

The Planning Inspectorate publishes its 2021/22 Annual Report and Accounts

The report demonstrates progress in many key areas over the last year despite the continued challenge of keeping casework moving during the pandemic.

Some of the key achievements from 2021/22 include:

- publishing the new three-year [Strategic Plan](#)
- recruiting more than 50 new inspectors and apprentices
- adopting our first Environmental Policy
- developing our Customer Strategy to become more customer-focused
- formalising the way that we assure the quality of our decisions and reports
- designing and developing our Digital Public Services
- improving data protection
- improving equality, diversity, and inclusion
- establishing health and safety working groups

The Inspectorate decided more than 17,400 appeals, issued 34 reports on Local Plans, and continued to hold hearings and inquiries using a blend of virtual and face-to-face events.

Planning appeals are our largest area of work and we decided 8,971. New planning appeals being submitted increased, back to pre-pandemic levels, and were 4% higher than 2020/21. The number of new planning appeal cases submitted needing to be heard by inquiry rose by 38%.

Continuing to plan for the country's infrastructure needs has been a focus for us, to aid economic recovery and to provide certainty for communities. We made recommendations to a Secretary of State on 12 national infrastructure applications on time and provided advice on 70 potential infrastructure projects.

Despite still working with a reduced capacity caused by COVID-19, we received 21,300 appeals in 2021/22, 6% more than in 2020/21, and close to the pre-pandemic level. As restrictions reduced, we increased the number of decisions we made and decided more cases in 2021/22 than 2020/21. This involved running virtual hearings and inquiries (which took longer than face-to-face equivalents), on top of lockdown measures impacting both employees and customers.

While some decisions were faster than previous years, on average decisions took longer last year. However, a focus was placed on casework with the most community interest and those key to supporting the nation's economic recovery, such as national infrastructure applications, local plan examinations and appeals needing a hearing or inquiry. We are working hard to decide more appeals so our decisions can become consistently faster.

In October 2021 we published our rolling Strategic Plan outlining the objectives we will be delivering to achieve our vision to:

‘Provide our customers with high quality, timely and efficient services that support the nation’s recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic by engaging, empowering, and equipping our workforce and by delivering ambitious policy changes’.

We also saw the successful establishment of the new Planning and Environmental Decisions Wales service after transferring our Wales-based team to the Welsh Government.

Sarah Richards, Chief Executive of the Planning Inspectorate, said:

“Through our use of technology, planning effectively for the future, focused resource management and robust decision making we kept casework moving through the COVID-19 pandemic. Overall, the speed of decision making for our appeals service is now steady, and in some areas has improved. We have focused our efforts on the areas that are key to the economy.”

She also highlighted ongoing work to make the Inspectorate a more inclusive and diverse organisation.

Trudi Elliott, Chair of the Planning Inspectorate Board, said:

“The second year of the pandemic has required us to dig deep. I am proud of the way the Inspectorate’s people and Board have stepped up. I’m also grateful for the constructive collaboration of our partners and stakeholders and the support and interest of Ministers.”

“We remained focused on improving the speed with which we determine cases and have agreed new measures with Ministers, which better reflect our customers’ needs.”

Work to support planning reform over the last year has now been given more focus and momentum with the progress of the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill currently making its way through parliament.

This work is woven within the priorities the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities has recently set for the Planning Inspectorate, which include improving digital services and cutting timescales for some infrastructure projects.

[Read the full report](#)

[Many children placed in homes far away](#)

from their families amid national sufficiency challenge

Press release

An Ofsted report published today suggests that there are too few suitable places to keep children in care close to home.



Children in the care system are often placed in homes far away from their families because of a lack of suitable places near to where they live, Ofsted research published today suggests.

Ofsted's report, ['What types of needs do children's homes offer care for?'](#) finds that children with mental health problems, or experience of abuse and neglect, are likely to be living the furthest away from their home prior to coming into care, and above the average distance of 36 miles.

The research suggests that children are living far away from their families because homes are not evenly distributed across the regions of England, meaning supply does not match demand. For example, just 5% of England's children's homes (7% of places) are located in London, but London local authorities placed 11% of all children living in homes. In contrast, local authorities in the North West placed 19% of children living in children's homes, but 25% of all homes (23% of places) are located in the region.

Yvette Stanley, Ofsted's National Director for Children's Social Care, said:

Today's research shows that this is a national challenge. It suggests that Local Authorities are making a difficult choice between placing a child either in a home close by, or in one that is far away but relevant to their needs.

Children need provision of the right care, in the right place, at the right time. And for some children, it is only through a better needs analysis and planning across health and social care at a national level, that they will be able to stay closer to their family and friends.

Ofsted's research, which is based on data up to 31 March 2020, aims to contribute to the wider conversation around why there may be barriers to achieving sufficiency of places in children's homes.

Other findings in the report include:

- there was no link between the types of needs that homes said they could accommodate and their Ofsted inspection grades.
- a very high proportion of children living in children's homes had special educational needs (80%) compared with all children looked after (52%) and all children (around 15%)
- the majority of homes (80%) said they could accommodate 2 or more areas of need, with one fifth (20%) saying they could accommodate only one area
- providers that stated they could accommodate children with complex needs were the most common (93%), while sensory impairment (4%) and complex health needs (5%) were the least common
- the majority (83%) of children's homes included in the report were privately owned on 31 March 2020, which marked an increase from 69% on the same date in 2016

Published 8 July 2022

[Projects developing innovative carbon removal tech benefit from over £54 million government funding](#)

- Development of new greenhouse gas removal (GGR) technologies backed by over £54m in government funding
- Tech removes carbon emissions from the atmosphere, vital for the UK to reach its climate change targets
- Funding will help develop new greenhouse gas removal industry in the UK, which could be worth billions to the UK economy and create new jobs

New developments in innovative technologies to remove greenhouse gases from the atmosphere will be taken forward by new government-backed projects across the UK – helping create new green jobs and put the UK at the forefront of this new industry, which could be worth billions to the UK economy.

A total of 15 projects right across the UK, from Edinburgh to Exeter, Swindon to Sheffield, will benefit from a share of over £54 million to develop technologies that remove carbon emissions from the atmosphere, the UK government has announced today (Friday 8 July). This government support will encourage further private investment into the UK, the creation of new green

jobs in these regions, and help the UK meet its emission reduction targets.

The money will help projects further develop their greenhouse gas removal technologies, which include a machine that can pull carbon dioxide out of the air, a plant to convert household waste into hydrogen for use in the transport industry, and a system to remove carbon dioxide from seawater.

Energy and Climate Change Minister Greg Hands said:

This £54 million government investment announced today will help establish a greenhouse gas removal industry in the UK, which could be worth billions to our economy, bringing in private investment and supporting the creation of new green jobs.

The funding comes under Phase 2 of the [Direct Air Capture and Greenhouse Gas Removal technologies competition](#).

The competition is worth a total of £60 million: in phase one, 23 winners received a share of £5.6 million. Of those, 15 have progressed to phase two and will receive a share of the £54.4 million announced today to bring their technologies to life, taking their projects through to the demonstration phase, and towards the successful commercialisation of their technologies.

Some of the innovative projects receiving funding today include:

- Advanced Biofuel Solutions in Swindon will receive £4.75 million for a plant that can convert gas from household waste into low carbon hydrogen for use in the transport industry
- Mission Zero Technologies in London will receive £2.9 million to build a machine that can pull carbon dioxide out of the air
- SAC Commercial in Edinburgh will receive £2.9 million to develop technology that will capture methane produced from cattle, to reduce emissions from the livestock farming sector
- The University of Exeter will receive nearly £3 million to develop their 'SeaCURE' system to remove carbon dioxide from seawater

Greenhouse Gas Removal technology will be essential to meeting the UK's climate change target of net zero carbon emissions by 2050. While the government is working hard to decarbonise the UK and boost energy security by accelerating the move away from fossil fuels, these technologies will be necessary to offset emissions from hard to decarbonise areas, such as parts of the agriculture and aviation sectors.

Today's funding announcement will help establish a thriving Greenhouse Gas Removal industry in the UK. This week the government has also launched a [consultation](#) on Greenhouse Gas Removal business models, seeking views from stakeholders on how the government can help put the UK at the forefront of the sector, by supporting and encouraging investment into this developing industry.

Professor Paul Halloran, SeaCURE, University of Exeter said:

The UK has world leading academic and industrial expertise in marine science and technology. The BEIS GGR programme is allowing us to bring this together to deliver a novel climate change solution which builds on the ocean's natural capture of anthropogenic carbon.

Michael Evans, CEO, Cambridge Carbon Capture said:

The BEIS GGR programme provides vital support for early stage GGR technology companies, such as Cambridge Carbon Capture Ltd, by providing contracts enabling us to develop a pilot plant and business model necessary to attract further investment needed to scale and commercialise our technology.

Alex Clarke, Co-Founder & CEO, Black Bull Biochar said:

BEIS's DAC & GGR programme catalyses Black Bull Biochar to build a pathway that rapidly scales greenhouse gas removal. It enables us to bring together industry and agriculture on a pioneering platform that helps the UK overcome barriers to the creation and scale-up of a sustainable, effective biochar network. This will restore our environment, remove carbon, regenerate depleted soils and thereby enrich our industrial and agricultural systems.

Notes to Editors

Funded through the BEIS [Net Zero Innovation Portfolio](#), the Direct Air Capture and Greenhouse Gas Removal technologies competition provides funding to develop technologies that enable the removal of greenhouse gases from the atmosphere in the UK.

Phase 2 of the programme was only open to applications from projects that were supported under Phase 1, as Phase 2 builds on Phase 1 to take projects from the design and feasibility stage to the demonstration phase.

[Read a full list of the Phase 2 projects.](#)

The programme provides support for four main types of greenhouse gas removal:

- Direct Air Carbon Capture (DACC) – DACC technology uses chemical reactions to capture carbon dioxide from the air as it passes through the system. The carbon dioxide can then be permanently stored or used in various products or applications.
- Bioenergy Carbon Capture and Storage (BECCS) – captures and stores carbon from organic materials, converting it into useful energy such as heat, electricity, liquid or gas fuels.
- Biochar – This is a form of charcoal produced when organic matter is burned without oxygen. The biochar is rich in carbon and can be used as

a fertiliser.

- Seawater – The oceans naturally absorb carbon dioxide but because of a large increase in carbon dioxide emissions from our activities the oceans absorb more than previously. The result is that the oceans are becoming more acidic. Seawater GGR technology can remove CO₂ from seawater directly to help restore this natural balance.

Soiled nappies among banned waste exported to Turkey

Illegal export of waste from Kent has left P&D Material Recovery Ltd handing over thousands of pounds to an environmental charity.

In March 2019, the company filled 11 containers with plastic contaminated with banned waste at Chatham Dockyard, Gillingham. The 2 shipments described as plastic scrap, totalling approximately 220 tonnes, was to be sent to a facility in Turkey.

P&D Material Recovery tried to ship nappies and other items against the law

However, intervention and enforcement action by the Environment Agency has meant a bird charity in Sandwich has now benefitted from £13,000 to improve local habitats. P&D has also paid the Environment Agency's costs of nearly £11,000 from the investigation.

This breach in international law on the export of illegal waste was discovered during a routine inspection. The containers were found to include plastic contaminated with soiled nappies and sanitary towels, but also condoms, cotton buds, glass, textiles, including old underwear and tin cans.

Tin CAN'T! The Environment Agency held the banned cargo, including drinks cans

The company accepted that the contents inspected were unsuitable for export, and that it had returned the containers to its facility and sent them for incineration.

To prevent further breaches, the company has agreed to employ additional staff and employ a company that specialises in the manufacturing of waste sorting stations to design a secondary clean-up system and an additional picking station.

Stephen Young, lead investigator for the Environment Agency on this case,

said:

We want all producers and waste companies to be responsible and make sure they only export material that can be legally and safely sent abroad for recycling.

Illegal waste exports blight the lives and environment of those overseas.

All UK waste exports should meet regulations on waste shipments, and the Environment Agency has a system of inspections in place to verify compliance.

P&D Material Recovery Ltd made the £13,000 payment as a civil sanction, also known as an enforcement undertaking. The Sandwich Bay Observatory Trust, who are committed to the conservation and recording of the natural environment in the Sandwich Bay area, used the money on its 'Restharrow Scrape Project.'

A scrape is an artificial wetland and acts as a refuge for many ducks and wading birds. The charity redesigned and enlarged a shallow lake to benefit resting, migrating and breeding birds, and to include an accessible hide. Birds found here include black-headed gulls, lapwings, oystercatchers, as well as several pairs of avocets who have nested here in recent years, the first-ever in this corner of east Kent.

P&D Material Recovery Ltd, from St Mary's Island, Chatham, will pay the Environment Agency's costs of £10,845.60 as they breached the Transfrontier Shipment of Waste Regulations 2007 and the attempted export of illegal waste.

ENDS.

Notes to editors

- Under enforcement undertakings companies and individuals can make good some of the environmental damage they cause, including through a financial contribution to a local project. The Environment Agency must also be satisfied that the offender will make changes to its operations to prevent similar damage in the future.
- While agreeing to enforcement undertakings, the Environment Agency continues to prosecute organisations and individuals where evidence shows high levels of culpability and serious environmental harm.

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Ashley Alder appointed as Chair of the Financial Conduct Authority

News story

HM Treasury has today (Friday 8 July) announced the appointment of Ashley Alder as Chair of the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA).



- Ashley Alder is appointed as Chair of the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA)
- He is expected to take up his role at the FCA in January 2023 and will succeed interim chair Richard Lloyd
- Mr Alder is currently CEO of the Securities and Futures Commission of Hong Kong and Chairs the International Organisation of Securities Commissions

Mr Alder is expected to take up his role in January 2023 and will succeed Richard Lloyd who has served as interim Chair since Charles Randell stepped down from his post in May 2022.

The former lawyer currently serves as the CEO of the Securities and Futures Commission of Hong Kong, having been in post since October 2011, and is also currently the elected Chair of the International Organisation of Securities Commissions, the global standard setter for securities markets regulation. He previously held senior roles at Herbert Smith Freehills LLP.

Ashley Alder said:

It's a great privilege to have the opportunity to Chair the FCA, whose core work is so vital to the financial health of consumers.

I also value the opportunity to contribute to a crucial phase in the FCA's history as it helps chart the UK's post-Brexit future as a global financial centre which continues to support innovation and competition through its own world-leading regulatory standards.

I look forward to working with FCA colleagues as they deliver on

their mission.

HM Treasury has also announced the reappointments of Liam Coleman and Dr Alice Maynard to the Board of the FCA. Their second three-year terms as Non-Executive Directors will commence on 5 November 2022.

Liam Coleman is Currently Chairman of Great Western Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust and has held a variety of roles spanning retail, commercial and wholesale banking.

Dr Alice Maynard has worked in the field of diversity and inclusion for 30 years and coaches senior leaders in inclusive leadership alongside her Board and advisory roles.

Further information

- The FCA is the conduct regulator for around 51,000 financial services firms and financial markets in the UK.
- The FCA is an independent body, accountable to HM Treasury and to Parliament.
- Under the Financial Services and Markets Act 2000, HM Treasury is responsible for appointing the members of the FCA Board, including the Chair.
- Two of the Non-Executive Directors on the FCA Board are appointed jointly by HM Treasury and the Secretary of State for the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS). Dr Alice Maynard is one of those Directors, and her reappointment was jointly agreed by HM Treasury and the BEIS Secretary of State.
- Appointments and reappointments to the FCA Board are regulated by the Office of the Commissioner for Public Appointments.
- All appointments are made on merit and political activity plays no part in the selection process. However, in accordance with the original Nolan recommendations, there is a requirement for appointees' political activity (if any is declared) to be made public. Ashley Alder, Liam Coleman and Alice Maynard have not engaged in any political activity in the past five years.
- Liam Coleman was Deputy Chief Executive Officer and subsequently Chief Executive Officer at The Co-operative Bank plc from May 2016 to July 2018. He is currently Chairman of Great Western Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust.
- Dr Alice Maynard is a Non-Executive Director on the Board of HMRC and is a member of the Government Commercial Office Remuneration Committee.

Published 8 July 2022