

Real local choice

News story

In her blog, Annabelle Lillycrop introduces the community consent-based process to find a suitable location for a GDF



Our Community Engagement Manager Annabelle Lillycrop with a member of the public

Annabelle Lillycrop is one of our Community Engagement Managers. She acts as a key point of contact for communities wishing to find out more about the possibility of hosting a Geological Disposal Facility (GDF).

Annabelle has significant public and stakeholder engagement and partnership development experience and knowledge in the environmental and nuclear sectors, and previously worked with the environmental regulator, the Environment Agency, where she led nationally on engagement for the Nuclear Regulatory Group.

Annabelle does not live far from the Hinkley Point power station, and knows what life is like in a community that hosts a major nuclear facility. In her new blog, she introduces the unique community consent-based process to find a suitable location for a GDF.

The process is designed to make sure any interested community can make a fully informed decision about hosting a GDF.

Annabelle writes:

Any community that gets involved will naturally have lots of questions and may have concerns. It'll be my responsibility, and my colleagues', to make sure we provide satisfactory answers. There's no off-the-shelf way to do this; it all depends on what your community needs and is comfortable with. We might organise public exhibitions and meetings, we'll set up a website, and post information on social media, for example.

We'll keep working with your community until people feel that they can make an informed decision about hosting a GDF. It might take a long time to reach this point, and that's all right. This is a long-term project, and informed consent is more important than a quick decision.

Read the blog in full [here](#).

Published 4 November 2020

£134 million boost to help UK businesses build back greener

- £134 million government investment to keep UK's greenest, most innovative businesses thriving during coronavirus pandemic and could help to secure and create new jobs across the country
- projects to service offshore wind turbines autonomously, using AI to reduce beer waste in the brewing process and converting seaweed into compostable packaging to tackle plastic waste set to benefit
- investment part of the government's commitment to build back better by supporting the UK's risk takers to bring their novel ideas to market

Robots that patrol UK roads to detect and repair cracks and potholes, using Artificial Intelligence (AI) that will help to reduce beer waste and converting seaweed into compostable packaging are just some of over 1,000 projects that will today (Wednesday 4 November) receive £134 million of government investment.

Businesses right across the UK, from Glasgow to Devon, are set to benefit from the investment, enabling 1,069 ground-breaking clean growth projects develop new technologies, secure and create new jobs, drive productivity and tackle climate change.

This includes marine company [Rovco](#) in Bristol, which is developing unique technology allowing for autonomous underwater inspections of large offshore wind turbines. This will be crucial in assisting human operators carry out effective maintenance of one of the UK's cleanest, renewable energy sources, which can often be dangerous, while ensuring it is carried out in accordance with social distancing measures.

[KegTracker](#) in Pontypridd, Wales, is aiming to reduce the amount of waste in the UK's brewing industry by using artificial intelligence (AI) to turn kegs into 'smart containers' that will provide real time data to accurately monitor the condition and contents of kegs as they travel from brewery to pub

and back again. This will help reduce the amount of liquid that is thrown away annually, currently costing the UK an estimated £5 billion a year.

Another company, [Oceanium](#) in Argyll, Scotland, is developing an advanced bio-refinery which will turn seaweed into food and compostable packaging products, tackling plastic waste and creating new jobs in the local area, while supporting the UK's target to reach net zero carbon emissions by 2050.

These ideas could transform whole industries such as manufacturing, hospitality and the automotive sector by helping them respond to the unique challenges presented by the pandemic, while supporting risk takers to bring their novel ideas to market.

Business Secretary Alok Sharma said:

The UK's response to coronavirus has demonstrated the very best of British ingenuity, and it is this resourcefulness that will help us navigate our way through this pandemic.

Today's investment will ensure that our innovators and risk-takers can continue to scale up their ideas, helping the UK to build back better and ensure we meet our clear commitments on tackling climate change.

An additional company receiving funding today includes [Robotiz3D](#) in Manchester, which is developing autonomous technology which will enable robots to be deployed to patrol UK roads to detect and repair cracks and potholes as soon as they appear. This approach will speed up the time taken to make repairs and will lower overall costs, while reducing the carbon footprint caused by road maintenance vehicles.

The [Sustainable Innovation Fund](#), delivered through [Innovate UK](#), is a cornerstone of the £1.25 billion investment package announced by the Chancellor in April to help ambitious, innovative businesses survive and thrive during the current pandemic.

Executive Chair Innovate UK Dr Ian Campbell said:

Yet again we see the exciting range of business innovation taking place across the United Kingdom, despite these difficult times.

Every initiative we've supported here represents an important step forward in sustainable economic development, but also one step nearer dreams becoming reality for ambitious hard-working company owners and their staff.

The investment forms part of the government's commitment to support the UK's entrepreneurs and start-ups to scale up their innovations, set out in its ambitious [R&D Roadmap](#) in July this year.

- The £134 million funding comes from Innovate UK's Sustainable innovation Fund, which was launched as part of the [£550 million package of measures](#) to support innovative SMEs respond to COVID-19
 - each business will receive up to £175,000 from the £134 million funding
 - for a smaller number of recipients, their award is the first phase of a 2-part competition under the [Small Business Research Initiative](#) (SBRI) that addresses specific net zero and clean growth challenges as part of the government's pledge to tackle climate change
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[Fire and Rescue Service Boats report published](#)

News story

Fatal collision between 2 fire and rescue service boats on the River Cleddau, Wales.



Our report into a collision during a training and familiarisation exercise on the River Cleddau, near Milford Haven on 17 September 2019 with loss of 1 life, is now published.

The report contains details of what happened, actions taken and recommendations made: [read more](#).

Statement from the Chief Inspector of Marine Accidents

This tragic accident could have been avoided had the training activities been properly planned and communicated to all the fire and rescue crew on the water that morning. It was unnecessary for the two boats to be operating in close proximity to each other in a wide stretch of the River Cleddau. Neither of the boat's crew were aware of the other's intended activities, nor were they keeping an

effective lookout as they manoeuvred at speed.

Our investigation found that elements of the Mid and West Wales Fire and Rescue Service documentation and procedures for boat operations were out of date, unclear and presented confusing safety messages to the reader. In addition, it was found that at a national level, fire and rescue service boats are not being operated consistently to a recognised standard when not on inland flood rescue duties.

Mid and West Wales Fire and Rescue Service has taken a number of actions following this investigation, but I have recommended that it also review the qualifications required of its boat crews and implement measures to maintain crew competency. I have further recommended that the National Fire Chief's Council work with the Maritime and Coastguard Agency to introduce a standard code for the operations of its water craft.

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[36th Universal Periodic Review: UK statement on Panama](#)

World news story

The UK delivers statement on Panama at the 36th Session of Universal Periodic Review (UPR), sharing recommendations to improve their human rights record.



The Universal Periodic Review takes place in Geneva.

Thank you, Madam President.

The United Kingdom welcomes steps taken by Panama to promote and protect human rights since the 2015 universal periodic review, including adopting a National Preventive Mechanism as part of the implementation of the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture.

The UK also welcomes Panama's adoption of the adversarial judicial system. We urge the Government to further strengthen this system, by boosting its resources and guaranteeing that independent appointments are made to ensure the impartiality of justice.

We note that a free press is essential for ensuring democratic accountability, and therefore urge the Government to uphold the freedom of the media and the rights of journalists. Laws criminalising defamation should be repealed.

We recommend that Panama:

1. Devote further resources to proactively investigating reports of forced adult and child labour in the construction, mining and agriculture sectors, and bringing those responsible to justice.
2. Adopt an open, merit-based process when selecting national candidates for UN Treaty Body elections.
3. Adopt, in consultation with civil society organisations, comprehensive legislation and policies against discrimination and violence based on sexual orientation or gender identity.

Thank you, Madam President.

Published 3 November 2020

Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration term extended

News story

David Bolt agrees to extend his term as Chief Inspector.



David Bolt, the current Independent Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration, has agreed to extend his term.

The extension will enable continuity while a recruitment competition to appoint a new Chief Inspector is completed.

Since his appointment in May 2015, Mr Bolt's leadership of the ICIBI has been integral in ensuring the Home Office continues to address and improve its border and immigration function.

Home Secretary Priti Patel said:

I want to thank David for his vital and exemplary work which constructively challenges the department's immigration functions so that they are as effective as they can be.

I'm glad David has agreed to extend his term until a new Chief Inspector can be appointed, to prevent a gap in the important scrutiny of the Home Office's work.

This extension has been made in line with the Governance Code on Public Appointments, which allows ministers to extend the terms of public appointees.

A competition to recruit a new Chief Inspector is underway.

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