

Press release: Civil service 'hub' to bring growth to Edinburgh

The UK government has today announced the location of a new hub at New Waverley, Edinburgh, which will deliver significant growth to the city by moving 2,900 civil servants into the city centre premises in 2020.

The new hub will:

- contribute to the creation of a modern Civil Service – with fit-for-purpose workspaces, cross-departmental collaboration, smarter technology, and enhanced career opportunities;
- demonstrate the government's commitment to engaging with and supporting the local Edinburgh community;
- contribute to growth in Edinburgh, as the largest office prelet in the city for over 20 years;
- create a centre of excellence for the delivery of public services in Scotland and facilitate more effective working between government departments within a devolved administration;

The UK government will take approximately 190,000 square feet at New Waverley Edinburgh, with a lease commitment of at least 20 years. This hub will continue to strengthen the government's commitment to building a strong Civil Service outside London.

The new development, adjacent to Waverley Station, will deliver grade A offices to be occupied by civil servants from several UK Government departments. This includes HMRC who will operate one of its 13 regional centres from New Waverley.

The hub will provide high quality, skilled jobs to the city centre, as well as contributing to the local economy. The UK government intends to develop strong links with those living and working locally and for the Hub to become a valuable asset to the local area.

Relocating civil servants from existing, often fragmented office locations, to modern, cross-departmental workplaces maximises efficiency by using space more effectively and encourages collaboration across departments.

The location of the Edinburgh hub has been chosen due to its exceptional public transport connections to the rest of Scotland and the UK.

Minister Caroline Nokes said:

This new flagship building is part of our radical upgrade of the Civil Service and will support our diverse and creative workforce as they make a real difference to the lives of people in Scotland. This landmark development will deliver significant benefits to Edinburgh and the communities within it.

Alongside significant savings for the taxpayer, the roll out of government hubs will provide modern working environments across the whole of the UK that will enable us to provide the best public services we can.

HMRC Chief Executive, Jon Thompson, said:

Locating HMRC's new regional centre for Edinburgh in the New Waverley development is another step in HMRC's transformation, into a modern, digitally-advanced tax authority. HMRC will bring its teams together to promote closer working relationships, and increasing our effectiveness in collecting taxes.

The UK Government Property Unit, as part of its remit to drive savings across the UK government estate, is overseeing the deal for the new Hub.

[Press release: Improvements to M271/A35 Redbridge roundabout in Southampton backed](#)

A proposed multi-million pound upgrade to the busy Redbridge roundabout near Southampton docks is a step closer today (Tuesday 11 July 2017) after Highways England published the results of a recent public consultation.

The scheme includes the creation of a new free flow left turn lane from the M271 to the Port of Southampton. The roundabout will also be widened on the southern side from Southampton to create four lanes and increase the capacity of the roundabout. Crossings for pedestrians and cyclists will be improved, with an additional Toucan crossing added, a footbridge will be replaced and a subway to the north of the junction will be refurbished.

Highways England Project Manager Joe Clark said:

I would like to thank everyone who took part in our consultation to improve Redbridge roundabout. This has provided a useful insight into the decision of our preferred route. It is clear from the wide range of opinions that have been collected from the public that improvements are necessary and we will use these comments to ensure that a suitable design can be achieved which best meet the objectives of the scheme.

Councillor Jacqui Rayment, Cabinet Member for Transport and Environment on Southampton City Council, said:

I am pleased that Highways England have modified their plans and residents views have been taken into account. We welcome investment into our roads network and any scheme to improve the roads even though it causes disruption and delays will be all worthwhile in the end.

A public consultation was held from 9 November to 16 December 2016, and generated 184 responses. A copy of the consultation report can be found on the Highways England website, along with a summary of the preferred route.

More than three quarters of people taking part in the consultation agreed that congestion at the roundabout was an issue and that pedestrian and cyclist facilities needed upgrading. The consultation collected a wide range of opinions on the proposed upgrade, which will now all be considered by the project team as they develop a detailed design for the improvements.

Anyone interested in the scheme can sign up to receive updates [via the project page](#) on the Highways England website.

General enquiries

Members of the public should contact the Highways England customer contact centre on 0300 123 5000.

Media enquiries

Journalists should contact the Highways England press office on 0844 693 1448 and use the menu to speak to the most appropriate press officer.

[Press release: Environment Agency minded to approve application at Horse Hill](#)

The Environment Agency is minded to approve application for an environmental permit at Horse Hill oil and gas exploratory site in Surrey.

The application is for a bespoke environmental permit to drill a new well, drill a side track to the existing well and to carry out flow testing. Horse Hill Developments Limited have also applied for a Standard Rules Permit to

store oil on site. In deciding whether or not to issue the permits, the Environment Agency will take into account all relevant considerations and legal requirements.

Before the Environment Agency grants the bespoke environmental permit there will be a further consultation period, which closes on 4 August 2017, to allow people to comment on the application.

[Further information on the bespoke application, a copy of our draft decision document and details of how to comment.](#)

An Environment Agency spokesperson said:

An environmental permit sets out stringent conditions that a site must adhere to. We will not issue an environmental permit for a site if we consider that activities taking place will cause significant pollution to the environment or harm to human health.

Although we are minded to approve the application for the bespoke permit we are still in the determination process and a final decision has not yet been made. We want to hear from the public and understand peoples' views on the application. Everybody has the chance to see what the bespoke permit may look like and to raise any additional concerns before we make any final decision.

[Press release: Francesca Osowska to leave Scotland Office](#)

The Scotland Office has announced that Director Francesca Osowska will be leaving the department later this year.

Francesca, who joined the Scotland Office in January 2015, has played an instrumental role in overseeing the implementation of the Scotland Act 2016, following the recommendations of the Smith Commission.

She will begin her new role as Chief Executive of Scottish Natural Heritage in October 2017.

Responding to the announcement, Secretary of State David Mundell said:

Since January 2015 Francesca has been a dedicated and enthusiastic voice for Scotland as Director for the Scotland Office. From ensuring the powers recommended by the Smith Commission were

delivered in full, to engaging fully with Scottish businesses as we prepare for our exit from the EU, her tenacity has helped me ensure Scotland's voice has been heard at the heart of Westminster.

On behalf of the Scotland Office I thank her for all her hard work, and warmly congratulate her on her new role.

Francesca Osowska said:

It has been a pleasure and a privilege to serve as the Director for the Scotland Office for over two and a half years, ensuring that Scotland's voice is heard in Whitehall and Whitehall's voice in Scotland.

From overseeing the implementation of the Scotland Act 2016, to witnessing the UK Government's implementation of transformative City Deals, it has been a truly rewarding experience. I would like to thank all my colleagues and wish the Scotland Office and its Ministers continued success in the future.

A competition to appoint my successor will start shortly to ensure a smooth transition before I take up my post with Scottish Natural Heritage on 2 October.

Press release: Journey planning advice for weekend of 'royal' events

Wednesday next week (19 July) kicks off a five-day 'long weekend' of events starting with the Royal Horticultural Society (RHS) Flower Show at Tatton Park near Knutsford in Cheshire, closely followed on the Thursday (20) by the competition stage of the Open Golf tournament at Royal Birkdale near Southport in Merseyside.

The motorway network around Cheshire and Merseyside, as well as parts of Lancashire, is likely to be particularly busy at key times around the weekend.

Chris Chadwick, Highways England's events planning manager for the North West, said:

Next week promises to be a very busy one in parts of the region. Our traffic officers will be working around the clock as usual to help keep drivers on the move – including responding to incidents

and setting signs warning drivers of any congestion, incidents or diversion advice.

All drivers, whether or not they are heading to the golf or horticultural show, can help themselves by planning their routes and checking for traffic and congestion before setting out on journeys.

Practice sessions at Royal Birkdale will begin on Sunday (July 16), 4 days before the start of the tournament proper. Between 30,000 and 40,000 people a day are expected to attend the tournament with up to 80,000 visitors over the 5 days of the ever popular RHS Show.

Highways England will be using signs to give journey advice for the events and its traffic officers will be on the look-out for any incidents or congestion on the motorway network.

The Royal Horticultural Society's website features full information about the show including public transport options and advice for drivers with a [dedicated journey planning page](#). The show is open between 10am and 6.30pm each day except on the Sunday when it closes at 5pm.

More information about [journey planning for the golf tournament](#).

Highways England provides live traffic information [via its website](#), local and national radio travel bulletins, electronic road signs and mobile apps. Local Twitter services are also available at @highwaysNWEST.

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