

# Lord David Willetts appointed as Chair of UK Space Agency Board

- Business Secretary Kwasi Kwarteng appoints Lord David Willetts as Chair of the UK Space Agency's Board
- Lord Willetts previously served as Minister for Universities and Science as well as holding Chair and Board positions across the space and science sector
- Lord Willetts will work with the recently appointed CEO of the UK Space Agency, Dr Paul Bate, to deliver on the government's vision for space

Business Secretary Kwasi Kwarteng has appointed Lord David Willetts as the Chair of the UK Space Agency's Board, the government announced today.

The appointment comes at an exciting time for the agency, looking ahead to the UK's first domestic launch this year, and following the recent publication of the [National Space Strategy](#), which sets out the government's long term commitment to building on the UK's existing strengths in order to develop the UK as a world class space economy.

Lord Willetts brings a wealth of experience to the role, and will work with the recently appointed CEO of the UK Space Agency, Dr Paul Bate, to deliver on the government's vision for space and maximise opportunities for the sector.

New UKSA Chair, Lord David Willetts, said:

I am a strong supporter of the UK space sector in all its diversity and am grateful for this new opportunity to serve it.

Business Secretary Kwasi Kwarteng said:

I am delighted to have appointed Lord David Willetts as the Chairman of the UK Space Agency's Board. Lord Willetts will bring a wealth of expertise to the role while working with the excellent Paul Bate to deliver on the UK's space ambitions.

Our £16.5 billion space sector is a major contributor to a strong and secure UK economy and looking ahead to the first satellite launches from the UK this year, this is an extremely exciting time for the industry across the country.

Previously, Lord Willetts served as Minister for Universities and Science and as the Member of Parliament for Havant, and has held a range of Chair and Board positions across the space and science sector, including Chair of the British Science Association, member of the Space Policy Advisory Board for EU

External Action Service, the Board of UKRI, and of the ESA Expert Group on the Future of Space in Europe.

Lord Willetts has officially taken up the post this month, and will bring ambitious direction and leadership to the agency's Board.

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## [New public bodies review programme launched](#)

Press release

The launch of the Public Bodies Review Programme will set out how departments should assess their public bodies.



The Cabinet Office has published guidance which will inform departments how to review their public bodies over the next five years.

The Public Bodies Review Programme delivers on commitments made in the Declaration on Government Reform to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of public bodies and will look to identify a minimum of 5% savings for each organisation.

**Minister for Brexit Opportunities and Government Efficiency Jacob Rees-Mogg said:**

Taxpayer's money should be spent efficiently and on worthwhile areas.

It's right then that we should always look at public organisations and whether they are delivering for the British people.

Departments will be asked to review their public bodies to:

- Assess whether a function should be delivered by the State, or whether an alternative is more fitting.
- Ensure public bodies have a ‘laserlike’ focus on delivering their objectives, and are not making decisions which fall under the remit of Ministers.
- Reduce the burden on the taxpayer as the increased pressures of the pandemic on the public purse come to an end.
- Spend taxpayer money with greater care and ensure performance, expenditure and other data is shared openly.

Arm’s length bodies now spend over £220 billion a year and employ over 300,000 people. It is expected that reviews will deliver average savings of at least 5%, or one in every twenty pounds spent, across the public bodies under review.

These reviews build on action already taken by the Government. The National Audit Office recently reported that since 2010 the Government has reduced the number of ALBs by a third between 2010 and 2015, saving around £3 billion annually in administrative costs. The number of ALBs identified in the Cabinet Office has fallen again from 463 to 295 between 2016 and 2019.

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## **Boost for National Infrastructure Commission with new appointments**

Nicholas Winser CBE, Kate Willard OBE and Jim Hall will strengthen infrastructure, energy and environment expertise as new Commissioners at the NIC, which was established in 2017 to provide impartial, expert advice to government on major long-term economic infrastructure challenges.

The Commission carries out in-depth studies into the UK’s major infrastructure needs – covering transport, energy, water, flood protection, waste and digital infrastructure – and makes recommendations to the government. Alongside these appointments, Neale Coleman CBE, Julia Prescott, and Andy Green CBE have been reappointed as Commissioners for further five-year terms.

**The Exchequer Secretary to the Treasury, Helen Whately, said:**

The National Infrastructure Commission plays an invaluable role providing expert and impartial advice to the government on the UK’s long-term infrastructure challenges.

These appointments bring extensive expertise to advise the Government as we boost the economy, level up opportunities, and transition to net zero.

**Chair of the Commission, Sir John Armitt, said:**

I am pleased to welcome Nick, Kate and Jim to the Commission at a critical time for ensuring long term infrastructure policy helps address some of society's biggest challenges. Their expertise will be particularly useful as we work towards publication of the second National Infrastructure Assessment next year.

I would also like to pay tribute to David Fisk as he steps down from the Commission. David has helped us chart the steps necessary to deliver a low carbon future for energy and the interventions needed to safeguard the resilience of vital services upon which we all rely. We wish David all the best for his future work in infrastructure and beyond.

The Chancellor has appointed Mr Winser, Ms Willard and Prof. Hall as NIC Commissioners until April 2027, with the appointments taking effect from 1 May 2022.

Mr Winser will replace David Fisk as the Commissioner with particular experience in the energy sector, while Prof. Hall and Ms Willard have been appointed to further strengthen the Commission's expertise on the relationship between infrastructure and the environment, and local and regional infrastructure policy.

Mr Winser CBE brings extensive experience in energy systems, markets and regulation with a 30-year career in the energy sector which included CEO of National Grid across UK and Europe, President of the European Network of Transmission System Operators for Electricity and CIGRE UK Chair. He has been the chairman of Energy Systems Catapult since 2015, was appointed chairman of the Advisory Board for the Energy Revolution ISCF programme in 2018, and served on the Advisory Panel for the Cost of Energy Review in 2017. He is also a member of the Net Zero Expert Group, a fellow of the Royal Academy of Engineering and a member of the Institute of Engineering and Technology, serving as its President in 2017/18.

Ms Willard OBE is Chair of the Thames Estuary Growth Board and the Government appointed Thames Estuary Envoy. She has lived and worked in Hungary, France and Belgium, established the first UK-Hungarian cultural partnership trust and was CEO of the UK's first rural regeneration company. Kate is on Arts Council England's National Council, and chairs both Arts Council Area Council North and the Board of Teesside International Airport. She is a Churchill Fellow and Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts (FRSA).

Prof. Hall FEng is Professor of Climate and Environmental Risks in the University of Oxford and is Director of Research in the School of Geography

and the Environment. Before joining the University of Oxford in 2011 to become Director of the University's Environmental Change Institute, Prof Hall held academic positions in Newcastle University and the University of Bristol. Professor Hall is a member of the Prime Minister's Council for Science and Technology and is Expert Advisor to the National Infrastructure Commission. He is Chair of the Science Advisory Committee of the International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis (IIASA). He was a member of the UK independent Committee on Climate Change Adaptation from 2009 to 2019.

Neale Coleman CBE, Julia Prescott and Andy Green CBE have also been reappointed for further five-year terms until April 2027.

Mr Coleman is currently Director and Founding Partner at Blackstock Partnerships Limited. Prior to this Neale worked at the Greater London Authority from 2000 – 2015, leading the Mayor's work on London's Olympic bid, the delivery of the Games and their regeneration legacy and was a Board Member of the Olympic Delivery Authority throughout its life. Neale co-chaired the Olympic Delivery Group, which had responsibility for leading preparations for the Games prior to the creation of the ODA, ensuring the right infrastructure was in place to support the largest sporting event in the world.

Ms Prescott holds several board and advisory roles. She is a co-founder and Chief Strategy Officer of Meridiam and sits on the Executive Committee of Meridiam SAS. She has been involved in long term infrastructure development and investment in the UK, Europe, North America and Africa. She is an Honorary Professor at the Bartlett School of Construction and Project Management, University College London. She also serves as Deputy Chair of the Port of Tyne.

Mr Green holds several Chair, Non-Executive Director and advisory roles, linked by his passion for how technology transforms business and our daily lives. He chairs Nominet UK which runs the .UK namespace and provides Cyber Security solutions, is Senior Independent Director at Airtel Africa plc, and has served as Chair of the Digital Catapult, an initiative to help grow the UK's digital economy.

#### **About the Appointment Process:**

Nicholas Winser, Kate Willard and Jim Hall were selected following a fair and open competition. An advisory assessment panel chaired by Sir John Armit (Chair, National Infrastructure Commission) and also consisting of Joanna Key (Director, HM Treasury), James Heath (CEO of the NIC) and Rachel Skinner (Director, WSP) interviewed a number of candidates and made recommendations to the Exchequer Secretary to the Treasury and Chancellor, which informed the selection decision.

The Treasury is committed to appointing a diverse range of people to public appointments and works to attract the broadest range of suitable applicants for posts. There were 97 applications for these positions, of which 16 candidates were shortlisted for interview. Based on data disclosed during the

appointment process, the table below shows the diversity profile of applicants and interviewees. The diversity breakdown for this appointment is below.

	Gender	Ethnicity	Disability	Sexual orientation
All applicants	80% male, 20% female	91% white, 9% ethnically diverse	90% no disability, 10% identified as having a disability	90% heterosexual, 10% LGBTQ*
Interviewees	62% male, 38% female	87% white, 13% ethnically diverse	81% no disability, 19% identified as having a disability	93% heterosexual, 7% LGBTQ*

All appointments are made on merit and political activity plays no part in the selection process. However, in accordance with the original Nolan recommendations, there is a requirement for appointees' political activity (if any declared) to be made public.

Mr Winser, Ms Willard and Prof. Hall have confirmed they have not engaged in any political activity in the last five years.

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## [2.1 million annual tax credits packs to be issued](#)

About 2.1 million tax credits customers will begin to receive their annual renewal packs this week from HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC).

The packs will be sent between 25 April and 27 May, and customers have until 31 July to check their details are correct and update HMRC if there has been a change in their circumstances.

Tax credits help working families with targeted financial support, so it is important that people do not miss out on money they are entitled to.

There are 2 types of renewal packs:

- if it has a red line across the first page and says 'reply now', customers will need to confirm their circumstances to renew their tax credits
- if it has a black line across the first page and says 'check now', customers will need to check their details are correct. If correct, customers do not need to do anything and their tax credits will be automatically renewed

About 630,000 customers will need to confirm their circumstances to renew their tax credits for the 2022 to 2023 tax year.

Renewing online is quick and easy. Customers can log into GOV.UK to check the progress of their renewal, be reassured it is being processed and know when they will hear back from HMRC. Customers choosing to use the HMRC app on their smartphone can:

- renew their tax credits
- update changes to their claim
- check their tax credits payments schedule
- find out how much they have earned for the year

HMRC has released a video to explain how tax credits customers can use the HMRC app to view, manage and update their details.

[How do I use the HMRC app to manage my tax credits?](#)

If there is a change in a customer's circumstances that could affect their tax credits claims, they must [report the changes to HMRC](#). Circumstances that could affect tax credits payments include changes to:

- living arrangements
- childcare
- working hours
- income (increase or decrease)

Tax credits are ending and will be replaced by Universal Credit by the end of 2024. Many customers who move from tax credits to Universal Credit could be financially better off and can use an [independent benefits calculator](#) to check. If customers choose to apply sooner, it is important to get independent advice beforehand as they will not be able to go back to tax credits or any other benefits that Universal Credit replaces.

Find out more about [renewing tax credits claims](#).

Customers can download the [HMRC app](#) for free from their smartphone app store.

Find out more about [Universal Credit replacing tax credits](#).

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## [\*\*New register of specialists to advise on construction products\*\*](#)

News story

The Office for Product Safety and Standards (OPSS) will commission scientific

work to support public protection.



Experts are encouraged to apply to join the register of pre-approved specialists from whom OPSS can commission short pieces of ad hoc scientific work to support its work in protecting the public.

In this call for construction products expertise, OPSS is looking for people within the domains of civil and structural engineering, fire sciences, material science as well as other associated areas of knowledge in relation to the natural analytical sciences and technical fields of expertise.

Applicants will be selected based on their experience and ability to provide scientific evidence, analysis or technical advice across OPSS's remit including:

- Construction product research support: methodological design, proposal appraisal, rapid evidence reviews, report evaluation/peer review, quality assurance and risk analysis.
- Guidance and technical support on the development and validation of analytical methodologies applied to the assessment of construction products.
- Ad hoc technical advice on construction product safety issues which may impact human health.

Further information can be found on the [OPSS Careers Website](#)

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