

Multi-billion pound road and railway investment to put nation on path to recovery

- investment across road and rail will support the country's economic recovery and continue to level-up infrastructure.
- £1.7 billion to improve journeys for cyclists, pedestrians and drivers across England through repairs to local roads.
- fast tracked construction works worth £175 million will ensure networks get vital repairs while fewer passengers are using transport system.
- plans to lock in environmental benefits seen during lockdown with vision to boost England's charging infrastructure for electric vehicles over next decade.

Journeys on local roads, railways and motorways will be smoother and safer thanks to a multi-billion-pound infrastructure package Transport Secretary Grant Shapps will announce today (14 May 2020).

Hundreds of millions of pounds worth of upgrades have already been made to the nation's road and rail networks during the lockdown period with more planned over the coming weeks and months.

Drivers and cyclists beginning to return to England's streets will benefit from a £1.7bn Transport Infrastructure Investment Fund to improve roads, repair bridges and fill in millions of potholes.

The package will target around 11 million nuisance potholes, enough to tarmac a road stretching a third of the way around the Earth. It will also see smaller improvements completed to upgrade local networks, such as enhancing road safety at key locations, the installation of priority bus lanes, and the creation of projects to help lock in improvements in air quality experienced during lockdown.

Transport Secretary Grant Shapps said:

There has been a monumental effort in every corner of the country to slow the spread of the virus and protect our NHS. However, the battle is not over yet and we urge everyone to keep up the good work and only travel when they need to.

To help those who do have to use public transport or get out on the roads to do their jobs, we've been accelerating infrastructure upgrades to make sure that, as we gradually reopen our society, everyone can benefit from smoother and safer journeys with better connections for our future.

On top of this fund, the government is also accelerating more than £175 million worth of work during the quieter period across our road and rail network while people follow the guidance to avoid unnecessary travel.

It comes after the Transport Secretary last week [announced £2 billion in funding to boost more sustainable greener travel and encourage more people to begin cycling and walking](#).

Major improvement works have already taken place over the past month. England's motorways and major A-roads benefitted from £200 million of work carried out in April while some £550 million of improvements and maintenance were also completed on the rail network.

Sir Peter Hendy CBE, chairman of Network Rail, has also been asked by the Transport Secretary to oversee how operators can best act in line with the government's guidance to keep passengers safe. As part of this, rail operators have been asked to deliver regular station speaker announcements, clear signage and floor markings, while ensuring extra staff are available to manage crowding and provide guidance to passengers. Enhanced cleaning regimes on trains and at stations have also been introduced by operators and Network Rail. As more people return to their cars, it is critical this is done in a sustainable way. The government has therefore today outlined its vision to supercharge the electric car chargepoint network by boosting the numbers of rapid chargepoints across England's strategic road network over the next decade.

On England's motorways and major A roads, drivers are currently never more than 25 miles away from a rapid chargepoint. Today's [vision](#) aims to ensure every motorway service area will have a minimum of six ultra-rapid chargepoints, with some larger sites having as many as 10-12, by 2023. This means that many drivers will be able to charge their cars in around 15 minutes – three times faster than they can currently and in the same time it takes to have a rest break, or grab food for their journey.

It will also allow people to charge their electric vehicles quickly and easily using their debit or credit card and access information on available chargepoints and pricing information during their journey.

[Recovered appeal: land at Hawthorns, Bells Piece, Farnham, Surrey, GU9 9RL \(ref: 3211033 – 14 May 2020\)](#)

[unable to retrieve full-text content] Decision letter and Inspector's Report for a recovered appeal.

[Dame Ottoline Leyser appointed new CEO of UK Research And Innovation \(UKRI\)](#)

Business Secretary Alok Sharma has today (14 May) appointed Professor Ottoline Leyser DBE FRS as the new CEO of [UK Research and Innovation](#) (UKRI).

Professor Ottoline Leyser is a leading British plant biologist and Director of the [Sainsbury Laboratory](#) at the University of Cambridge. Starting the position on Monday 29 June, as UKRI CEO, Professor Leyser will guide the delivery on the government's ambitions to increase investment in research and development (R&D) to 2.4% of GDP by 2027, establishing the UK as a global hub for science and technology, now and far into the future.

This appointment will ensure the UK research sector remains at the forefront of new advances to tackle the biggest industrial and societal challenges affecting the world today including climate change, healthcare and the current coronavirus pandemic.

Business Secretary Alok Sharma said:

Professor Leyser's appointment comes at a critical time for the UK. The coronavirus pandemic has shown the importance of science for our future and UKRI has a vital role to play in this.

As the new Chief Executive, Professor Leyser will drive forward UKRI's mission to create the great British companies of the future and help keep the UK at the cutting edge of global research and development.

I would like to thank Sir Mark Walport for his dedication to UKRI, leading its transformation programme and championing science, engineering and technology across the UK.

Science Minister Amanda Solloway said:

I am thrilled with the appointment of Professor Leyser and I look forward to working closely with her to drive forward our shared ambition to boost our world-leading research and development.

Since its launch in 2018, UKRI has gone from strength to strength. Professor Leyser has already led a highly collaborative lab in her previous role which will be a great skill to bring to UKRI as it embarks on a new stage of exciting evolution.

I would also like to personally thank Sir Mark Walport for his

dedication to this role.

Professor Ottoline Leyser commented:

UKRI has a unique opportunity to make a profound contribution to tackling the many challenges facing the world.

During my career, I have seen the power of genuinely collaborative cultures to catalyse the transformative thinking needed to create effective solutions.

I look forward to working with the UKRI team to ensure that the UK's superb research and innovation system continues to work for everyone, by pioneering new partnerships, developing innovative funding models and strengthening international collaboration.

About UKRI

UKRI works in partnership with universities, research organisations, businesses, charities and government to create the best possible environment for research and innovation to flourish, ensuring the UK remains a world-leader in science and research.

UKRI was established on 1 April 2018, bringing together 7 existing research councils, Innovate UK and Research England. It has a combined budget of £7 billion.

About Professor Ottoline Leyser DBE FRS

Ottoline received her BA (1986) and PhD (1990) in genetics from the University of Cambridge. After post-doctoral research at Indiana University and Cambridge, she took up a lectureship at the University of York, where she worked from 1994-2010.

Among her honours are the Society of Experimental Biology's President's Medal (2000), the Royal Society Rosalind Franklin Award (2007), the International Plant Growth Substance Association's Silver Medal (2010), the UK Genetics Society Medal (2016), the European Molecular Biology Organization (EMBO) Women in Science Award (2017) and the British Society for Developmental Biology's Waddington Medal (2020).

She was appointed a Dame Commander of the Order of the British Empire (DBE) in the 2017 New Year Honours list for services to plant science, science in society and equality and diversity in science. She is a Fellow of the Royal Society, an International Member of the US National Academy of Sciences and a Member of the European Molecular Biology Organisation and the Leopoldina. She is a Fellow of Clare College.

She currently chairs the Royal Society's Science Policy Expert Advisory Committee and serves on the Council for Science and Technology.

Making a difference

News story

Juggling HR activities and supporting elderly isolated people in her spare time – that's Helen Roughley who has continued both activities during the Covid-19 pandemic.



Helen Roughley volunteering in her community

Helen is a HR Advisor at Sellafield Ltd for project delivery, supply chain and general counsel and has been volunteering for the Re-engage charity in Wigan for over 3 years that provides social contact for isolated individuals.

Helen said:

There are currently 2 groups in Wigan, each with around 6 to 8 people, and our group regularly meet for afternoon tea at someone's house. Some volunteers are 'hosts' who will open their home and provide refreshments, others are 'drivers' who will chauffeur the guests to the house.

Obviously since the pandemic, gatherings have not been possible, so to maintain social contact our volunteers now make regular telephone calls to the individuals instead to check whether anything specific is needed, but mostly they just have a chat.

Most charities need people during the week but Re-engage wanted people at the weekend. It's great to hear tales of old Wigan but our individuals certainly don't live in the past – we have heated debates about sport and politics. I anticipate when we get back together there will be strong opinions on the current political landscape – and of course I am looking forward to getting back to afternoon tea.

On top of her Re-engage role, Helen has also offered her services to the Volunteer Centre Manchester where she was invited to apply to Northern Care Alliance NHS Group as a 'day to day volunteer' at Fairfield Hospital.

This role involves carrying out reception duties, cascading daily communications to staff, assisting with stock checks, pharmacy runner etc.

Helen added:

Volunteering is a great way to give back to your community in any circumstance, and it's even more important to help out one another in these testing times.

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[UK statement in response to the OSCE Project Co-ordinator in Uzbekistan](#)

We welcome and thank Ambassador John MacGregor and his colleagues for his report to the Permanent Council and the good work they have clearly done in Uzbekistan over the last year.

The excellent relationship his Office has built with the host government is warmly welcomed by the UK. This relationship allows the OSCE to strengthen co-operation between Uzbekistan and the full range of OSCE institutions and executive structures. We commend bringing the collective and tailored strengths of different parts of the OSCE to the country. This includes the Special Representative for trafficking; ODIHR; the High Commissioner on National Minorities; and the Representative on Freedom of the Media.

The UK government continues to support the Uzbek government's reforms – including in the areas of law, commerce, foreign exchange, national security, and anti-corruption. We are also pleased to witness Uzbekistan's continued cooperation with its neighbours, mirrored by the work of the Office.

I want to focus attention today – and highlight – three specific areas of commendable work of the Project Coordinator.

First on transnational threats. And in particular assistance in developing the draft National Strategy on Countering Terrorism in Uzbekistan and its related Action Plan for 2021 to 2025. We welcome the training of law enforcement officers on counter-terrorism policing and improving their skills on countering illicit drug circulation. The UK also looks forward to continuing collaboration with the Uzbek Government on regional security and

the prevention and detection of serious organised crime.

Second, the work on the third dimension. This includes supporting adoption of a National Human Rights Strategy. This is occurring via a national consultation conference and by raising awareness of the tangible benefits of a National Preventive Mechanism (NPM) against torture. We welcome the Uzbek Government's efforts to improve engagement with the UN, OSCE and international NGOs and in addressing longstanding human rights concerns. At the heart of the OSCE is the principle of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, which we support all efforts to advance.

And third – training to enhance women's empowerment and advance female participation following the December 2019 elections, as well as promoting the importance of women in policing. Promotion of gender inclusivity is a key UK priority. We welcome the progress made on gender issues, and encourage implementation of the recommendations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women.

In addition – we welcome the Office's Project Agreement Process. We are glad to see that this has been both useful and successful over the years in guiding the work of the field mission. It is of the utmost importance that OSCE-funded projects are effective and relevant and as such we welcome this useful tool. We also commend the renewed effort at sharing project ideas, successes and best practice in programme activity.

As this is likely to be the last Permanent Council meeting for Ambassador MacGregor in his role as Head of Mission in Tashkent I would like to greatly thank him for his hard work, his unbounded energy and his efforts in Uzbekistan and in ensuring the OSCE has a strong presence there. I wish the Office continued success and wish him all the very best in whatever comes next.