

Project lays foundations for success



The first of many concrete pours for the new facility.

The first concrete has been poured on a billion pound project, the Sellafield Product and Residue Store Retreatment Plant.

The facility will provide safe storage of special nuclear material for at least 100 years and is a vital part of our hazard and risk reduction mission.

It will take 18 pours to complete the base slab for the building, with this work expected to be finished by mid-summer 2020.

The project is one of the first three to be delivered through the Programme and Project Partners.

[The Sellafield Product and Residue Store Retreatment Plant](#)

Head of Projects for Sellafield Ltd, Steve Harnwell said:

The team's hard work and dedication has seen completion of piped service diversions, security fence modifications, installation of sheet piles around the construction site, excavation of 20,000m³ of spoil and concrete blinding of the excavation.

All of this excellent work, together with the early approval of the pre-commencement safety report by the Office For Nuclear Regulation, has meant we could start work early on the main concrete raft, which acts as the foundation for the main process building.

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UK statement to the TRIPS Council

Thank you Chair,

The United Kingdom has always been a strong supporter of the multilateral trading system and intends to use its role in the WTO in 2020 to support efforts to strengthen the multilateral rules-based trading system, and to modernise and build confidence in the WTO.

The United Kingdom is committed to a balanced and effective intellectual property regime, and so we have introduced a number of legislative changes since we last updated the Council on our IP laws and regulations, in accordance with Article 63.2 of the TRIPS Agreement. A transparent IP regime is essential for the growth of our IP intensive industries, including the creative industries, technology, agricultural products, healthcare and the life sciences. Notifications to the WTO are an important part of this regime.

In consideration of the Chair's encouragement for members to update any outstanding notifications, and the importance the United Kingdom attaches to TRIPS transparency arrangements, we have begun preparations to update our notifications to the WTO Secretariat, using the eTRIPS system. We will be making our first notifications shortly, which will be on legislation changes relating to trade marks and industrial designs, ahead of the next TRIPS Council in May.

Further information setting out some of the implications of the United Kingdom's departure from the European Union in the WTO can be found in our communication WT/GC/206 circulated to the General Council on 1 February 2020.

The United Kingdom looks forward to engaging with all WTO Members in our collective effort towards defending and improving the multilateral trading system.

Thank you Chair.

UK's Creative Industries contributes almost £13 million to the UK economy every hour

- Creative industries contributed more than £111bn to the UK economy in 2018
- Advertising and marketing were two of the key drivers of growth in the Creative Industries

New government figures show the country's successful creative industries contributed £111.7 billion to the UK in 2018, equivalent to £306 million every day.

This is up 7.4 per cent on the previous year, meaning growth in the sector is more than five times larger than growth across the UK economy as a whole, which increased by 1.4 per cent.

The sector was supported by large contributions from tech services and the film and television industries, which contributed £45.4 billion and £20.8 billion to the economy respectively. Another boost was delivered by the advertising and marketing industries, which account for a quarter of the total growth of the creative industries since 2017.

Minister for the Creative Industries, Nigel Adams, said:

The creative industries encompass the best and brightest of UK businesses and these figures paint a vibrant picture of creativity and talent in our country today.

I would like to congratulate all those within the sector whose hard work and ingenuity means the industry is making a staggering contribution of nearly £13 million to the national economy every hour.

As a whole, the Department for Digital Culture Media and Sport (DCMS) Sectors (excluding Tourism) contributed £224.1 billion to the UK in 2018, accounting for 11.7 per cent of the economy. Headline figures include:

The Digital Sector contributed £149 billion to the UK in 2018, accounting for 7.7 per cent of the UK economy. This contribution is up 7.9 per cent on the previous year, meaning growth in the sector is nearly six times larger than growth across the economy as a whole, which increased by 1.4 per cent.

The Cultural Sector contributed £32.3bn to the UK economy in 2018 – up 2.7 per cent from the previous year. The sub-sector 'Film, TV and Music' made up three fifths of this sector (£21.3bn).

The full DCMS Sectors Economic Estimates 2018 report can be found [here](#).

Notes to Editors:

- The Creative Scale-Up programme, funded by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport, will see £4 million invested across three regions in the UK giving creative businesses bespoke support to help them grow their business and become ready to take on investment. The programme will help boost opportunities for the creative industries which are worth over £100 billion to the UK economy.

- In July 2019, the Culture Secretary Jeremy Wright announced plans for an apprenticeship scheme in the creative industries. The Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport invested £100,000 to support the pilot ScreenSkills Apprenticeship Programme with matching funds from industry. The Government's reforms to the apprenticeship system mean that apprenticeships are higher quality – at least 12 months, with more off the job training and with a proper assessment at the end.
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[RWM at the District Councils Network Annual Conference 2020](#)

Radioactive Waste Management (RWM) is exhibiting at the 2020 District Councils Network (DCN) Annual Conference in Kenilworth from 6th to 7th February to explain its long-term mission to deliver a safe final disposal solution for our radioactive waste.

The construction and operation of a Geological Disposal Facility (GDF) to safely and securely manage the UK's higher activity radioactive waste for the long-term will be a multi-billion pound, multi-generational infrastructure project.

RWM's aim is to find a suitable site and a community who will decide for themselves if they are willing to host a GDF.

RWM is attending the DCN Annual Conference to raise awareness, answer questions and help people find out more about the role communities have to play at the heart of the process.

Steve Reece, RWM's Siting and Engagement Director, said:

“Constructing a GDF is long-term environmental endeavour that is the right thing to do for today's society and for future generations. Attending DCN and spreading the word amongst councils represents an opportunity to explore how they can get involved and how hosting a GDF could be part of the long-term vision for their area”.

RWM is at the very start of the process to find a site for a GDF in the UK. Individuals or organisations will enter the process in their own time and Working Groups, which take the first steps in finding out about the process, will be announced as they are formed.

To follow the RWM team and their progress at the event visit us on [Twitter](#); and to find out more please visit our [homepage](#).

[Inspection report published: An inspection of the Home Office's Network Consolidation Programme and the "onshoring" of visa processing and decision making to the UK](#)

My report on the Home Office's Network Consolidation Programme and the "onshoring" of visa processing and decision making to the UK was completed in September 2019.

The thrust of my five recommendations was that the Home Office should be more straightforward and more transparent about its plans, processes and performance (including of its outsourced front-end services): in the case of its plans, with its staff and with other stakeholders; in the case of its processes and performance, with visa applicants (its "customers").

I understand the point the Home Office has made in response to my recommendation to provide more information about the "Streaming Tool". It is right to be wary of the risk that greater transparency could be exploited by "unscrupulous parties", and I am certainly not advocating any weakening of checks and controls. But, my question, given that the vast majority of visa applicants are not looking to manipulate the system but simply to understand how to make a successful application, is has it got the balance right.

The more cryptic the Home Office is seen to be about the way visa decisions are made, the more it will fuel concerns about bias and poor practice. The department's reputation and the staff who work in this area would be better served if its first instinct were to be open and engaging rather than seemingly reluctant to reveal more than it absolutely has to.