

Campaign for co-Chair of the Council for Science and Technology

News story

A campaign has launched to select a new co-Chair for the Prime Minister's Council for Science and Technology.



A campaign to recruit a new independent co-Chair for the Council for Science and Technology has been launched and is open for applications until 22 November 2020.

The Council for Science and Technology advises the Prime Minister on science and technology policy issues across government. It is jointly chaired by the government Chief Scientific Adviser, Sir Patrick Vallance, and an independent co-Chair, currently Dame Nancy Rothwell, President and Vice Chancellor of Manchester University, who is stepping down next year.

The Council for Science and Technology is the government's highest-level advisory body on science and technology, advising on issues that cut across the full range of government's responsibilities.

Members of the Council are leading figures in the science and technology community, including presidents from the national academies and UKRI (ex officio), and representation from academia and key high-tech businesses.

The government is seeking applicants who are senior figures in a science, technology, engineering or mathematics field, with a track record of outstanding achievement as a researcher or innovator, and the ability to provide a well-grounded 'big picture' perspective on a wide variety of science and technology policy issues.

The full details of the co-Chair recruitment campaign can be found on the Public Appointments [website](#)

The work of the Council has directly influenced the government's research and innovation strategies and high-profile initiatives including the establishment of the Alan Turing Institute and the 100,000 Genomes Project.

The Council's current work programme includes:

- the advice on meeting government's long-term objectives for research and development
- taking a systems engineering approach to achieving net zero carbon emissions by 2050
- the contribution of science and technology to inform the government's levelling up agenda
- and science and technology for a sustainable health and social care system.

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[Meeting of the Specialised Committee on the Other Separation Provisions](#)

News story

Joint UK-EU statement following the first meeting of the Specialised Committee on the Other Separation Provisions on 30 October 2020.



The UK hosted the first Withdrawal Agreement Specialised Committee on the Other Separation Provisions today (Friday 30 October) via videoconference. The meeting was co-chaired by officials from the EU and UK.

The Committee was established by the Withdrawal Agreement to facilitate the implementation and application of its Part Three on Separation Provisions. Most of the provisions of Part Three shall apply at the end of the transition period and ensure, in particular, an orderly winding-down of existing arrangements with regard to matters ongoing at that time.

The UK and the EU reaffirmed their commitment to continued progress in implementing the measures provided for in Part Three of the Withdrawal

Agreement.

The co-chairs agreed that the Committee would meet again as necessary to facilitate the implementation of Part Three of the Withdrawal Agreement.

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[Defra concludes its review into releasing gamebirds on and around protected sites](#)

The review looked at areas including the number of gamebirds released and their impact on protected sites, the consenting process, and whether further safeguards could be provided to protect sites.

The [review has now concluded](#) and found that the negative effects of gamebird releases on protected sites tend to be localised and that there are minimal or no effects beyond 500m from the point of release. It also highlighted a need to gain a better understanding of how any impacts – particularly local ones – might be mitigated.

In response to a pre-action protocol letter from Wild Justice in July 2019, last September Defra accepted that in principle the annual release of non-native gamebirds on, or affecting, Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and Special Protection Areas (SPAs) is capable of constituting a “plan or project” requiring appropriate assessment within the meaning of the Habitats Directive.

While not accepting the argument that current laws do not provide for appropriate assessment in such cases, Defra undertook a review to consider the legislative arrangements around the relevant activities and whether there are ways in which their effectiveness could be improved.

Environment Secretary, George Eustice, said:

The negative effects of gamebird releases on protected sites tend to be localised with minimal or no effects beyond 500m from the point of release.

However, our review highlighted a need to gain a better understanding of how any localised impacts might be mitigated and existing arrangements strengthened. The introduction of an interim licensing regime for next year will enable us to manage any potential impacts while gathering more information where evidence

gaps exist. We will continue to engage and consult with industry in order to minimise any disruption.

The [SoS has proposed a number of measures as a result of the review](#):

- A new interim licensing regime for the 2021 releases of common pheasant and red-legged partridge within European protected sites and within a 500m buffer zone around these sites.
- Improvements to the Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA) poultry register.
- Review and improve the existing consenting regime.
- Improve monitoring of SACs and SPAs.

Defra will continue to consult with industry early in order to minimise any disruption.

Further information:

What to do if you release gamebirds on protected sites

The new interim licensing regime will be in place for the 2021 releases. The detail of this will be informed by consultation. Details of the consultation process will be announced shortly.

The Gamebird Release Review team can be contacted on GLTeam@defra.gov.uk for further information.

The introduction of an interim licensing regime

The new licensing regime is an interim measure for the 2021 releases of common pheasant and red-legged partridge within European protected sites and within a 500m buffer zone around the sites.

The interim licensing regime will be revisited once further evidence has been gathered to enable a site-specific appraisal of the impacts of gamebird release.

Defra will also ensure the interim regime is proportionate and will set out how key aspects of it will work ahead of the key planning stages for shoots to minimise disruption on them.

Subject to further consideration, the preferred option here is likely to be a general licence. General licences do not require an application to be made and there is no fee.

General licences set out conditions that must be complied with in order to rely on the licence. The licence to be introduced in respect of releases of common pheasant and red-legged partridge is likely to have conditions relating to the number of birds, density of release and location of key infrastructure. This is because the evidence is that effects are significantly reduced where birds are released in smaller numbers and at lower densities. However, the precise thresholds for any conditions are subject to further consideration and consultation. The intention is that

where shoots cannot meet the conditions of the general licence, they will have the option to apply to NE for an individual, bespoke licence, a process which enables the impacts on the specific protected sites in question to be considered.

[Hammersmith Bridge Taskforce meeting, 29 October 2020](#)

News story

Joint statement on progress made by the taskforce at its meeting on 29 October 2020.



The sixth meeting of the Hammersmith Bridge Taskforce was held yesterday, Thursday 29 October.

It was chaired by Transport Minister, Baroness Vere and attendees included the Project Director Dana Skelley, Professor Norman Fleck, plus representatives from the London Boroughs of Hammersmith and Fulham, and 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:

The taskforce held another productive meeting yesterday. The group discussed the constructive Zoom meeting held with members of the public on Tuesday night and the latest thinking from the engineers.

This thinking focused on recent modelling and the installation of the temporary system to control the temperature of the chains on the bridge. We were also pleased to hear that several engineering reports, including Professor Norman Fleck's, will be presented to the taskforce shortly to help inform the best way forward.

The Hammersmith Bridge Taskforce was set up by the Department for Transport in September 2020 to work towards safely reopening the Hammersmith Bridge. The taskforce is chaired by Baroness Vere and includes representatives from TfL, London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham, London Borough of Richmond upon Thames, Network Rail, the Greater London Authority and the Port of London Authority.

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[CNC Hinkley Point launches Project Servator – Trust your Instincts](#)

Project Servator will see highly visible yet unpredictable deployments of specially trained officers around the Hinkley Point site and the surrounding local community. The operational deployments involve officers working together with our communities to report suspicious activity. These officers are deployed to deter, help detect, and provide reassurance and confidence to members of the public.

The tactics used as part of Project Servator are not new and are used regularly by other police forces around the country, including at several other sites policed by the CNC. They have been developed to enhance the effectiveness of our resources and not as a response to any change in threat.

Supt Donna Jones, who is leading on the implementation of the project across the Constabulary, said: “We are deploying these additional tactics to further complement the operational activity that exists in and around our Operational Policing Units. Our aim is to build upon relationships with partners as well as businesses and communities.

“These tactics are not new but allow us to have a focus on community engagement. This is not restricted to the Hinkley Point site but also to the surrounding area. We are aware of the vast amount of information members of our community have and they are aware of what is out of the ordinary. All we ask is that they report any suspicions to us.

“The deployments will be unpredictable and on occasion may be highly visible or more covert on another. The aim is to work with our local communities to deter any hostile threat.

“Remember, trust your instinct and report any suspicious activity directly to the CNC by calling 03303 138146.”

The CNC is the armed police force in charge of protecting civil nuclear sites and nuclear materials in England, Scotland and Wales. We employ over 1,500

highly trained police officers and police staff across the UK. Counter terrorism is a major part of our policing.

The CNC have their own Twitter, Facebook and Instagram page, so keep up-to-date with recruitment information, Servator deployments or anything CNC by searching for us and giving us a follow. You can also find out about recruitment opportunities at our [CNC Jobs website](#)