

Press release: RACE DRIVEN to support driverless cars

RACE – UKAEA’s state of the art robotics technology centre at Culham Science Centre – is to consolidate its position as a test site for driverless cars as a number of major investments in this area were announced today.

These projects will play a key role in putting the first driverless cars on public roads in the coming years. Most notable is the DRIVEN consortium* led by award-winning driverless car developers Oxbotica and including RACE. DRIVEN has received over £8m in funding from the Government’s CCAV (Centre for Connected and Autonomous Vehicles) £13m investment in this area. This will go towards developing and operating a fleet of vehicles to operate on public roads, with complete autonomy, within the next two and half years. The project will culminate with these vehicles travelling autonomously from London to Oxford (with safety drivers on board as a precaution) – as a public demonstration of the viability of this technology.

RACE will play a key role in the project. Oxbotica’s main field test activities are conducted from their base in the RACE building, and they make use of the 10 kilometres of roads, junctions, roundabouts (even traffic lights and pedestrian crossings) within the closed Culham site; a perfect ‘test track’ for these vehicles to test their ability to monitor and react to other vehicles, cyclists and people in realistic circumstances, whatever the weather. This latest funding comes amid strong support for the whole robotics and artificial intelligence community. ‘Cutting edge artificial intelligence and robotics systems that will operate in extreme and hazardous environments’ will benefit from a £270m Industrial Strategy Challenge Fund announced in the 2017 Spring Budget, and a recent House of Lords Science and Technology Committee report recommended the route ahead to harness the huge potential of connected and autonomous vehicles.

RACE Director Rob Buckingham said:

RACE has been working with Oxbotica for some time now. The DRIVEN team brings together the right combination of interests and enthusiasm to change the conversation in this exciting field from mostly speculation to real world detail. DRIVEN will show how autonomous vehicles will change the world, both for the public and industrial users.

DRIVEN is important because it will answer questions around cyber security and insurance as well as the underlying technology. RACE has a key supporting role: enabling testing on the Culham Science Centre site before we venture on the public roads. DRIVEN reinforces our aspiration to enable connected and autonomous

vehicles to be widely adopted. Starting in Oxfordshire we are already thinking about how autonomous vehicles fit within a modern transport plans for both Oxford and Didcot Garden Town. DRIVEN is a very important step on this journey.

*The DRIVEN consortium is led by Oxbotica Ltd.; the other partners in the project are the Oxford Robotics Institute, insurer XL Catlin, Nominet, Telefonica, the Transport Research Laboratory, UKAEAs RACE facility, Oxfordshire County Council, Transport for London and Westbourne Communications.

For more information please contact Nick Holloway, UKAEA Media Manager, on 01235 466232 or email nick.holloway@ukaea.uk

Statement to Parliament: Sky / Fox Merger

Update Regarding Proposed Merger of 21st Century Fox and Sky: Written statement – HCWS610

On Thursday 16 March I intervened in the proposed acquisition of Sky by 21 Century Fox on the media public interest grounds of media plurality and commitment to broadcasting standards by issuing a European Intervention Notice (EIN).

The EIN triggered the requirement for Ofcom to assess and report to me on the public interest grounds specified and for the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) to report to me on jurisdiction. I required Ofcom and the CMA to provide their reports to me in response to the EIN by Tuesday 16 May. Once I receive these reports, my decision-making role in this process would resume.

Given the proximity of this decision to the forthcoming general election and following discussions with the parties, Ofcom, the CMA and the Cabinet Office Propriety and Ethics team I wrote to Ofcom and the CMA on Friday 21 April to extend the period by which these reports should be submitted to Tuesday 20 June.

[Press release: Holy Cross bomb discovery](#)

Rt Hon James Brokenshire, MP said:

I am sickened by this incident with dissident republican terrorists placing a bomb close to a primary school in north Belfast. This shows their wanton disregard for human life, potentially putting children in danger.

The consequences could have been utterly devastating and it shows them for what they really are. I am grateful to the emergency services for their work in keeping people safe.

[Press release: Cornwall waste disposer prosecuted for illegally storing asbestos](#)

The owner of a Cornish waste disposal business has been ordered to pay almost £80,000 in fines and costs for illegally storing and treating waste including asbestos at a site near Penzance.

The site manager was also prosecuted and ordered to pay a total of £6,000 in fines and costs. The case was brought by the Environment Agency.

Leslie Allen ran a waste operation from a site in Perranuthnoe where waste from various commercial and domestic sources was illegally processed. The site was also used to store hazardous waste including asbestos. The storage and bulking of waste requires an Environment Agency permit.

Truro Crown Court heard how the defendant operated without a permit despite receiving advice and guidance from the Environment Agency and assuring officers he would apply for a permit. The business had traded for some 18 years.

An investigation was launched by the Environment Agency in 2014 after officers suspected Les Allen Waste Disposal Services was still operating illegally. The transfer of waste was often not recorded and when it was, the records were either inadequate or misleading.

Waste was recorded as being taken from a customer direct to an approved site when, in actual fact, it was transported to Perranuthnoe for sorting before being taken to various sites. The business benefitted financially from operating without an environmental permit.

During their investigation, Environment Agency officers recovered asbestos from a pile of waste at the site. It had not been bagged or stored in a secure container as is required by law.

Sentencing Allen and his site manager, Richard Shore, Judge Carr said the handling of asbestos was a 'great responsibility' and the defendants had exposed themselves and others to risk. He said poor record keeping meant we would never know what waste went through the site.

On 5 February 2016, the Environment Agency discovered Leslie Allen was continuing to run an illegal waste operation despite having been interviewed under caution and giving an assurance he would stop. The business was operating a crusher and swing shovel on land near Sunnyvale Farm, Rosudgeon, Penzance and treating mixed construction and demolition waste to raise a ground level without an Environment Agency authorisation.

Sophie Unsworth of the Environment Agency said:

Waste sites must operate within the law and always put human health and the environment above financial gain. This is especially important for sites receiving hazardous waste such as asbestos.

Despite being given repeated advice and guidance by the Environment Agency, the owner chose to continue to operate illegally, receiving, handling and storing waste, without a permit.

Leslie Allen was fined £40,000 for two offences under the Environmental Permitting (England and Wales) Regulations 2010 including, between 17 November 2014 and 6 November 2015 and 5 February 2016 operating a regulated facility, namely a waste operation at The Workshop, Perranuthnoe Lane, Perranuthnoe and on land adjacent to Sunnyvale Farm, Rosudgeon, Penzance without an environmental permit.

He was also ordered to pay £14,200 costs and £25,772 under the Proceeds of Crime Act. Allen was warned that failure to pay would result in a 9-month prison sentence.

The site manager, Richard Shore, was fined £4,000 for the same offences and ordered to pay £2,000 costs.

The sentencing hearing took place at Truro Crown Court on 10 April 2017.

The Environment Agency is currently running a [Right Waste Right Place campaign](#) aimed at small to medium sized businesses who need waste advice.

Notes to editor

- Waste crime can cause serious pollution to the environment, puts communities at risk and undermines local businesses. It's a serious issue, diverting as much as £1 billion a year from legitimate business and the Treasury.
 - Waste crime is an issue that we and the government take very seriously. The Environment Agency has enhanced powers – introduced in 2015 – to tackle illegal activity at waste sites.
 - The Environment Agency stopped nearly 1,000 illegal waste sites from operating in 2015/16.
 - 97% of waste management operators are well run and provide a much needed waste management service. But we take tough action against poor performing companies and those who commit waste crime.
 - If you see waste crime report it by calling our incident hotline on 0800 80 70 60 or anonymously to Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111.
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Press release: Natural England Board members re-appointed

Secretary of State for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, Andrea Leadsom, has reappointed Julia Aglionby, Andy Clements, Teresa Dent and Simon Lyster for second terms to the Board of Natural England.

Additionally, Nigel Reader's second term of appointment has been extended by 12 months from 1 June 2017.

The reappointments will take effect from 14 July 2017 for two years, with the exception of Andy Clements who has been reappointed for three years.

Board members provide non-executive leadership challenge and support to the executive through regular Board meetings, committees and groups. They also undertake individual lead roles on relevant issues and with local operational teams.

All appointments to the Natural England Board are made on merit and political activity plays no part in the selection process. The appointments comply with the Code of Practice of the Commissioner for Public Appointments.

Natural England is a non-departmental public body, set up under the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006. Its remit is to ensure the natural environment is conserved, enhanced and managed for the benefit of present and future generations.

There is a requirement for appointees' political activity (if significant) to be declared. None of the appointees have declared any significant political activity during the past five years.

Natural England Board Members receive £11,808 per annum based on a time commitment of 36 days.

Dr Julia Aglionby

Julia Aglionby is a Chartered Surveyor and Agricultural Valuer who advises on uplands and common land matters and is the Executive Director of the Foundation for Common Land.

She is a consultant with H and H Land and Property and a member of the Newcastle University School of Agriculture's Industrial Advisory Board. Julia has previously been Director of the National Centre for the Uplands and a non-executive director of Cumbria Rural Enterprise Agency. She has worked as an environmental economist for the Overseas Development Administration in Indonesia.

Julia lives in Cumbria on a farm run as a social enterprise focusing on local food and agricultural education.

Dr Andy Clements

Dr Andy Clements is a naturalist and ornithologist, and has a science background.

Since 2007 he has been the Chief Executive Officer of the British Trust for Ornithology and he is also a Trustee of National Biodiversity Network and he is the founder Chair, and now member, of the Council of the Cambridge Conservation Initiative.

Andy has previously worked for the government's nature conservation agencies, where he held various senior positions from 1982 until 2006 and helped to establish Natural England.

Teresa Dent CBE

Teresa Dent has been the Chief Executive Officer of the Game and Wildlife Conservation Trust since 2001, a charity whose remit is wildlife conservation with a special interest in game species. She is also Chairman of the Marlborough Downs Nature Enhancement Partnership, a board member of the Langholm Moor Demonstration Project and a director of the Game and Wildlife Scottish Demonstration Farm.

Teresa is a fellow of the Royal Agricultural Society of England, and previously was a partner with Strutt and Parker working as a farming and business management consultant.

Dr Simon Lyster

Simon Lyster is currently a non-executive Director of Northumbrian Water Group, Chairman of World Land Trust, and Trustee of Rural Community Council of Essex, Kilverstone Wildlife Charitable Trust and Conservation International (UK).

He was previously Chief Executive of Leadership for Environment and Development International and before that Director General of The Wildlife Trusts. Prior to that he was Head of Conservation Policy at the World Wide Fund for Nature UK.

Simon is qualified as a lawyer, a member of the International Council of Environmental Law and author of the book 'International Wildlife Law'. He runs a small farm business at his home in Essex, and is a Deputy Lieutenant for the county of Essex.