

News story: Education Secretary appoints new Social Mobility Commissioners

The new commissioners come from all walks of life and include leaders from the fields of business, education and technology. Many have their own personal stories of how they have overcome barriers to success and now work to improve social mobility in their sectors.

Education Secretary Damian Hinds said:

Dame Martina and I share a vision for a country where we raise our ambitions for every child, whatever their background. Education is at the heart of this, giving everyone the chance to fulfil the spark of potential that exists in them.

This new team of commissioners brings together established business men and women, policy makers, academics and young people all with important perspectives to bring. The Social Mobility Commission will benefit from the expertise of this diverse mix of individuals, all of whom will bring their own unique stamp to what social mobility means in their lives.

I look forward to working with the new Commission to make our shared vision a reality.

The appointments follow approval from the Prime Minister and the Public Appointments Committee, and include the editor of a women's magazine Cosmopolitan, a university professor, a headteacher and two youth ambassadors.

Dame Martina Milburn, Chair of the Social Mobility Commission said:

I am delighted to welcome a record number of Social Mobility Commissioners who will work to make England a fairer society.

This is a group of people with real-life experiences of social mobility to help challenge government, business, and society as a whole, to create a fair system where people can thrive.

Many of our new Commissioners had modest starts in life and know the barriers that young people must overcome to become successful. They are also individuals with the skills, resources, and energy to drive real change around the country, united by a passion for fairness and an ability to make a real difference to people's lives.

The Social Mobility Commissioners will take up their new roles next month with an event planned to mark the Commission's relaunch on 11 December.

Their appointments build on Dame Martina's vision to bring greater ethnic, gender and age diversity to Commission by tapping into a diverse range of backgrounds.

Younger commissioners, as well as members based outside London and the south east will make sure its work is better represented regionally, helping to raise its profile and influence young people directly.

Joining Dame Martina as commissioners will be:

- Alastair da Costa, Chair of Capital City College Group
- Liz Williams, Group Director of Digital Society at BT
- Farrah Storr, Editor-in-chief of Cosmopolitan
- Harvey Matthewson, Volunteer, and part-time Sales Assistant at Marks & Spencer
- Jessica Oghenegweke, Project co-ordinator at the Diana Award
- Jody Walker, Senior Vice President at TJX Europe (TK Maxx and Home Sense in the UK)
- Pippa Dunn, Founder of Broody, helping entrepreneurs and start ups
- Saeed Atcha, Founder and Chief Executive Officer of Xplode magazine
- Sam Friedman, Associate Professor in Sociology at London School of Economics
- Sammy Wright, Vice Principal of Southmoor Academy, Sunderland
- Sandra Wallace, Managing Partner UK and Joint Managing Director Europe at DLA Piper
- Steven Cooper, Outgoing Chief Executive Officer of Barclaycard Business

[Press release: £3 million to boost digital skills in Manchester](#)

The funding announced in the Budget will see the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) team up with the Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) for the pilot project.

Employers and training providers will identify which digital skills are in short supply in the local area and design a targeted approach that can help people prepare to move into digital roles.

Greater Manchester is one of the largest digital clusters in the UK with almost 8,000 digital businesses employing more than 80,000 people.

Digital Minister Margot James said:

We want everyone to benefit from the digital revolution and by working in partnership with industry we can make sure that we're giving people the skills they need to succeed in the future.

Greater Manchester has a thriving and growing tech sector and as part of our modern Industrial Strategy we're helping to make the UK one of the world's most digitally skilled nations.

Mayor of Greater Manchester, Andy Burnham said:

Ensuring people in Greater Manchester have the skills they need to access the jobs that are being created in our outstanding digital and tech sector will be a key part of making our post-Brexit future a success.

Greater Manchester is already leading the way with the devolution of adult skills funding and creating our own Local Industrial Strategy, alongside the Government, to ensure everyone here can access good jobs and benefit from the growth in our economy. This project will help take this work even further.

Our devolved administrations are primed and ready to make decisions on key domestic agendas and with further devolution over areas like skills, we can truly make the difference people need.

The project will be co-funded with employers and will particularly look to encourage training provision that is offered flexibly so that those already in work or with other responsibilities can benefit from opportunities to develop new digital skills and move into exciting new roles.

This will support the Local Industrial Strategy for Greater Manchester and complement the devolution of adult skills funding which is making it more responsive to the needs of local employers.

The announcement builds on the other good news for Greater Manchester in the budget, following the plans outlined for the Greater Manchester Local Industrial Strategy.

The progress statement published this week showcases the work that has been done so far by local leaders in the Northern Powerhouse who are working with the Government and businesses to identify economic opportunities that the region can seize in the years to come.

[Press release: Government launches consultation on community involvement in shale gas proposals](#)

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[Press release: Government launches consultation on community involvement in shale gas proposals](#)

Shale gas developers could be required to consult local communities, even before submitting a planning application, following the launch of the latest [government consultation](#) seeking to further reform shale industry practice in England.

Launched today (31 October 2018), the consultation seeks the views on whether to:

- require developers to publish relevant information
- open a meaningful dialogue with communities and stakeholders
- listen to residents and take account of what they say

Developers would then be able to address concerns where possible before submitting final proposals to local authorities.

Early engagement with communities at the pre-application stage would give local people an earlier say on proposals, whilst making developers aware of issues of importance to the community that may need to be resolved through working with the relevant local authority.

It's part of the government's commitment to speed up decision making, as it's

recognised that no one benefits from unnecessary delays when determining planning applications.

Those with an interest have until Monday 7 January 2019 to respond.

Today's announcement follows the [consultation on re-designating exploratory drilling as permitted development](#). This closed on Thursday 25 October and a response is currently being considered.

Further information

View the [consultation documentation](#).

The new planning rulebook and existing guidance makes it clear that early engagement has potential to improve the effectiveness of the system for all those involved. However, the proposed reforms out for consultation seek to take it a step further by making it a formal requirement before submitting an application.

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Press release: We bake a winner – could you?

Building roads may seem a million miles from baking, but a good quality motorway, or major A road – those managed by us – is made up of many, distinctive layers, all with expertly picked and mixed ingredients.

Our Director of Asset Development, Safety, Engineering and Standards Nicola Debnam said:

Our roads connect the country together and our network helps four million journeys to be made safely and reliably each day. We want the people who use them to be safe and a big part of that is ensuring we have a good quality road surface too. Some people may not be aware of the incredible engineering that has taken place beneath their wheels to make them happen. But just like a cake, it really is a refined recipe.

We hope our new way of illustrating our work will encourage people who may not normally consider a career in engineering to think again – a job with Highways England could satisfy your career appetite!

Our teams of expert chefs design each road, building a number of special layers starting with a sub-base and finishing with the smooth icing of the surface layer.

Road surface expert Lyle Andrew, Director of Development for the Institute of Asphalt Technology, added:

Just as expert bakers carefully select and prepare their ingredients to make the finest cakes, highway engineers specify and use high quality constituents to ensure that the materials used in the construction of our roads make the perfect blend of strength, durability and smooth surface. An accurate proportion of each ingredient is as vital to the engineer as it is to the star baker.

Using our well tested basic recipe (we don't take any whisks!), our chefs will change the ingredients for each road as needed.

Starting with a sub-base of crushed stones, like a cheesecake base giving the cake a strong foundation and preventing a 'soggy bottom', it's followed by a base of coarse stones like a rich fruit cake full of fruit and nuts. Next our chefs work on the binder layer, which is like a sponge full of fine

ingredients (flour and sugar), similar to a Victoria sponge. Finally, as with any quality cake our surface layer, like the good quality smooth icing, providing drivers with a smooth skid resistant surface while preventing surface water from seeping into the other layers. Each layer has a special purpose, whether providing support, drainage or load distribution.

Holding the winning cake design together is a layer of top quality sticky jam, otherwise known as the bond coat.

It works the other way too. In a Highways England-funded trial, Nottingham University has used every day sunflower oil, to help repair road surfaces. The University found that by placing capsules of the oil in asphalt, a material used for surfacing roads, they would 'heal' cracks in the road as they emerged by softening the asphalt around the crack.

So while you settle down to watch the Bake Off contestants battle it out , consider that if you love baking, you might love making a road.

Motorways and major A roads connect businesses, families and friends. Yet the country faces a shortage of the people that build them. That's why we're taking part in the [Year of Engineering](#) campaign, which aims to inspire young people to consider engineering as a rewarding career. The company is looking for a continuing pipeline of young engineers to deliver the multi-billion investment plans network, improving lives and making a positive difference to the world.

If this has inspired you to consider a career in engineering please visit our [careers website](#) for further details.

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.