[News story: Landmark for English Channel electricity link project](#)

Updated: Added further explanation of the milestone following feedback

The Marine Management Organisation (MMO) has issued a comprehensive decision for the IFA2 (Interconnexion France-Angleterre) project under the TEN-E Regulations, after it attained all of the required statutory consents in UK consenting regime.

The IFA2 interconnector is a 1,000mw high voltage direct current (HVDC) link, which will run from Normandy in France to Hampshire in England. The project is being carried out by National Grid IFA2 Ltd and RTE.

MMO Senior Marine Licensing Manager Matthew Kinmond said:

> This is the first comprehensive decision from the MMO under the TEN-E Regulations and the first in the UK for a cross-border and multiple consenting regime interconnector project. It represents a major milestone for the IFA2 project.

Dave Luetchford Head of IFA2 from National Grid said:

Enhancing Great Britain's energy connection to France will bring a number of benefits, including increasing security of electricity supplies for both countries and providing opportunities for shared use of renewable energy.

Find out more about the [IFA2 project](#)

Find out more about [TEN-E Regulations](#)

[News story: Landmark for English Channel electricity link project](#)

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Find out more about the [IFA2 project](#)

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[Press release: Environment Secretary publishes bill to strengthen animal welfare](#)

A new law will ensure animal abusers are jailed for up to 5 years and animal sentience is reflected in domestic law, under plans published by the Environment Secretary today.

The Government has published a draft bill which would increase the maximum prison sentence for animal cruelty tenfold, from six months to five years, in England and Wales. The draft bill also sets out that the government "must have regard to the welfare needs of animals as sentient beings in formulating and implementing government policy". Subject to consultation on the draft bill, the government will legislate to deliver both aims.

The plans underline the government's commitment to raising animal welfare standards, ensuring there will be enhanced protections for animals as we leave the EU.

Environment Secretary Michael Gove said:

> As we leave the EU we will deliver a Green Brexit, not only maintaining but enhancing animal welfare standards.
>
> Animals are sentient beings who feel pain and suffering, so we are writing that principle into law and ensuring that we protect their welfare.
>
> Our plans will also increase sentences for those who commit the most heinous acts of animal cruelty to five years in jail.
>
> We are a nation of animal lovers so we will make Brexit work not just for citizens but for the animals we love and cherish too.

The plans to increase maximum sentences follows a number of recent shocking cases where courts have said they would have handed down longer sentences had they been available, including a case last year when a man trained dogs to ruthlessly torture other animals, including trapping a fox and a terrier dog in a cage to brutally attack each other.

The move has been strongly welcomed by animal welfare groups and follows dedicated campaigning from Battersea Dogs & Cats Home.

Battersea Dogs & Cats Home's Chief Executive Claire Horton said:

> Battersea is greatly encouraged by the Government's willingness to

see sentences for the most shocking cases of animal cruelty increase from six months to five years and today's Defra announcement takes a significant step in that direction.

Battersea is very much at the front line of animal welfare and it's heart-breaking to see truly shocking cases of animal cruelty and neglect come through our doors, where dogs and cats have clearly had to endure so much suffering.

The current maximum cruelty sentence of six months in England and Wales is neither a punishment nor a deterrent but Battersea believes today's publication of a draft Bill could help to achieve both.

The draft Bill is part of a wider programme of reform to cement the UK's position as a global leader on animal welfare. Earlier in the year, we announced plans to make CCTV mandatory in all slaughterhouses and we have committed to taking steps to control the export of live farm animals for slaughter as we leave the EU.

1. Cases of extreme cruelty are rare — while on average about 1,150 people per year are convicted for animal cruelty, fewer than five of them receive the current maximum sentence. The change in law will ensure that offenders are properly punished in those rare but shocking cases.
2. Under the government's plans, courts will retain the ability to hand out an unlimited fine and ban an offender from owning animals in the future, but crucially they will also have the ability to sentence the worst cases appropriately. The move will bring maximum sentences for animal cruelty in England into line with other countries such as Australia, Canada and the Republic of Ireland.
3. Some of the recent shocking cases in which courts commented they would have handed down longer prison sentences had the law allowed them include:

- A man who systematically abused and killed several puppies by beating, choking and stabbing them, sentenced to the maximum six months' imprisonment and banned from owning animals.
- A man who kicked his girlfriend's dog to death, given a custodial sentence of just over five months, fined £1,000 and banned from owning animals.
- A man who fed his dog aspirin and paracetamol to try to kill her, before beating her to death with a shovel, sentenced to four months in prison and banned from owning animals.

[Press release: National Data Guardian 2017 report published](#)

The National Data Guardian (NDG), today publishes the [National Data Guardian for Health and Care 2017 report: Impact and Influence for patients and service users](#)

The publication marks 3 years since Dame Fiona Caldicott was appointed as the first NDG, looks back over this first term of office and describes future priorities. It sets out a clear case for the independent advice and challenge the role provides to ensure that confidential data collected by the NHS and social care services is properly safeguarded and used appropriately to improve care. It also anticipates the NDG role being place on a statutory footing during this Parliament.

The report reinforces the fundamental requirement of building public trust for successful advancements in health and care based on data sharing. [The 3 principles that have informed the NDG's work](#) since she was asked by the Secretary of State for Health to take up the role remain crucial:

1. To encourage sharing of information in the interests of providing care to individuals.
2. There should be no surprises to citizens and they should have choice about the use of their data.
3. There must be dialogue with the public, helping to increase their knowledge and choices about how data is used to improve health and care.

Dame Fiona said: "New technologies and ways of sharing data mean that we can now gain huge benefit from the sharing of health and care data, both in terms of individuals' own care and the broader social good of advancing research and treatment. However, as NDG I have seen time and again that the most praiseworthy attempts at innovation falter if they lose public trust.

"Those entrusted with looking after and using patient data must demonstrate their right to be trusted by adopting the highest standards of data security and giving people a right to a genuine choice over how data is used. The public must be included in understanding and supporting innovation which relies on data generated by their use of health and care services."

[Press release: UK House Price Index for October 2017](#)

The lowest number of repossession sales in August 2017 was in the East of

England.

*Figures for the two most recent months are not being published because there are not enough new build transactions to give a meaningful result.

The [UK Property Transaction Statistics](#) showed that the number of seasonally adjusted transactions on UK properties with a value of £40,000 or greater has increased by 9.2% in the year to October 2017. Between September 2017 and October 2017, property transactions increased by 1.7%.

The Bank of England's [Agents' summary of business conditions](#) reported that housing market demand has strengthened overall but with a divergence between the regions, as there are signs of excess supply in London and the South East but excess demand in the majority of other UK regions.

Looking more closely at regional levels of the UK, the largest annual growth was in the East Midlands at 7%, up from 6.3% in September 2017. It was followed by the South West, which showed annual growth of 6.7%. The slowest annual growth was in London at 2.1%, a fall from 2.9% in September 2017. This is the 11th consecutive month where the growth in London house prices has remained below the UK average. The second slowest annual growth was in the North East at 2.4%.

1. The UK House Price Index (HPI) is published on the second or third Tuesday of each month with Northern Ireland figures updated quarterly. The November 2017 UK HPI will be published at 9.30am on 16 January 2018. See [calendar of release dates](#).

2. From this month, we are making some changes to improve the accuracy of the UK HPI. We are not publishing average price and percentage change for new build and existing resold property as we have previously done, because there are not currently enough new build transactions to provide a reliable result. This means that in this month's UK HPI, the earliest new build/existing resold property breakdown is for August 2017, in line with the sales volumes currently available.

3. The UK HPI revision period has been extended to 13 months, following a review of the revision policy (see [calculating the UK HPI](#) section 4.4). This ensures the data used is more comprehensive.

4. Sales volume data is also available by property status (new build and existing property) and funding status (cash and mortgage) in our [downloadable data tables](#). Transactions involving the creation of a new register, such as

new builds, are more complex and require more time to process. Read [Revisions to the UK HPI data](#).

5. Revision tables have been introduced for England and Wales within the downloadable data. Tables will be available in csv format. See [about the UK HPI](#) for more information.

6. Data for the UK HPI is provided by HM Land Registry, Registers of Scotland, Land & Property Services/Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency and the Valuation Office Agency.

7. The UK HPI is calculated by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) andLand & Property Services/Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency. It applies a hedonic regression model that uses the various sources of data on property price, in particular HM Land Registry's Price Paid Dataset, and attributes to produce estimates of the change in house prices each month. Find out more about the methodology used from the [ONS](#) and [Northern Ireland Statistics & Research Agency](#).

8. The [UK Property Transaction statistics](#)are taken from HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) monthly estimates of the number of residential and non-residential property transactions in the UK and its constituent countries. The number of property transactions in the UK is highly seasonal, with more activity in the summer months and less in the winter. This regular annual pattern can sometimes mask the underlying movements and trends in the data series so HMRC also presents the UK aggregate transaction figures on a seasonally adjusted basis. Adjustments are made for both the time of year and the construction of the calendar, including corrections for the position of Easter and the number of trading days in a particular month.

9. UK HPI seasonally adjusted series are calculated at regional and national levels only. See [data tables](#)

10. The first estimate for new build average price (April 2016 report) was based on a small sample which can cause volatility. A three-month moving average has been applied to the latest estimate to remove some of this volatility.

11. Work has been taking place since 2014 to develop a single, official HPI that reflects the final transaction price for sales of residential property in the UK. Using the geometric mean, it covers purchases at market value for owner-occupation and buy-to-let, excluding those purchases not at market value (such as re-mortgages), where the 'price' represents a valuation.

12. Information on residential property transactions for England and Wales, collected as part of the official registration process, is provided by HM

Land Registry for properties that are sold for full market value.

13. The HM Land Registry dataset contains the sale price of the property, the date when the sale was completed, full address details, the type of property (detached, semi-detached, terraced or flat), if it is a newly built property or an established residential building and a variable to indicate if the property has been purchased as a financed transaction (using a mortgage) or as a non-financed transaction (cash purchase).

14. Repossession data is based on the number of transactions lodged with HM Land Registry by lenders exercising their power of sale.

15. For England, this is shown as volumes of repossessions recorded by Government Office Region. For Wales, there is a headline figure for the number of repossessions recorded in Wales.

16. The data can be downloaded as a .csv file. Repossession data prior to April 2016 is not available. Find out more information about [repossessions](#).

17. Background tables of the raw and cleansed aggregated data, in Excel and CSV formats, are also published monthly although Northern Ireland is on a quarterly basis. They are available for free use and re-use under the Open Government Licence.

18. HM Land Registry's mission is to guarantee and protect property rights in England and Wales.

19. HM Land Registry is a government department created in 1862. It operates as an executive agency and a trading fund and its running costs are covered by the fees paid by the users of its services. Its ambition is to become the world's leading land registry for speed, simplicity and an open approach to data.

20. HM Land Registry safeguards land and property ownership worth in excess of £4 trillion, including around £1 trillion of mortgages. The Land Register contains more than 25 million titles showing evidence of ownership for some 84% of the land mass of England and Wales.

21. For further information about HM Land Registry visit www.gov.uk/land-registry

22. Follow us on: