News story: UK ratifies new agreement to tackle global warming

The UK has today become one of the first nations to ratify a landmark agreement that will play a major role in preventing global warming by reducing emissions from appliances such as air conditioning units and refrigerators.

The Kigali amendment to the UN Montreal Protocol commits nations to reducing hydrofluorocarbon greenhouse gases (HFCs) by 85% between 2019 and 2036.

These harmful greenhouse gases could have risen by up to 11% by 2050 and the United Kingdom is one of the first countries to approve the landmark UN agreement to help prevent that from happening.

The Montreal Protocol is already one of the most successful treaties ever agreed, having phased out 98% of ozone depleting substances – including chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs) and hydrochlorofluorocarbons. As a result, the ozone layer is showing the first signs of recovery.

The Kigali amendment to the Montreal Protocol, which the UK has completed ratifying, goes even further and extends targets to HFCs. Although HFCs do not harm the ozone layer, they have a global warming potential thousands of times greater than carbon dioxide.

Consequently this deal is likely to avoid close to 0.5 degrees Celsius of global warming by the end of this century, making it the most significant step yet in achieving the Paris climate agreement goal of keeping temperatures well below two degrees.

Environment Secretary Michael Gove said:

> Adopting this ambitious target marks the UK as a world leader in tackling climate change. This deal will reduce global greenhouse gas emissions by the equivalent of around 70 billion tonnes of carbon dioxide by 2050 – the same as more than 600 coal fired power stations would produce during that time.
>
> The UK, along with the rest of the EU, has already begun to phase down HFCs by 79% between 2015 and 2030.
>
> The Montreal Protocol will result in an additional UK reduction equivalent to around 44 million tonnes of carbon dioxide

Notes to editors:

- As part of global efforts to tackle climate change, countries agreed at the Montreal Protocol meeting in Kigali, Rwanda in October 2016 to phase

down the production and use of HFCs. Developed countries agreed to an 85% phase-down between 2019 and 2036; most developing countries agreed to 80% between 2024 and 2045; and ten developing countries (India, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, The United Arab Emirates, Iran and Iraq) agreed to 85% between 2028 and 2047.
- For further information please contact Defra press office on 020 8225 7510 or out of hours on 0345 051 8486.

Statement to Parliament: Publication of the Mendoza Review of Museums in England and the Strategic Review of DCMS-sponsored museums.

Neil Mendoza was the lead, independent reviewer. He was supported by officials at DCMS. Throughout the process Neil engaged closely with the museums sector, Arts Council England (ACE), Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF), Historic England (HE), and relevant government departments.

The Mendoza Review of Museums in England

The Mendoza Review is the first in over a decade to examine the English museums sector. It was commissioned in response to the Culture White Paper in 2016 which called for "a wide-ranging review of national, local and regional museums, working closely with ACE and HLF". Therefore, it has looked at what the national infrastructure for museums is, what it could and should be, the museums sponsored directly by government, and the challenges and opportunities for all of England's museums. Whilst it focuses primarily on the 1,312 ACE accredited museums, it does consider the wider context of the sector, which emcompasses approximately 2,000 museums in England. The review does not cover the policy of free admission to the permanent collections of national museums as this is a manifesto commitment.

The Mendoza Review proposes recommendations enabling a more strategic approach to public funding for museums from government and its Arm's Length Bodies. It highlights the increased importance for government and its ALBs (including the National Lottery) of distributing funding in a more joined-up and effective fashion. The roles and responsibilities for relevant stakeholders are divided as follows:

- a more strategic and focused approach by DCMS and its ALBs;
- a more prominent and assertive role for Arts Council England;
- a more strategic use of Lottery funding for museums;
- a more active role for Historic England;
- and national responsibilities for national museums.

The Review also sets out ideas for local authorities on how to make best use of their museums, and best practice suggestions for the sector itself.

The report is available [here]

Alongside the Mendoza Review we publish the Strategic review of DCMS-sponsored museums. This is the first clustered review undertaken by any government department, following Cabinet Office guidelines for tailored reviews. It examines the form and functions of 16 ALBs (15 museums and the British Library) sponsored by DCMS, their functions, forms, effectiveness, efficiency and accountability. Of particular importance was establishing the extent of the leadership and coordinating activity these ALBs provide, nationally and internationally, identifying any areas for improvement. It should be read alongside the Mendoza review for a full picture of the role, importance and significance of the sponsored museums, especially after the UK's exit from the European Union, and how the findings from this review feed into and support its recommendations.

Both reviews benefited from the independent Challenge Panel, members of which were appointed to ensure the review's robustness and impartiality. I am also grateful to the following government departments who sat on the Programme Board: HM Treasury, Cabinet Office, the Department for Education, the Department for Communities and Local Government and the Ministry of Defence. Finally, I would like to thank all those who contributed evidence to the review through the public consultation.

The report is available [here]

Press release: Institute Chief Executive announcement

The Institute for Apprenticeships (the Institute) has today announced that Sir Gerry Berragan has been appointed as the new Chief Executive of the Institute and will take up the post from 27 November.

The Institute for Apprenticeships (the Institute) has today announced that Sir Gerry Berragan has been appointed as the new Chief Executive of the Institute and will take up the post from 27 November. The Institute is a crown, non-departmental public body, sponsored by the Department of Education (DfE). The Institute ensures high-quality apprenticeship standards and advises government on funding for each standard. Sir Gerry will replace Peter Lauener, the current Chief Executive, who has held the post since the launch of the Institute on 1 April 2017. Sir Gerry has been involved in leadership and training for 36 years, throughout his Army career, giving him experience of running big, complex organisations, consisting of both military people and civil servants. He led the army's training provision which had 13,000 people on an apprenticeship at any one time – making the army the largest apprenticeships provider in the country.

Antony Jenkins, Chair of the Institute for Apprenticeships said:

> As a member of the Institute's Board Sir Gerry has already been instrumental in the set–up of the organisation and in developing its strategy and values so that it can deliver to the high expectations we and others set for the Institute. Sir Gerry has extensive experience of leadership and management, as well as an in depth knowledge of apprenticeships and the positive impact they can have. I am very pleased to be able to appoint him and look forward to working closely with him on the challenges ahead.

Rt. Hon Anne Milton MP, Minister of State for Apprenticeships and Skills, Minister for Women said:

> I'm delighted that Sir Gerry has been appointed. He will drive the Institute to meet the challenges ahead, and I look forward to working closely with him. Having met Sir Gerry, I know that he will make sure that high quality apprenticeships, available for everyone, will be at the heart of the Institute's work.

Sir Gerry Berragan said:

> I am honoured to have been appointed as Chief Executive of the Institute for Apprenticeships. I was closely involved in delivering high quality apprenticeships during my Army career and I have been an Institute Board member from the outset earlier this year, so I understand the challenge. I look forward to working with employers to deliver high quality apprenticeships to meet their needs, whilst providing excellent opportunities for people and employers across the country.

The Chief Executive is responsible for the leadership and day-to-day management of the Institute. The Chief Executive is also Accounting Officer for the Institute's budget and is accountable to the DfE's Principal Accounting Officer, and to Parliament for the stewardship of these funds.

Press release: UK House Price Index

for September 2017

The most up-to-date HM Land Registry sales figures available for England show the number of completed house sales in July 2017 fell by 17.1% to 64,592 compared with 77,919 in July 2016.

The most up-to-date HM Land Registry sales figures available for London show the number of completed house sales in July 2017 fell by 24.5% to 6,639 compared with 8,794 in July 2016.

The UK Property Transaction Statistics show that the number of seasonally adjusted transactions on UK properties with a value of £40,000 or greater has increased by 4.6% between September 2016 and September 2017. However, comparing September 2017 with August 2017, the number of seasonally adjusted property transactions has decreased by 1.8%.

The Bank of England Agents' summary of business conditions reported that supply and demand appeared to be broadly in balance across the overall market. Demand had proved more resilient in the new-build sector and the help to buy scheme was regarded as crucial to sustaining demand among first-time buyers.

Looking more closely at regional levels of the UK, the largest annual growth was in the North West at 7.3% up from 5% in August 2017. The slowest annual growth was in London at 2.5%. This is the 10th consecutive month where the growth in London house prices has remained below the UK average. See the economic statement.

1. The UK House Price Index (HPI) is published on the second or third Tuesday of each month with Northern Ireland figures updated quarterly. The October 2017 UK HPI will be published at 9.30am on 12 December 2017. See calendar of release dates.

2. From next month, we are making some changes to improve the accuracy of the UK HPI. We will not be publishing average price and percentage change for new build and existing resold property, as we do now, because there are not currently enough new build transactions to provide a reliable result. This means that when we publish the October UK HPI in December, the earliest new build/existing resold property breakdown will be for August 2017, in line with the sales volumes currently available.

3. The UK HPI revision period has been extended to 13 months, following a review of the revision policy (see calculating the UK HPI section 4.4). This ensures the data used is more comprehensive.

4. Sales volume data is also available by property status (new build and existing property) and funding status (cash and mortgage) in our downloadable

data tables. Transactions involving the creation of a new register, such as new builds, are more complex and require more time to process. Read Revisions to the UK HPI data.

5. Revision tables have been introduced for England and Wales within the downloadable data. Tables will be available in csv format. See about the UK HPI for more information.

6. Data for the UK HPI is provided by HM Land Registry, Registers of Scotland, Land & Property Services/Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency and the Valuation Office Agency.

7. The UK HPI is calculated by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) and Land & Property Services/Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency. It applies a hedonic regression model that uses the various sources of data on property price, in particular HM Land Registry’s Price Paid Dataset, and attributes to produce estimates of the change in house prices each month. Find out more about the methodology used from the ONS and Northern Ireland Statistics & Research Agency.

8. The UK Property Transaction statisticsare taken from HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) monthly estimates of the number of residential and non-residential property transactions in the UK and its constituent countries. The number of property transactions in the UK is highly seasonal, with more activity in the summer months and less in the winter. This regular annual pattern can sometimes mask the underlying movements and trends in the data series so HMRC also presents the UK aggregate transaction figures on a seasonally adjusted basis. Adjustments are made for both the time of year and the construction of the calendar, including corrections for the position of Easter and the number of trading days in a particular month.

9. UK HPI seasonally adjusted series are calculated at regional and national levels only. See data tables

10. The first estimate for new build average price (April 2016 report) was based on a small sample which can cause volatility. A three-month moving average has been applied to the latest estimate to remove some of this volatility.

11. Work has been taking place since 2014 to develop a single, official HPI that reflects the final transaction price for sales of residential property in the UK. Using the geometric mean, it covers purchases at market value for owner-occupation and buy-to-let, excluding those purchases not at market value (such as re-mortgages), where the ‘price’ represents a valuation.

12. Information on residential property transactions for England and Wales,

collected as part of the official registration process, is provided by HM Land Registry for properties that are sold for full market value.

13. The HM Land Registry dataset contains the sale price of the property, the date when the sale was completed, full address details, the type of property (detached, semi-detached, terraced or flat), if it is a newly built property or an established residential building and a variable to indicate if the property has been purchased as a financed transaction (using a mortgage) or as a non-financed transaction (cash purchase).

14. Repossession data is based on the number of transactions lodged with HM Land Registry by lenders exercising their power of sale.

15. For England, this is shown as volumes of repossessions recorded by Government Office Region. For Wales, there is a headline figure for the number of repossessions recorded in Wales.

16. The data can be downloaded as a .csv file. Repossession data prior to April 2016 is not available. Find out more information about repossessions.

17. Background tables of the raw and cleansed aggregated data, in Excel and CSV formats, are also published monthly although Northern Ireland is on a quarterly basis. They are available for free use and re-use under the Open Government Licence.

18. HM Land Registry's mission is to guarantee and protect property rights in England and Wales.

19. HM Land Registry is a government department created in 1862. It operates as an executive agency and a trading fund and its running costs are covered by the fees paid by the users of its services. Its ambition is to become the world's leading land registry for speed, simplicity and an open approach to data.

20. HM Land Registry safeguards land and property ownership worth more than £4 trillion, including more than £1 trillion of mortgages. The Land Register contains more than 25 million titles, which show evidence of ownership, covering more than 84% of the land mass.

21. For further information about HM Land Registry visit www.gov.uk/land-registry

22. Follow us on:

News story: These SMEs did it and so can you!

In the past 12 months in my role as SME Rep, I've been keen to ensure that smaller businesses do not overlook government as a customer or wrongly fear it will be too difficult to access that market. Online webinars, regional events, supplier guides and contract advice have all been aimed at encouraging SMEs to consider supplying the public sector and government buyers to look at SMEs as new and reliable suppliers.

But which smaller suppliers have been successful? Without knowing anything about the businesses that have been successful, there has been a slight air of mystery. Well not anymore, a list of the top 100 SME suppliers to central government has been published.

Not only that, but several are now sharing their stories and offering top tips for suppliers considering bidding.

These stories show how with some understanding of the public sector process – which we look at on our Government is Open for Business site and especially in the supplier guide – SMEs can successfully bid for, and win, public sector contracts.

Moving forward we have a renewed focus on connecting small businesses with government's largest suppliers so SMEs can win government work, without being the lead bidder. This work will also consider how large contractors can quickly identify a quality supply chain that can help them fulfil contracts.

I hope this will inspire new businesses to 'go for government' and existing suppliers to keep aiming high, even if they haven't yet had the successes they'd hoped for – the opportunities are there.

Don't forget… I'm hosting a 'Meet the Buyer' event in Leeds, at the Town Hall on the 24th November – an opportunity for small businesses to hear direct from government buyers as to what they're after, and an insight into future pipelines.

Plus, we continue the programme of regular webinars where guests are government buyers or entrepreneurs who have successfully sold to the public sector, and small businesses, from anywhere, can tune in for free.

So much is happening but there is still plenty to do!