

News story: Clean-up work underway in Salisbury in next phase of recovery

Clean-up work is beginning in Salisbury after the appalling nerve agent attack, to bring a small number of potentially contaminated sites back into safe use for the people of the city and its visitors.

This follows the continuing handover of sites from the police investigation to recovery operations, including The Maltings, the cemetery, Zizzi and the Ashley Wood compound. In total nine sites, three of which are in the city centre, have been identified as requiring some level of specialist cleaning.

Today (Tuesday 17 April) a small cordoned area of London Road cemetery was the first area to be reopened to the public after extensive investigations and testing established that it was not contaminated.

All remaining potentially contaminated sites will remain secured and the current scientific assessment is that the remainder of Salisbury is safe for residents and visitors. Public Health England have reaffirmed that the risk to the general public is low.

Work to clean each site will involve a process of testing, removal of items which may have been contaminated, chemical cleaning and retesting. Sites will not be released back into use until test results and the work undertaken has been reviewed and approved by the government's decontamination science assurance group.

The work, which is expected to take a number of months, is being planned and overseen by Defra based on expert advice from Defence Science and Technology Laboratory (Dstl), Public Health England, Department for Health and Social Care, Home Office, and Ministry of Defence (MOD). The clean-up operation will be carried out in partnership with Wiltshire Council with support from the MOD, who are providing specialist teams to carry out work on the sites. Around 190 specialist military personnel from the Army and RAF will support the operation.

Defra's Chief Scientific Adviser Ian Boyd, who is chair of the decontamination science assurance group overseeing the work, said:

Our approach is based on the best scientific evidence and advice to ensure decontamination is carried out in a thorough and careful way. Our number one priority is making these sites safe for the public, so they can be returned to use for the people of Salisbury.

Thanks to detailed information gathered during the police's investigation, and our scientific understanding of how the agent works and is spread, we have been able to categorise the likely level of contamination at each site and are drawing up tailored plans.

Meticulous work is required and we expect it will be a number of months before all sites are fully reopened.

The public will begin to see more activity in the city as the work gets underway. In the coming days residents can expect to see current cordons around the most public sites replaced with secure fencing, backed by police patrols and security guards. At certain points during decontamination, some cordons will be temporarily expanded to allow workers access to the sites with specialist equipment and ensure public safety as work is underway. Wherever possible this sort of disruption will be kept to a minimum.

As work in the city moves from site to site the local authority will keep businesses and the community informed. The clean-up work goes hand in hand with the [£2.5m already announced](#) to support businesses, boost tourism and meet unexpected costs in recognition of the exceptional response and recovery effort in Salisbury. Baroness Jane Scott, the Leader of Wiltshire Council, said:

We are pleased that work will be starting to decontaminate the sites affected by the shocking attack in our city. Working together with local and national agencies we are doing all we can to help Salisbury return to normal. Our main concern is to ensure that Salisbury is safe for residents, businesses and visitors and that the city can focus on the future, its recovery and that it will go from strength to strength.

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Press release: G7 leaders: statement on chemical weapons use in Syria

We, the G7 Leaders of Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the United Kingdom, the United States of America and the European Union, are united in condemning, in the strongest possible terms, the use of chemical weapons in the April 7 attack in Eastern Ghouta, Syria.

We fully support all efforts made by the United States, the United Kingdom and France to degrade the Assad regime's ability to use chemical weapons and to deter any future use, demonstrated by their action taken on April 13. This response was limited, proportionate and necessary – and taken only after exhausting every possible diplomatic option to uphold the international norm against the use of chemical weapons.

Use of chemical weapons is a breach of the [Chemical Weapons Convention](#) and constitutes a threat to international peace and security. The repeated and morally reprehensible use of chemical weapons by the Assad regime in the past has been confirmed by independent international investigators. We condemn this deliberate strategy of terrorizing local populations and forcing them into submission. Syria's possession of chemical weapons and their means of delivery are illegal under [UN Security Council Resolution 2118](#) and the Chemical Weapons Convention. We stand together against impunity for those who develop or use these weapons, anywhere, anytime, under any circumstances.

We remain committed to a diplomatic solution to the conflict in Syria. We commend and support UN Special Envoy de Mistura's efforts towards an inclusive and credible political transition in accordance with [UN Security Council Resolution 2254](#) and the [Geneva Communiqué](#).

Press release: Devolved Brexit legislation referred to the Supreme Court

The UK Government's senior Law Officers, the Attorney General and the Advocate General for Scotland, are referring EU exit legislation passed in the Scottish Parliament and the National Assembly for Wales to the Supreme Court.

They are asking for a ruling on whether this legislation is constitutional, and properly within devolved legislative powers. The legal power to refer devolved legislation to the Supreme Court for a ruling on its constitutionality – as set out in the Devolution Acts – is exercisable by the Law Officers in the public interest.

Announcing the decision, the Attorney General, Jeremy Wright QC MP said:

This legislation risks creating serious legal uncertainty for individuals and businesses as we leave the EU. This reference is a protective measure which we are taking in the public interest. The Government very much hopes this issue will be resolved without the need to continue with this litigation

The two Bills – the UK Withdrawal from the European Union (Legal Continuity) (Scotland) Bill, and the Law Derived from the European Union (Wales) Bill – passed through the Scottish Parliament and Welsh Assembly on 21 March this year.

The reference is made to the UK Supreme Court under powers conferred by the Scotland Act 1998 and the Government of Wales Act 2006, which provide the Law Officers with discretion to ask the Supreme Court to consider whether legislation passed by the devolved legislatures is within their respective legislative competence. These powers allow the Law Officers to fulfil their unique constitutional duties to uphold the rule of law and the boundaries of the devolution settlements.

The European Union (Wales) Bill and the UK Withdrawal from the European Union (Legal Continuity) (Scotland) Bill cover very similar ground to the EU(Withdrawal)Bill currently before Parliament but with significant differences in terms of the EU law that is retained and the processes by which it can be amended. To leave these pieces of legislation on the statute book would create very significant legal uncertainty as to how the law would operate.

News story: National Museums Liverpool Trustee Extensions

Andrew McCluskey

Andrew is a founding member, lead singer and songwriter in the successful musical group Orchestral Manoeuvres in the Dark. He has achieved 60 global gold and platinum album and single awards and has three Ivor Novello Award nominations. The group's music has been featured on several major film soundtrack recordings including *Pretty in Pink* and *Waltz with Bashir*. Andrew has performed with The Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra in Liverpool and at the Liverpool Night as part of the 2010 Shanghai Expo. OMD continue to play live at major global music festivals and concerts, recently headlining the UK/Mexican Dual Year festival in Guadalajara. His song *Enola Gay* was selected to feature in the opening ceremony of the 2012 London Olympics. In February 2015 the band performed at the Dresden Peace Prize awards on the 70th anniversary of the bombing of that city where Andy delivered a speech outlining how music had helped to heal the wounds of history and build bonds of tolerance and understanding. Andrew is a frequent contributor to, and reviewer for, BBC Radio 4 Front Row Programme and regular interviewee and commentator for television documentaries, books, and radio programmes on musical history and culture.

Philip Price

Philip is a leading figure within the North West investment community. He is an owner director of Dow Schofield Watts, a prominent corporate finance advisory business in the North of England. For over 20 years Philip has provided specialist corporate finance advice to growing businesses across a broad range of clients and sectors. He has advised both private and public organisations on an array of transactions including significant fundraising, corporate mergers and acquisitions together with the delivery of key strategic guidance; this extends to the management and development of investments held under an associated private equity fund, PHD Equity Partners. Philip is a member of the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales (ICAEW) having trained and qualified as a chartered accountant with KPMG in Liverpool. He worked across KPMG's Liverpool and Manchester offices for 10 years prior to joining Dow Schofield Watts. He is also a Fellow of the Chartered Institute for Securities and Investment. Philip has been based in Liverpool since 1990 when he came to study at John Moores University. He now lives in the Woolton area of Liverpool with his wife and three young children.

The roles are not remunerated. This appointment has been made in accordance with the [Cabinet Office's Governance Code on Public Appointments](#). The appointments process is regulated by the Commissioner for Public

Appointments. Under the Code, any significant political activity undertaken by an appointee in the last five years must be declared. This is defined as including holding office, public speaking, making a recordable donation, or candidature for election. Andrew and Philip have declared no such activity.