

News story: Launch UK brings together UK commercial space sector

Universities and Science Minister Jo Johnson and Minister for Aviation Lord Ahmad spoke alongside the UK Space Agency CEO Katherine Courtney at the Launch UK conference at the Royal Aeronautical Society on 21 February.

A key strand of the government's Industrial Strategy is for the UK to hold a greater share of the commercial spaceflight market, worth an estimated £25 billion over the next 20 years, by developing competitive, commercial and safe spaceflight proposals for UK-based satellite launch services and sub-orbital flights.

The conference brought together potential UK spaceports and spaceflight vehicle operators – the component parts of the consortia that are working to provide commercial launch services from the UK.

The UK Space Agency has made grants worth £10 million available to help develop the capability for spaceflight. The consortia are being invited to provide their business cases for funding to develop key technologies or infrastructure in the UK.

The conference took place as new legislation – the Spaceflight Bill – was delivered to the House of Commons and the House of Lords today to facilitate and regulate commercial spaceflight.

Universities and Science Minister Jo Johnson said:

“We really do stand at the dawn of a very exciting era. This is a big and incredibly exhilarating moment for this country.

“The traditional space sector is changing and the way we access space is changing too, which is why this is a truly important moment for us. It's vital that we don't miss the exciting opportunities that are now ahead of us.”

Minister for Aviation Lord Ahmad said:

“We are boldly legislating where no British government has legislated before.

“It's clear we are galvanised and ready to grasp this huge opportunity for our country. We want to move quickly but we also want to get it right too.

“It's our ambition as a government, as a collective industry, as a country that the UK is the best place in Europe for space flight operations.”

Seven potential regional spaceports gave presentations and a panel of industry experts discussed innovations in commercial spaceflight, looking ahead to 2025, while there was also an opportunity for networking.

Katherine Courtney, CEO UK Space Agency, said:

“With our partners across government we continue to create a supportive environment for commercial innovation and cutting edge science.

“Together, we are working to embrace the emerging small satellite launch market to capture a share of the £25bn global opportunity. I’m confident that 2020 will see the first launches from British soil, and we’re working hard to make that a reality.”

Press release: Shoreham flood scheme enters next phase

A major flood defence scheme that will significantly reduce flood risk to over 2,300 properties in Shoreham and East Lancing has taken a step towards completion this week, with piling works at 2 of the project’s 10 phases now finished.

The huge jack-up barge, that has been working to install one of the new tidal flood defence piled walls in the town centre since November, will leave the site next week having completed its phase of the work.

Of the planned 10 construction phases, 3 have been worked on since the project started in October 2016, and work so far has been progressing well. The scheme will significantly improve the current ageing flood defences, and when the whole project is complete, in 2018, it will reduce the tidal flood risk to thousands of homes and a significant number of commercial properties in the area. It will also protect important local infrastructure such as the road network, railway line and Shoreham Airport.

Russell Long, Flood Team Leader at the Environment Agency, said:

Work on the scheme is progressing well, and further phases of work are set to begin later in the year. We are aware of the impact that the development of these schemes can have on local communities, and we thank the residents of Shoreham for their understanding during the works.

The Adur Ferry Bridge will need to be closed for a few hours when the jack-up barge leaves Shoreham next week (week commencing 27 February), and shuttle buses will be provided during this time. Exact timings of this operation will depend on weather and site conditions, and we will do all we can to keep the community informed of our plans. I’d encourage residents to monitor [@EnvAgencySE](#) on Twitter, go to www.shorehamadurtidalwalls.co.uk, or

visit the project's visitor centre to find out more.

The Shoreham scheme's dedicated project visitor centre is located at Beach Green Car Park, Shoreham-by-Sea, and is open between midday and 5pm on weekdays.

For further information, you can view the webpage [Shoreham Adur Tidal Walls Scheme](#) or you can call 03708 506506. You can also request information by email at shorehamwestbank@ea.gov.uk or by writing to

SSD Enquiries
Environment Agency
Guildbourne House
Chatsworth Road
Worthing
BN11 1LD

Notes:

The visitor centre may be closed during scheduled visits from schools and interest groups.

For all media enquiries please call 0800 141 2743.

Press release: New business champions to support rights of disabled consumers

Eleven new sector champions, who will help to tackle the issues disabled people face as consumers, have been announced by the Minister for Disabled People, Work and Health today (21 February 2017).

The champions, who represent a range of different sectors and businesses, from gaming to retail, will use their influential status as leaders in their industries to promote the benefits of being inclusive to disabled people.

There are currently more than 11 million disabled people in the UK and the spending power of their households – 'the purple pound' – is almost £250 billion. But many businesses are missing out on this potential customer base by having everyday products and services which aren't available to disabled people – who, as a result, are regularly excluded from experiences and opportunities that many others take for granted.

The sector champions will amplify the voices of disabled customers and employees within their own industries, increasing accountability and challenging inequality. They will also be able to highlight specific changes and improvements that will make a difference to the millions of people who often miss out.

The Minister for Disabled People, Work and Health, Penny Mordaunt, said:

As a public advocate for accessibility, these champions will help businesses realise the value of disabled consumers and the importance of catering to every customer's needs.

These industries must become fully inclusive. Not being able to access the high street, products and services, transport or simply to access a lot of things with our national values: it must change.

The new sector champions will drive improvements to the accessibility and quality of services and facilities in their sector, helping to showcase best practice and show other businesses the merit of making disabled customers a priority.

The sector champions are:

- Helen Drury, Corporate Responsibility Manager at Intu (retail)
- Suzanne Bull MBE, CEO of Attitude is Everything (music)
- Huw Edwards, Public Affairs Director at UKActive (leisure)
- Chris Veitch, Co-founder of Access New Business (tourism)
- Robin Sheppard, Chairman of Bespoke Hotels (hotels)
- Dan Brooke, Chief Marketing & Communications Officer at Channel 4 (media)
- Sam Phillips, CMO at Omnicom Media Group (advertising)
- Michael Connolly, Regional Training and Standards Manager at OCS Ltd (transport – airports)
- Jane Cole, Managing Director at Blackpool Transport Services (transport – buses)
- Trudie Hills, Disability Manager, Lloyds Bank (banking)
- Dr Jo Twist OBE, CEO of UKIE (gaming)

Media enquiries for this press release – 020 3267 5123

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you when submitting VHCC family work

From:

First published:

21 February 2017

You can prevent delays to Very High Cost Case family work by making sure you avoid a few common mistakes.

We have checked through correspondence received by the VHCC family team in recent weeks and believe the following tips could help you avoid unnecessary delays.

Avoid sending documents by both email and DX

This often causes confusion and additional work for the team, meaning that it takes longer for them to issue a response.

Unless otherwise requested choose just one way of sending documents i.e. email or DX.

Download and use the template to register a VHCC case

As you work through the registration template remember that the VHCC team requires the following:

- certificate reference numbers
- number of hearing days and advocate meetings to date
- number of future hearing days/advocate meetings
- date of final hearing (if known)
- full breakdown of costs to date

If information is missing the VHCC team will need to ask for additional information, which will mean delays. A link to the page hosting the template is available below.

Use correct process for enquiries

Enquiries about cases managed within CCMS need to be dealt with in the CCMS environment. Non-CCMS cases enquiries can be dealt with by emailing:
vhcc.queries@legalaid.gsi.gov.uk

Avoid emailing caseworkers directly as this can cause unnecessary delays.

Further information

[Family high cost cases](#) – scroll down to ‘when a case becomes high cost’ for link to ‘email template’ to help you register your VHCC case

Green MEP launches post-Brexit agriculture reports and calls for 'green tape' as Leadsom attacks 'red tape'



21 February 2017

Green MEP Molly Scott Cato, a member of the European Parliament's Agriculture Committee, has launched [two reports](#) on ideas for the future of farming post-Brexit. The launch comes on the day the [National Union of Farmers begin their annual conference](#) in Birmingham, where Defra Secretary, Andrea Leadsom, again [attacked the EU](#) for 'tying farmers up in red tape'. She also called for a system based on simpler, more effective rules, where farmers will be 'free to grow more, sell more and export more.'

However, Ms Leadsom offered farmers [no clear plan on farming post-Brexit](#) and Dr Scott Cato says that [questions to the government](#) reveal they lack ideas on the future of farming after the UK leaves the EU.

The two reports – one by the [Soil Association](#); the other by Simon Fairlie of the [Land Workers' Alliance](#) – foresee a future where policies put soil health and biodiversity first, and where the way we use land helps tackle climate change. They say that to achieve this, farmers will need to receive at least as much money as they currently get through the Common Agriculture Policy (CAP). Molly Scott Cato said:

"Like Ms Leadsom, I don't want farmers tied up in red tape, but we do need to bind ourselves in some green tape. We need to ensure land management protects and improves our soils, encourages biodiversity, and helps tackle climate change. The reports I have launched today contain a wealth of ideas on how we can achieve this.

"They also call for direct payments based on land area to be scrapped; instead future payments would be based on paying farmers for the public benefits they provide and for protecting the environment.

"With the government planning to remove us from the single market where around 65% of total UK agricultural exports are sold, platitudes about growing more, selling more and exporting more will ring hollow for most farmers.

"These reports show how to move UK agriculture away from a dependence on export markets and towards creating thriving rural communities by supporting family farms and relocalising food production. Brexit could be a unique

opportunity to move towards an ecologically and economically sustainable farming system, but the government seems determined to move us in the wrong direction."

Dr Tom MacMillan, Director of Innovation at the Soil Association, said:

"We're hearing a fair bit of consensus from farming, nature and public interest groups on the big principles for agricultural policy after we leave the CAP – that the public expect high standards on animal welfare, for example, and that public money should pay for public benefits. What's missing are practical and inspiring ideas that seize the chance to make a better fist of it, and face up to monumental challenges like climate change. So we've tried to set out a few game-changing ideas in our report".

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