

Press release: PM meeting with Chancellor Merkel: 29 September 2017

A Downing Street spokesperson said:

“Prime Minister Theresa May and Chancellor Angela Merkel this morning held a bilateral meeting at the Tallinn Digital Summit in Estonia.

The Prime Minister began by congratulating Chancellor Merkel on her recent re-election and said she looked forward to continuing to work closely together.

The two leaders agreed on the importance of the Iran nuclear deal in maintaining regional and global security.

On the issue of Brexit, the Prime Minister reiterated her commitment to the UK being the strongest friend and partner to the EU after we leave.

She said her Florence speech had been intended to create momentum in the ongoing talks and that the response from the EU 27 had been constructive.

Chancellor Merkel welcomed the speech, and noted the good progress that had been made in negotiations this week. She looked forward to the next round of talks in early October.

The Prime Minister and the Chancellor both agreed on the importance of settling the issue of citizens’ rights at the earliest opportunity.

The PM pointed to the commitment made in her Florence speech to incorporate the agreement reached on citizens’ rights fully into UK law and make sure the UK courts can refer directly to it.

The PM also stressed it was in everybody’s interests to agree to a time-limited implementation period once Britain leaves the EU, to provide certainty to businesses and others in both Britain and the EU.”

Press release: Government confirms Birmingham bid for the Commonwealth Games 2022

- Culture Secretary Karen Bradley says Birmingham would put on a “brilliant Games that will showcase the best of Britain to the world and

make the entire country proud”

- Birmingham bid team, government and Commonwealth Games England working together to finalise formal bid submission to be delivered to Commonwealth Games Federation tomorrow

Birmingham is to be the UK’s official candidate city for the 2022 Commonwealth Games, Culture Secretary Karen Bradley has announced.

The city’s bid plans have impressed the government which believes that, should Birmingham’s bid be successful, hosting the Games would provide value for the public money that would be invested and have benefits for Birmingham, the West Midlands and the UK as a whole.

Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport Karen Bradley said:

The Commonwealth Games in Birmingham would be brilliant. It would showcase the best of Britain to the world and make the entire country proud. Not only would it help grow the economy in the West Midlands and beyond, it would also leave a strong sports legacy, by upgrading facilities to benefit both elite athletes and the local community.

Birmingham’s bid has the backing of the government and our focus now is to work alongside Birmingham’s excellent bid team and [Commonwealth Games England](#) to put forward the strongest possible bid to the Commonwealth Games Federation, while ensuring that we get maximum value for money for the taxpayer.

The UK has fantastic expertise in staging major sporting events and it would be a privilege to welcome athletes and supporters from across the Commonwealth to Birmingham and the West Midlands in 2022.

[Birmingham’s bid](#) uses competition venues in Solihull, Coventry, Sandwell and Leamington Spa as well as training venues across the region, bringing benefits not just to the city, but to the wider West Midlands.

Sitting at the heart of the UK, and representing the diversity of the Commonwealth, Birmingham is well positioned to attract people to the Games and to ensure that the benefits of hosting extend from the city and region, to across the UK.

Birmingham’s bid showcases its youth and diversity alongside a world class reputation for sport and culture. With 95% of Birmingham’s proposed competitive venues already in existence this is a low risk, high quality proposition that’s well placed to meet the challenge of delivering the Games within five years.

Councillor Ian Ward, Interim Leader of Birmingham City Council and Chair of the Birmingham Commonwealth Games Bid Committee, said:

We have worked closely with the DCMS and the Treasury to create a compelling, compliant and value for money bid for Birmingham to host the 2022 Commonwealth Games. The support of the UK Government is a great endorsement of our bid and we are excited about finalising our submission and edging closer to the opportunity to bring the Games to Birmingham.

The support we have received from a range of public and private sector partners and from across the wider West Midlands region and beyond has been incredible and we thank everyone for backing Brum's bid to get us this far.

Ian Metcalfe, Chair of Commonwealth Games England said:

Anyone who experienced Manchester in 2002, London in 2012 or Glasgow in 2014 will know just how special major sporting events in the UK can be. I am sure that Birmingham can stage an unforgettable Commonwealth Games in 2022. Birmingham's exciting bid shows that the Games will not only deliver a sport programme of the highest calibre but also provide an amazing platform for the country as a whole.

On behalf of Commonwealth Games England I would like to thank both the Government and Birmingham 2022 for their hard work and support to date.

Alongside the Birmingham 2022 team, we look forward to presenting the strongest possible bid to the Commonwealth Games Federation in the hope that we can welcome the whole Commonwealth movement to England for the Games in 2022.

The government's decision follows an extensive three phase assessment process that has tested Birmingham's hosting credentials. This included being subjected to scrutiny from an independent assessment panel and officials from the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, the submission of two formal applications and two site inspection visits.

Previous major sporting events hosted in the UK, such as the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games, the Glasgow 2014 Commonwealth Games and the 2015 Rugby World Cup, have all shown how major sporting events can generate a positive return on investment.

Work on the expected cost of hosting the Commonwealth Games 2022, if Birmingham was selected, is ongoing. Should Birmingham win the right to host the Games, the government will present to Parliament a full budget, once it has been finalised. This budget will include staging, the cost of

constructing and upgrading facilities, security and a prudent contingency. If the bid is successful, the government will be the major funder with Birmingham City Council contributing 25 per cent to the cost of the Games. The Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport would manage the financing of the Games and will bear down heavily on costs to ensure value for public expenditure.

The government, Birmingham 2022 bid team and Commonwealth Games England are finalising the formal bid submission. Commonwealth Games England will submit the bid to the Commonwealth Games Federation tomorrow.

For further information contact:

Jose Riera at Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport 020 7211 6971

[News story: CMA clears UK meat processing merger](#)

The CMA has cleared the merger of Dawn Meats' and Dunbia's UK businesses, following an investigation.

The companies process meat for a range of different types of food products and operate various facilities across the UK and Ireland.

The Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) conducted a phase 1 investigation into the merger, which found it does not give rise to competition concerns. This applies to both the purchase of livestock (cattle and sheep) from farmers and the supply of unprocessed and processed meats to customers across the UK.

This is because the companies do not currently compete strongly for the purchase of livestock.

They also would continue to face strong competition from alternative suppliers in the supply of unprocessed and processed meats.

The merger was part of a wider transaction that included the acquisition by Dawn Meats of the Irish beef business of Dunbia, which was assessed separately by the [Irish Competition and Consumer Protection Commission](#) (CCPC).

Throughout the investigation, the CMA cooperated closely with the CCPC and also with the [European Commission](#), which reviewed a parallel merger of competitors in the same sector. The decisions from these reviews are being announced today (29 September 2017).

The merger will therefore not be referred for an in-depth investigation.
Information relating to this investigation can be found on the [case page](#).

Press release: Highways England Strategic Design Panel vision and progress report published

Among the recommendations of the multi-partner panel is the need for a Good Design Guide and design being central to a review of the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges which is used across the world. (See the [published report](#)).

The [panel was set up](#) to support the development of a culture where good design is at the heart of everything within Highways England and the wider road sector. This coincides with Highways England delivering the biggest programme of Government investment in a generation. The panel's focus is on strategic input rather than scheme specific details, targeting where its expertise, insight and guidance will have most positive impact and wider benefit such as standards, procurement and evaluation.

Highways England Chief Highway Engineer Mike Wilson said:

As we continue to successfully deliver the first Road Investment Strategy, I share the aspiration that as well as our roads being safe, efficient and affordable, that they are also beautiful. I do not underestimate the challenge of this; it requires a culture shift for Highways England and the wider roads sector. We will now review the recommendations and provide an update in due course.

The Panel has made the following key recommendations:

- Highways England should publish the design vision and principles recommended by the Panel and should work to develop a Good Design Guide.
- Highways England should ensure that its design vision and principles are implemented effectively and that the Good Design Guide becomes a practical tool across its projects and wider operations.
- Highways England should establish a specific objective aimed at ensuring that a design led approach, as set out in the design vision and principles, is at the heart of the review of the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges.

The panel members come from a range of disciplines and represent stakeholders who have a passionate interest in the design of the Strategic Road Network:

- Campaign for Better Transport
- Design Council/Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE)
- Transport Focus
- Chartered Institute of Highways and Transportation
- Institution of Civil Engineers
- Landscape Institute
- Historic England
- The Prince's Foundation
- Institution of Structural Engineers
- Royal Institute of British Architects
- Campaign to Protect Rural England
- Natural England
- National Trust

Sarah Weir OBE, Chief Executive, Design Council said:

Highways England are to be congratulated on the approach they have taken in establishing its Design Panel and having it focus on the strategic aspects of design, and we are delighted to have contributed to its work and proud to be a part of it. The Design Panel's report sets a design challenge for Highways England that puts design processes and thinking at the heart of the planning and development of the strategic road network. The Design Council fully endorses the Design Vision and comprehensive '10 Principles of Good Design' and welcomes the focus on valuing both the beauty of the places through which roads pass and the experience of people that live with and use road infrastructure. The Design Council supports Highways England's use of these principles through its planned Good Design Guide for the review of its overarching Design Manual, and encourages Highways England to use these as the means by which designs for future road infrastructure are measured, so that the full benefits of good design can be released through their work.

Phil Carey, Policy Advisor to Transport Focus, said:

As the Panel's report makes clear, at the heart of good design must be a road that works well for users – one that puts safety first, is easy to use, and is as far as possible a pleasure to travel on.

Clare Warburton, Senior advisor for Transport at Natural England and one of the report authors said:

Consideration for communities, the natural beauty and character of places as well as their surrounding landscapes in road design, is essential if we are to create a lasting, resilient transport legacy that contributes positively to the natural environment.

Ian Wilson, Assistant Director Operations (South West), National Trust, said:

The National Trust is hugely supportive of Highways England's emphasis on improving the design and environmental standards of our roads. Building or improving roads in sensitive landscapes such as World Heritage Sites or AONBs is not easy. We are delighted to be working with Highways England and other partners to lift the standard of design and ensure that our roads function well and respect the places and communities through which they pass.

Members of the public should contact the Highways England customer contact centre on 0300 123 5000.

Journalists should contact the Highways England press office on 0844 693 1448 and use the menu to speak to the most appropriate press officer.

News story: New Deputy Chief Medical Officer appointed

The Department of Health has confirmed the appointment of Professor Jonathan Van-Tam as the new Deputy Chief Medical Officer for England.

Professor Van-Tam will take up the position on 2 October 2017. He replaces Professor John Watson who is retiring after 4 years in the role.

The Deputy Chief Medical Officers are senior public health leaders who support the Chief Medical Officer – the most senior adviser on health and medicine to the UK government.

Professor Van-Tam is an internationally recognised flu, vaccine and respiratory expert. During his 25-year career, he has advised the World Health Organization, the UK Government and The European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control on influenza and other respiratory virus infections.

He graduated in medicine from the University of Nottingham in 1987, trained in public health medicine from 1991, and became a Senior Lecturer at the University of Nottingham in 1997.

In addition to publishing 150 scientific papers, Professor Van Tam has also held the following posts:

- 2004 to 2007: Head of the Pandemic Influenza Office at the UK Health Protection Agency
- 2005 to 2009: part of the UK national Scientific Pandemic Influenza Committee (SPI)

- 2007 to 2017: consultant to the World Health Organization on influenza
- 2007 to date: Professor of Health Protection at the University of Nottingham
- 2009 to 2010: part of the UK Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies (SAGE) during the influenza pandemic
- 2010 to 2017: leader of the WHO Collaborating Centre for Pandemic Influenza and Research
- 2013 to 2017: Editor-in-Chief of Influenza and Other Respiratory Viruses
- 2014 to date: Chair of the UK Government's New and Emerging Respiratory Virus Threat Advisory Group (NERVTAG).

Professor Van-Tam said:

It is a great honour to be given the opportunity to serve as the Deputy Chief Medical Officer for England. I am looking forward to the work ahead with enormous enthusiasm.

Professor Dame Sally Davies, Chief Medical Officer said:

I would like to congratulate Professor Van-Tam on his appointment. His track record speaks for itself; he will bring a wealth of experience and expertise to the role and I look forward to working closely with him.

Professor John Watson has been a fantastic Deputy Chief Medical Officer. I would like to thank him for his huge contribution to public health and for his expert support.