

Minister Keegan reaffirms important UK-Egypt ties on first visit to Cairo

Press release

Ahead of COP27 and on her first official visit to Egypt, UK Minister for Africa, Gillian Keegan, reaffirmed UK-Egypt partnership and thanked Egypt for its leadership on the climate change agenda.



Minister Keegan met with Foreign Minister and COP President Sameh Shoukry to discuss how the UK and Egypt can work together to secure the best outcome in the upcoming climate negotiations. The Minister also discussed a number of regional files with the Foreign Minister, thanking Egypt for its role in seeking stability across the Middle East & North Africa.

As part of Cairo Water Week, the Minister delivered opening remarks at an event hosted by the Alliance for Global Water Adaptation (AGWA), and met British business people in Egypt to discuss the significant opportunities that exist for UK investment and expansion in Egypt, particularly in the renewables and green sectors. She also met with Egyptian Energy Minister Dr Mohamed Shaker, discussing how UK firms can best invest in Egypt's booming renewables and green technology market, including solar, wind, and green hydrogen.

Speaking after the visit, Gillian Keegan said:

In less than a month, Egypt will host the world's leaders for the United Nations climate conference, COP27, and it is essential that the negotiations are a success. After meeting with my Egyptian counterparts, I am heartened by the effort, the energy, and the enthusiasm shown by the Egyptian government in its preparations.

I was grateful for the opportunity to meet with young Egyptian leaders, both those working on climate, and young entrepreneurs. I was struck by the dynamism and the passion on display. We owe it to these young people, and to future generations, to make real

progress in a month's time.

Whilst in Cairo, I also met the family of Alaa Abd El-Fattah to express the UK's sympathy and our commitment to his case. Mr El-Fattah is a dual Egyptian-British national: gaining consular access and ultimately securing his release is a priority for the UK. I raised our strong concerns about his ongoing detention with Foreign Minister Sameh Shoukry.

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[Performance update – October 2022](#)

News story

On a monthly basis, we publish the latest official statistics on appeals performance, which represent the highest volume (in terms of number of cases) of the work of the Planning Inspectorate.



[Planning Inspectorate statistical release 20 October 2022](#)

In summary:

Appeals

- Our appeal cases are dealt with in one of three ways; written representations, hearings, or inquiries. [New Ministerial performance measures](#) were announced earlier this year including an expectation to reduce average decision times over time. Since April we have been holding hearings for planning appeals much sooner and those appeals are now being decided between 24 and 26 weeks. This is about half the time they were taking previously.

- While we are still working through previously submitted hearings cases the average across all hearings cases will remain higher for a period of time.
- Decisions on appeals dealt with by hearing saw the fastest monthly median of the past 12 months in September (44 weeks) and inquiries the second fastest in the 12 months (36 weeks). Across all our appeal cases, the median time to decide a case in September 2022 was 29 weeks. This is the longest in the last 12 months and is driven by longer decision times for the appeals decided by written representation. Our next area of focus will be to start improving times for these cases.
- The overall number of open cases at the end of September was 14,260. We received 1,636 new cases in September and closed 1,358 (including withdrawn cases)
- In more than 30 Local Planning Authorities (LPA) across the country appeals are now being submitted using our new digital service using a [new process aimed at making the service easier, faster and more cost-effective](#). Building on a smaller pilot earlier this year, the 'beta' process has introduced a more intuitive appeal submission process and new LPAs will be added to the service in the coming months

Local Plans

- There are currently 60 live Local Plan examinations in progress. Local Plans help to protect communities from speculative or unwanted proposals. We encourage Local Planning Authorities (LPA) to use our advisory visits to help them get their plans in good shape and deal with challenges well before submission.
- We completed the examinations of two Local Plans in September and have completed three so far in October. Our final report on each has been issued to the relevant LPA so they can decide how to finalise and adopt their plan.

National Infrastructure

- We have a high number of [Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects \(NSIPs\)](#) at various stages. They include 68 national infrastructure schemes where we are providing advice before submission, 14 applications being considered by us and 11 applications where we have completed our recommendations and the Secretary of State's decision is awaited. Those 11 include:

1. Boston Alternative Energy Facility, which involves constructing of a

102MWe energy from waste facility

2. A1 in Northumberland, which will provide thirteen miles of upgrades to dual the carriageway linking Morpeth and Alnwick bypasses with the dual carriageway near Ellingham, to create a continuous dual carriageway from Newcastle to Ellingham.
 3. Keadby 3 Carbon Capture Power Station, combined cycle gas turbine (CCGT) power station with a capacity of up to 910 megawatts electrical output (gross), carbon capture and compression plant, electrical, gas, and cooling water connections.
- We continue to meet the statutory deadlines for infrastructure applications as part of continuing to focus on casework with the most community interest and those key to supporting the nation's economic growth.
 - Earlier this month the application to improve the interchange between the [A47 and A11 Thickthorn Junction](#) was given development consent by the Secretary of State for Transport. It followed an examination during which the public, statutory consultees and other interested parties were given the opportunity to give evidence to the Planning Inspectorate.

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[Collaborating with U.S. on Cyber](#)

News story

Strategic Command is working with the U.S. Cyber Command and other partners on a joint operation to improve interoperability and strengthen cyber resilience.



Personnel from Defence Digital will be joining the collaborative exercise

which will identify threats that could impact the internal systems of participants.

Insights from the operation will be shared with all partners in the interest of bolstering security and unifying our response to malicious cyber activity.

Rear Admiral Nick Washer, Director Operations at Defence Digital said:

Cyber does not recognise geographic borders. Our relationships with partners offer huge shared benefits; operations like this with U.S. Cyber Command put our expertise into practice and enhance our collective defence.

This sentiment was echoed by U.S. Navy Rear Adm. Matthew C. Paradise, deputy director, Operations J-3, U.S. Cyber Command, who added

Defensive Cyberspace Operations helps CYBERCOM meet its mission responsibilities by enabling and improving mission assurance of the joint force, as well as our allies and partners, by maintaining reliable and defensible networks

The information age is making the world more interconnected than ever before, driving opportunity, innovation, and progress. However, this increased digitisation also brings unprecedented complexity, instability and risk, making global partnerships key to our security and economic prosperity.

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[Runaway engineering train at London Liverpool Street station](#)

News story

Runaway engineering train at London Liverpool Street station, 2 October 2022.



The stopping point of the train (courtesy of Network Rail)

At about 11:52 hrs on 2 October 2022, an unattended freight train ran away from platform 3 at London Liverpool Street station. The signaller was alerted to the train's movement by track sections in the throat of the station showing occupied unexpectedly. The incident happened within a part of the station that was, at the time, under possession for engineering work. The unattended train travelled about 150 metres, before coming to a stop within the possession limits. No one was injured as a result of the incident, although a set of points which the train ran through were damaged.

We have undertaken a [preliminary examination](#) into the circumstances surrounding this incident. Having assessed the evidence which has been gathered to date, we have decided to publish a [safety digest](#).

The safety digest will be made available on our website in the next few weeks.

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[Appointment of Bishop of Newcastle: 20 October 2022](#)

Press release

Her Late Majesty The Queen approved the nomination of The Right Reverend Dr Helen-Ann Hartley, Suffragan Bishop of Ripon, for election as Bishop of Newcastle.



Her Late Majesty The Queen approved the nomination of The Right Reverend Dr Helen-Ann Hartley, Suffragan Bishop of Ripon, for election as Bishop of Newcastle, in succession to The Right Reverend Christine Hardman following her retirement.

Helen-Ann Hartley was educated at the University of St. Andrews and Worcester College, Oxford. She trained for ministry on the St Albans & Oxford Ministry Course and was ordained Priest in 2006. She served her title at St Mary the Virgin, Wheatley, in the Diocese of Oxford, and was appointed Curate at St Mary the Virgin and St Nicholas, Littlemore, in 2007. During this time she was also Director of Biblical Studies and Tutor in New Testament at Ripon College, Cuddesdon.

In 2012, Helen-Ann moved to New Zealand where she was Dean for the New Zealand Dioceses at the College of St John the Evangelist, Auckland, and in 2014 she was consecrated Bishop of Waikato, Anglican Church in Aotearoa, New Zealand and Polynesia.

Helen-Ann returned to the UK in 2018 when she was appointed to her current role as Suffragan Bishop of Ripon in the Diocese of Leeds.

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