conserving its current, sometimes damaged state. HPMA will allow us to see what truly recovering seas look like. They will set a new bar against which other protected areas could be measured.

The UK has also further advanced its role as a global leader in ocean protection by moving to full membership of the [Ocean Risk and Resilience](#)

[Action Alliance \(ORRAA\)](#). The Alliance brings together the financial sector, governments, non-profit organisations to pioneer innovative ways of driving investment into critical ecosystems like reefs, mangroves, seagrass beds, wetlands and beaches that provide the nature-based-solutions to build resilience against climate change.

The UK has also become a co-leader of The International Partnership on Marine Protected Areas, Biodiversity and Climate Change which will work with other countries to ensure they have the information and tools they need to understand the important role that Marine Protected Areas play in helping to mitigate and adapt to the effects of climate change on the world's oceans, and the biodiversity they protect.

The Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture Science (Cefas) has also today published its annual 'Blue Belt' assessment which reveals this year the [UK Government's Blue Belt Programme](#) exceeded its target of protecting and enhancing over 4 million square kilometers of marine environment around five UK Overseas Territories.

The commitments made today represent another step forward for the UK's efforts to step up action on climate change in the run up to the G7 Summit taking place in Cornwall this week and international climate conference COP26, to be hosted in Glasgow later this year.

ENDS

Further information:

Highly Protected Marine Areas

The government has [published its response to the Benyon review](#).

Highly Protected Marine Areas will take a 'whole site approach', conserving all species and habitats within their boundary to maximise protection of marine habitats and vital species. The government will develop criteria for identifying the sites and create a list of potential sites this year, followed by designations of a number of sites in 2022.

The Government recognises that the strict protections implied by Highly Protected Marine Areas will cause some concerns with other sea users and intends to liaise closely with them throughout the process, including the fishing industry.

The Government will consider the potential social, economic and environmental impacts of these sites, and are working to better understand wider issues such as the possible displacement of fishing activity.

Defra and Ocean Conservation Trust Ocean Literacy survey

Held in England and Wales, the ocean literacy survey measured public awareness, attitudes, knowledge and behaviours related to the marine environment and pressures on it, such as climate change and pollution.

'Ocean literacy' can be defined as the understanding of our individual and collective impact on the Ocean and its impact on our lives and wellbeing.

8,440 people over the age of 16 participated in the online survey (6,032 England and 2,248 Wales). Fieldwork was conducted between 16 February and 15 March 2021. Survey results were weighted to be representative of the population of interest.

The Ocean Literacy survey is part of the larger project "Understanding Ocean Literacy and ocean climate-related behaviour change in the UK" delivered in partnership by Defra and the Ocean Conservation Trust and in collaboration with Natural Resources Wales which also included an [evidence review of Ocean Literacy and Ocean-Climate related behaviour](#) which was undertaken by Dr Emma McKinley (Cardiff University) and Dr Daryl Burdon (Daryl Burdon Ltd.)

The key findings include:

- A strong connection to the ocean with 85% of people saying that protecting the marine environment was personally very important or important.
- Evidence of strong physical and mental health benefits of our marine environment. Of those who had visited our coastlines, 80% said it was good for their physical health and 84% said it was good for their mental health.
- The public feel that marine litter and plastic pollution (74%) is the greatest threat to the marine environment, followed by the chemical pollution (57%) and overfishing (54%). *Protecting and restoring marine environments which remove carbon was the top choice to address the effect of climate change on our marine environment (43%), closely followed by international commitments to reducing emissions (41%).
- The study reveals the role that documentaries such as the popular Blue Planet and the 'Attenborough effect' may have on the understanding of the threats facing our seas with 47% of people receiving information on the state of our oceans from wildlife documentaries.
- 78% said they had or plan to make lifestyle changes to protect the marine environment. The most common reasons for making these changes was concern about climate change (69%) and a desire to be greener (68%).

Members of the Global Ocean Alliance and/or the High Ambition Coalition for Nature and People

- The 80 countries now supporting the 30by30 target in the ocean are: Angola, Benin, Botswana, Cabo Verde, Chad, Cote D'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Gabon, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Kenya, Mauritania, Mozambique, Niger, Nigeria, Republic of Congo, Rwanda, Senegal, Seychelles, Togo, Uganda, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Guatemala, Guyana, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Peru, Belize, Grenada, St Kitts and Nevis, Mongolia, Jordan, Pakistan, UAE, Australia, Fiji, Marshall Islands, Palau, Vanuatu, Bangladesh, Cambodia, Maldives, India, Japan, South Korea, Armenia, Austria, Belgium, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, EC, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Monaco,

Montenegro, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and United Kingdom.

UK leadership on ocean protection and recovery

At last month's G7 Climate and Environment Ministerial meeting, hosted by the UK, ministers agreed to a number of ambitious commitments to drive urgent ocean action, including:

- Committing to Net Zero emissions by 2050 at the latest, with deep emissions reduction targets in the 2020s, and keeping the 1.5 degree temperature limit within reach – and where we recognise that climate action is ocean action;
- To support the '30by30' target to conserve or protect at least 30% of the global ocean by 2030 including through protected areas and Other Effective area-based Conservation Measures, in addition to domestic 30by30 commitments;
- An agreement to strengthen support for the Ocean Risk and Resilience Action Alliance;
- Working to conclude the negotiation of a new and ambitious legally binding instrument under UNCLOS on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction (the BBNJ Agreement), to support increased ocean protection;
- To fully engage in discussions or negotiations on options to tackle marine plastic litter and microplastics, including strengthening existing agreements, a potential for a new global instrument, and multi-stakeholder,
- To take action to tackle ghost fishing gear, including working with or supporting initiatives such as the Global Ghost Gear Initiative and to carefully consider the recommendations of the UK-commissioned OECD report 'Towards G7 Action to Combat Ghost Fishing Gear'.
- And to support these commitments, the G7 Ocean Decade Navigation Plan, agreed under the UK's Presidency, establishes a framework for the G7 to collaborate and advance our collective work on transformational ocean science for ocean action throughout the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development.

Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC) – International MPA Partnership

- The UK is committed to working with partners internationally to promote a safe, healthy and sustainable ocean, including nature based solutions for climate, biodiversity and people.
- The UK has a five-year Memorandum of Understanding with Chile to work collaboratively on MPAs. This work has led to successful joint workshops, parallel MPAs and climate change projects in both countries. The UK, Chile, France, Costa Rica and USA have set up an International Partnership for MPAs, Climate and Biodiversity to further develop this work around knowledge collaboration.
- The International Partnership on Marine Protected Areas, Biodiversity and Climate Change, with scientific support from the IUCN and the Marine Alliance for Science and Technology for Scotland, will support global leaders and MPA practitioners to ensure they have the information and

tools they need to understand the contribution of MPAs, and the biodiversity they protect, as a solution in helping mitigate the effects of climate change on the ocean.

- The Partnership officially launched on 2nd June 2021 and further information is available at www.mpabioclimate.org

CEFAS – Blue Belt Update

- This year the Blue Belt Programme exceeded its target of protecting and enhancing over 4 million square kilometers of marine environment around five UK Overseas Territories.
- Tristan da Cunha's designation of a new Marine Protected Zone (MPZ) in November 2020 brought the programme over the target.
- This means that at least 60% of the entire UK marine estate, including around the UK mainland and OTs has been designated within MPAs. These MPAs range from full 'no-take' MPAs, to multiple-use MPAs which recognise the effectiveness of the sustainable use of marine resources while also protecting and conserving the wider ecosystem.
- The Blue Belt Programme Annual Update 2020/21 highlights its key achievements from the past year, and sets out future ambition into 2022.
- The Blue Belt Programme is key to the UK Government's commitment to lead global efforts to protect 30% of the world's oceans by 2030, and demonstrates the impact that coordinated action can have on a global scale.
- The Blue Belt Programme will continue to work with and assist the UK Overseas Territories over the next year to further protect, monitor and sustain these unique marine environments for future generations.

ORRAA

- The UK has moved to full membership of membership of the [Ocean Risk and Resilience Action Alliance](#) (ORRAA).
- The alliance aims to drive \$500 billion of global investment by 2030 into nature-based solutions to climate change. The investment will be used to enhance marine and coastal ecosystems such as reefs, mangroves and seagrass beds to increase resilience to climate change and mitigate its impact on coastal communities.
- The UK becomes the second G7 country after Canada to become a full member of the Alliance. Through the UK's G7 and COP26 Presidencies, ORRAA will be uniquely placed to bring the financial sector, governments and NGOs together to drive investment in nature-based solutions and to build resilience in vulnerable coastal communities

[Next steps for supporting peace and](#)

stability in Chad, Central African Republic and Cameroon

Thank you Mr President.

On behalf of the United Kingdom, I want to express our thanks to SRSF Fall for his continued efforts to support and promote peace, stability and security in Central Africa, particularly amidst the Covid-19 pandemic and its impacts.

We welcome recent progress in the region, particularly the establishment of the new ECCAS Commission. But as SRSF Fall has set out, Central Africa continues to face serious political, economic and security challenges which have been exacerbated by Covid-19.

We commend UNOCA's ongoing efforts to coordinate with UN country teams across the sub-region, and deploy the UN's good offices to prevent, mediate and resolve conflicts across Central Africa. I would like to focus on the next steps needed in this respect in three of the country situations we have heard about today.

Firstly, Mr President, let me turn to Chad. The United Kingdom deplores the violence and repression of protestors in Chad in April. We support the AU's recommendation that the Transitional Military Council should respect human rights, provide an inclusive constitutional framework and conduct free and fair elections within 18 months. A stable Chad is pivotal for the Chadian people as well as the wider Sahel region.

Secondly, turning to the Central African Republic, I understand that we will have the opportunity in closed consultations to discuss the recent very troubling clashes across the border between Chad and the Central African Republic. The last thing the region needs is increased instability and mistrust between neighbouring countries, and so all actors should encourage de-escalation of those tensions.

Within the Central African Republic itself, following the recent presidential and parliamentary elections there is an opportunity to build on this democratic trajectory towards peace and reconciliation. We hope that all stakeholders will redouble efforts to strengthen political inclusivity, protect and promote human rights and meet the needs of the population, including with respect to basic security and humanitarian needs.

Thirdly, Mr President, The United Kingdom also remains deeply concerned by the ongoing crisis in the North-West and South-West regions of Cameroon. In March the UK's Minister for Africa visited Cameroon and met President Biya and Prime Minister Ngute, encouraging them to renew efforts to achieve a peaceful resolution to the crisis.

On his visit our Minister saw first-hand the profound impact of the crisis on

civilians. Over a million people have been displaced due to the conflict, and over two million are in dire need of humanitarian support. Unimpeded humanitarian access is desperately needed. At the same time, we continue to receive deeply concerning reports of human rights violations and abuses committed by both sides in the North-West and South-West regions of Cameroon. Accountability for perpetrators is essential for building long-term peace. And in the short-term, armed actors should heed the UN Secretary-General's call, and cease attacks against civilians.

We welcome the steps taken by the Government of Cameroon to grant special status for the Anglophone regions and convene the inaugural regional elections in 2020. However, all parties should do more to end this protracted conflict in Cameroon. The UK stands ready to support parties to engage in good faith dialogue and peacebuilding efforts. And we are supporting efforts to alleviate the suffering of vulnerable civilians through UK funding, currently totalling US\$19m, for vital assistance, food, sanitation and medical supplies.

Finally Mr President, I do want to acknowledge the very real threat that Cameroon and its neighbours continue to face in terms of terrorist attacks on civilians across the Lake Chad Basin region. The recent attack in Yagha province in Burkina Faso where over one hundred civilians were reportedly killed is a stark reminder of the grave threats facing civilians across this region. We strongly condemn all such attacks, and continue to support the efforts of the Multi-National Joint Task Force to tackle Boko Haram and Islamic State West Africa. We urge the governments of the Lake Chad Basin countries, with the support of international partners, to improve governance, demobilise and reintegrate former combatants, and mitigate the impacts of climate change on regional security.

I'd like to finish with a thank you as I began to SRSF Fall for his extraordinary efforts across this region. We know that his personal interventions across the region with countries, with governments and with Heads of States have a serious and significant effect on the trajectory of the region and we're very grateful to him.

Thank you, Mr President.

[Hammersmith Bridge Taskforce meeting, 3 June 2021](#)

News story

Joint statement on progress made by the taskforce at its meeting on 3 June 2021.



The latest meeting of the Hammersmith Bridge Taskforce was held on 3 June 2021.

It was chaired by Transport Minister, Baroness Vere. Attendees included the Project Director Dana Skelley, along with representatives from the London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham (LBHF), the London Borough of Richmond upon Thames, the Greater London Authority, Transport for London (TfL) and the Port of London Authority.

Dana Skelley, speaking on behalf of the Hammersmith Bridge Taskforce, said:

At last week's taskforce meeting we confirmed the immediate next steps following the latest extraordinary TfL funding deal announced on Tuesday 1 June 2021. As set out in the TfL funding deal, the Department for Transport, TfL and LBHF will now develop a memorandum of understanding in relation to funding the project. The taskforce awaits a decision from LBHF on its preferred engineering solution for stabilisation, what this will cost and how LBHF's contribution will be funded.

The group also discussed the potential protocols which will be implemented if the Case for Continued Safe Operation Board agrees to a limited and controlled reopening of the bridge to pedestrians, cyclists and expanded river transits in July. Engineers plan to meet in the coming days to discuss this in more detail.

The taskforce also heard the latest progress being made by TfL on the Hammersmith ferry service. TfL confirmed its aim for the ferry to be operational by late summer, subject to the appropriate planning and consent processes. This will provide a link across the river, independent of the bridge, that will remain open during any closures for works on the structure. Taskforce members shared the public concern to see the ferry up and running by late summer but noted and agreed the need for all procedures to be followed fully, to ensure public confidence in the ferry's operation and that all decision-making is in line with the statutory processes.