

High Speed Rail (West Midlands – Crewe) Bill: English Votes for English Laws

Written statement made by Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Transport, Ms Nusrat Ghani.

Sellafield Ltd CEO to step down after five years of unprecedented progress

A senior executive at the Sellafield site since 2000, Paul became Managing Director then the first Chief Executive of Sellafield Ltd in 2016.

As Chief Executive, Paul has overseen unprecedented progress in the mission to make Sellafield safer, sooner.

This progress includes: removing the majority of spent fuel from the world's oldest nuclear fuel pond; creating access routes in to the world's oldest nuclear fuel store and the start of the removal of materials from some of the world's most hazardous nuclear facilities.

In the process, Paul established Sellafield Ltd as a business that delivers more value for money than ever before; Sellafield Ltd is on target to deliver £1.4 billion in efficiencies by 2020 and has pledged a further £1 – £1.4 billion to government by 2029.

As part of delivering these successes, Paul oversaw the introduction of new terms and conditions across Sellafield Ltd and successfully managed the completion of nuclear fuel reprocessing at Thorp, whilst ensuring that every person working at the plant remained in employment. Paul has also Identified and started to tackle issues with regard to equality, diversity and inclusion, including taking personal action to address bullying and harassment.

In recent months, Paul has overseen the creation of a new 20-year, multi-billion-pound partnership contract between Sellafield Ltd and the supply chain partners (PPP) that will enable more progress to be made at Sellafield.

As the first Chief Executive of Sellafield Ltd, Paul has established a new approach towards how the company acts as a responsible corporate citizen. Under Paul's leadership, Sellafield Ltd has recruited record numbers of apprentices, and our new approach towards the social impact of Sellafield's operations has seen Sellafield Ltd invest over £40 million in projects of benefit to the communities closest to the site since 2015, including:

- a £10 million investment in the new Campus Whitehaven
- £1.75 million in the new WELL Project designed to lift educational attainment levels in every West Cumbrian classroom
- £3.6 million into new economic growth and diversification projects in Whitehaven
- the creation of a new community apprenticeships scheme providing apprenticeships for 50 people.

Paul Foster said:

It has been an incredible privilege to serve as the first Chief Executive of Sellafield Ltd. I have had the pleasure to work alongside some remarkable people on a mission of acute national importance and together, we have ensured that more progress than ever before is being made at Sellafield.

As a new business, Sellafield Ltd is providing more value for the taxpayer than at any point previously. We are making Sellafield safer, sooner, investing in the local community and changing the business to ensure future success for the taxpayer, government, NDA, our workforce and our local communities.

Five years is a significant amount of time to spend as Chief Executive in any organisation. It is the right time to seek a new challenge and I know that the Sellafield workforce will continue to be successful in the future.

Sellafield Ltd Chairman, Lorraine Baldry, said:

Paul has delivered unprecedented progress across the Sellafield site and business and his achievements will be lasting. Five years is a considerable amount of time to serve in such a challenging role and I'm grateful for everything that Paul has achieved. I wish him every future success.

NDA Chief Executive, David Peattie, said:

I'd like to thank Paul for his five years leading the organisation and for his support in building a stronger NDA group. His legacy of cleaning-up the UK's largest and most complex nuclear site is one of national importance.

Sellafield Ltd today is a stronger organisation because of Paul's leadership, progressing hazard and risk reduction on the site and supporting the goals of the UK nuclear decommissioning programme.

LN-Gaiety's takeover of MCD raises competition concerns

The Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) has been investigating the proposed takeover by LN-Gaiety Holdings Limited – a joint venture between Live Nation Entertainment Inc (Live Nation) and Gaiety Investments – of MCD Productions Unlimited Company (MCD).

Both companies run music festivals, whilst MCD also promotes live music events. Live Nation manages artists, operates venues and provides ticketing services through Ticketmaster – which it owns.

Following its initial Phase 1 investigation, the CMA is concerned that the deal could result in less competition in the music promotion industry in Northern Ireland.

There are only a few rival music promoters in the region and they mainly rely on Ticketmaster to sell tickets to their events. As Live Nation already owns Ticketmaster, the CMA is concerned that if it were to acquire MCD, it may be able to stop rival promoters selling tickets through that platform post-merger. This could result in less competition in promotion services to artists, leading to higher prices for concert goers, as well as a smaller variety of live music events to choose from.

The CMA has also considered other aspects of the companies' businesses, such as music festivals and access to music venues, but does not have competition concerns in these areas.

If the merging businesses are unable to address the CMA's concerns, the deal will be referred for an in-depth Phase 2 investigation to be carried out by a group of independent CMA panel members.

For more information, visit the [LN-Gaiety Holdings / MCD Productions](#) merger inquiry page.

UK to establish National Committee for the Safety of Journalists

The move underlines the Government's commitment to press freedom and the safety of journalists to operate in the UK and comes as the Foreign Secretary hosts an International Conference for Media Freedom in London.

The Committee will be asked to devise a National Action Plan on the Safety of Journalists and ensure that those who threaten journalists are held to account. The plan will examine current protections offered to journalists in the UK, and consider how to work together to build on existing strengths.

DCMS Secretary of State Jeremy Wright said:

With rising disinformation and threats against the media, the UK's strong and independent press is a beacon of freedom that this Government is committed to supporting and preserving.

The Committee will champion journalists' ability to safely carry out their important roles in society and to continue to hold the powerful to account. This is part of our broader commitment to ensuring the future sustainability of high-quality, public interest news.

The announcement follows a recommendation to its member states by the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), the world's largest security oriented inter-governmental organisation.

Membership of the Committee is to be decided, but the intention is that it will bring together representatives from journalism organisations and relevant government departments.

It is envisaged the Committee will make recommendations to Government, but will not be able to interfere with the independence of the press.

DCMS will now engage across government and more widely to agree the terms of reference and membership of the Committee.

As well as supporting media freedom in the UK, the Government has also made clear its commitment to promoting this freedom abroad. It is encouraging all governments at the Global Conference for Media Freedom to commit to developing a National Action Plan.

The establishment of the Committee is in line with the Government's objectives on reinforcing the rules-based international system and supporting a prominent UK role in the United Nations and OSCE post-Brexit.

The conference is a key part of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office's international campaign to shine a global spotlight on media freedom and increase the cost to those who are attempting to restrict it.

ENDS

Notes to Editors

- The International Conference on Media Freedom is taking place on 10 and 11 July in London, co-hosted with the Canadian Government.

- In the context of recent attacks, threats, and murders of journalists, in April 2019 the OSCE urged member states to establish “a national committee for safety of journalists which would gather representatives of the prosecutor’s office, the police and journalist associations to verify that all attacks and threats are properly investigated, improve procedures if needed; propose protection measures when necessary and implement preventive action to reinforce the security of journalists.”
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Eighty-thousand more children in good or outstanding sponsored academies

Eighty-thousand more children are now studying in good or outstanding sponsored academies, thanks to significant improvements in the last eighteen months.

[Latest figures](#) published by the Department for Education today (Thursday 11 July), show there are 380,000 children in England now studying in good and outstanding sponsored academies, up from 300,000 in December 2017.

By matching typically under-performing schools with a strong academy, schools are able to benefit from the network of support from a trust with both the capacity and capability to drive up standards, giving parents the opportunity to send their children to a good or outstanding school, where they may not have previously been able to.

Today’s figures also show that 7 in 10 previously under-performing council-run schools, that have converted to become sponsored academies supported by a strong academy trust, are now rated good or outstanding by Ofsted.

Education Secretary Damian Hinds said:

Academies have been at the heart of reforms that have revolutionised education and driven up standards since 2010, and this is just the latest evidence that they are leading the way in turning around some of the most challenging schools.

It should not be forgotten that academy trusts are charitable institutions, giving back to their communities, and making a huge difference to the futures of thousands of young people – the figures today prove this point loud and clear, and it is important that we tell their stories.

The figures published today follow a significant increase in the proportion of children studying in good or outstanding schools – of all types, not just

sponsored academies – in England since 2010, which has increased from 66% in August 2010, to 85% in March 2019. It also builds on an analysis published earlier this year which showed that standards typically rise faster in many sponsored academies than in similar council-run schools.

At a summit of academy leaders from some of the largest education trusts across the country on Wednesday (10 July) the Education Secretary Damian Hinds also paid tribute to academy trusts that have turned around under-performing schools since 2010 and called for trust leaders to redouble their efforts to place their charitable institutions at the heart of their communities.

Representatives from education trusts across the country attended the meeting, including Lucy Heller Chief Executive of Ark and Sir Daniel Moynihan of the Harris Federation, whose trusts are leading examples of the central role that academies have played in driving improvements in some of the worst performing schools across the country.

Harris Academy Bermondsey, for example, opened as a City Academy in 2006, replacing Aylwin Girls High School. Prior to conversion, Aylwin had underperformed for three years in a row, between 2001 and 2003. Since opening as an academy, the school has been judged Outstanding on both occasions, with Ofsted praising the 'excellent support' of the Harris Federation in supporting disadvantaged students.

To further build on the government's ambition to improve how all types of schools across the country are run and ensure transparency is consistent across the education system, the department will also shortly be publishing a new consultation to address the disparity between transparency of financial reporting in local authority schools and academies.

This will aim to strengthen local authority schools by bringing them in line with the accountability and transparency standards that academies are already required to meet.

Leora Cruddas, Chief Executive of the Confederation of School Trusts, said:

School trusts are education charities that are set up purely for the purposes of running and improving schools to give children a better future.

They do this by creating a strong and resilient structure to ensure that each child is a powerful learner and that adults have the opportunities to learn and develop as teachers and leaders.

More than 8,300 schools in the country have become an academy or opened as a free school since 2010 and hundreds of schools each year make the positive choice to become an academy. Earlier this year, to mark the milestone of 50% of children in state-funded schools in England being taught in an academy or free school, Damian Hinds called on more schools to consider becoming an academy and to embrace the freedom and autonomy it offers.