

## **News story: Northamptonshire PCC to take over fire and rescue service**

Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) for Northamptonshire Stephen Mold's proposal to take on responsibility for Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue service has today been approved by the Home Secretary, marking an important step in the government's drive to see police and fire collaborate further and faster to benefit their local communities.

He is now set to join Roger Hirst of Essex, who became the country's first police, fire and crime commissioner in October 2017, alongside the three other PCCs who have recently had their proposals to take on responsibility for their local fire and rescue services approved. These are John Campion, PCC for West Mercia, Matthew Ellis, PCC for Staffordshire, and Jason Ablewhite, PCC for Cambridgeshire.

Through the Policing and Crime Act 2017, the government has introduced a range of measures to drive greater collaboration between emergency services, enabling services to share best practice and become more efficient and effective. This includes enabling PCCs to take on governance of fire and rescue services where a local case is made.

Before submitting his proposal, the PCC was required to undertake local consultation, considering the views of the public and relevant local stakeholders. Northamptonshire County Council agreed to the PCC's proposal and the consultation showed high levels of local support from the public and the Fire and Rescue Service.

The Home Secretary carefully reviewed the PCC's proposal, the results of the consultation and the PCC's responses to the views expressed when making a decision.

Considering all available evidence, the Home Secretary was of the view that the proposal demonstrated that a transfer of governance would be in the interests of the local economy, efficiency and effectiveness, without having an adverse effect upon public safety.

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## **Press release: Government's ground-breaking Heat Networks Investment Project to launch in the Autumn**

- heat networks – dubbed 'central heating for cities' – scheme to be

launched in Autumn

- heat networks can lower bills for both consumers and non-domestic customers
- heat networks have key role in lowering carbon emissions

Delivering on its commitment to tackle energy bills using innovative, low carbon solutions, the government today (Wednesday 11 April 2018) announced a new scheme for consumers and non-domestic users such as hospitals, schools and council buildings to participate in a trailblazing heat networks scheme.

Marking another step forward in the government's [Clean Growth Strategy](#), a key pillar of the UK's Industrial Strategy, the government's £320 million Heat Networks Investment Project (HNIP) will offer grants and loans to both the public and private sectors in England and Wales, for networks serving 2 or more buildings. The scheme is due to open for applications this Autumn.

Heat networks distribute heat efficiently through insulated pipes from a central source to a variety of different customers. For residents in flats, heating costs could be as much as 30% lower on a heat network than alternatives such as individual gas boilers. As well as lowering bills for domestic and non-domestic consumers, they can reduce the UK's carbon emissions.

Heat networks could play a vital role in the long term decarbonisation of heating, as they provide a unique opportunity to exploit larger scale renewable and recoverable heat sources. Heat networks could meet up to 17% of heat demand in homes and up to 24% of heat demand in industrial and public sector buildings by 2050.

There are already a number of successful heat network projects already operating in the UK such as one in Sheffield which burns 12,000 tonnes of municipal waste each year as the main fuel source for its network. Or Southampton's main energy centre which has over 45 energy users ranging from over 1,000 residential properties, a hospital, university, shopping centre, police headquarters and BBC studios.

Today's announcement and government support of heat networks paves the way for the sector to grow and become a significant clean growth contributor.

Energy Minister Claire Perry said:

The UK has led in the decarbonisation of electricity, and today's announcement shows we are just as committed to tackling heat. Today's announcement creates a route to market for innovative energy projects across the country and demonstrates a key objective of the Clean Growth Strategy; to help deliver technologies that can lower bills, cut carbon and improve the quality of life for communities across the country.

Today's announcement coincides with the publication of [high level guidelines](#)

for the main scheme, as well as starting the process to find a delivery partner. Applications are expected to open in the Autumn with first funding decisions being made in 2019.

The government investment for the £320 million Heat Networks Investment Project was first announced in the Spring Budget 2015. More details on the HNIP can be found here:

[www.gov.uk/government/publications/heat-networks-investment-project-hnip](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/heat-networks-investment-project-hnip).

Further details on heat networks projects in the UK and other countries including Norway and Denmark across various applications, technologies and scales can be found here:

[www.gov.uk/government/publications/heat-network-case-studies](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/heat-network-case-studies).

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## [News story: Identity security: ObjectTech CEO named as top tech influencer](#)

ObjectTech chief executive, Paul Ferris (right), signs an agreement with Ali Ibrahim, Deputy Director General of Dubai Economy.

### **The 2018 top 100 influencers in identity**

The founder and chief executive of [ObjectTech](#), Paul Ferris, appears in this year's list alongside global names such as Allen Zhang, the creator of WeChat. Only 12 of the people included in the list are from the UK.

The list is compiled by [One World Identity](#), an independent identity research company focused on cyber security, digital commerce and risk management. The list includes identity pioneers and innovators, ranging from individual entrepreneurs to members of large organisations.

### **A secure solution for the 21st century**

People are currently facing an unprecedented number of requests from organisations asking to use their identity data – from banking, to travel, to ordering a coffee. The challenge posed by German Chancellor Angela Merkel at Davos in January 2018 was: “Data is the raw material of the 21st century, the question is who owns it?”.

However, ObjectTech is taking a different approach by helping people to control their own identity in a process known as [Self-Sovereign Identity](#) (SSID).

SSID is a process that enables people and businesses to store their identity data on their own remote platform – known as a ‘locker’, rather than in a centralised database. ObjectTech has designed and developed an application programme interface (API) which allows existing systems to integrate with SSID technology through a simple interface. This allows people to provide proof of their identity without the need to share actual data.

## **Benefits for ID-dependent businesses**

Paul Ferris said:

Imagine getting on a plane – anywhere in the world – and getting off again, anywhere in the world, and each time you disembark, there is no passport control – no queues, no hassle, no delays. The border authorities will already know who boarded the aircraft. And not just you – anyone who is using our new self-sovereign identity technology could do the same.

This technology could help you open and operate a bank account more easily, with faster and more accurate identity checks. As well as saving you time, this would also help banks and other businesses reduce costs – just imagine the benefits this could bring to any industry or public service.

Like a catalyst, we are converting the operation of identity into a global system, fit for the 21st century. We’ve solved the problem of identity management, not by changing existing data infrastructures, but rather through fundamentally changing the way they work.

## **New export markets opening up**

ObjectTech’s SSID technology is attracting interest from several major global organisations. The company is working on the Dubai government’s new contactless payments system and is exploring opportunities with other airport hubs around the world.

Ali Ibrahim, Deputy Director General of Dubai Economy, said:

A digital currency has advantages in faster processing, improved delivery time, and less complexity and cost. It will change the way people live and do business in Dubai and mark a giant leap for the city in harnessing game-changing innovations to improve the ease of business and quality of life. We are delighted to have ObjectTech as our partner in this initiative.

## Leading the world in identity security

Ferris is advising the [World Economic Forum](#) on their Trusted Traveller Program, part of the system initiative on [shaping the future of mobility](#). He is also a global convener for the [International Organization for Standardization](#) (ISO) standard on identity in blockchain.

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## [News story: £8 million expansion of programme to commercialise research](#)

The £8 million funding boost to the ICURe pilot will see the University of Warwick and Queen's University Belfast join the programme.

An £8 million expansion of the Innovation to Commercialisation of University Research (ICURe) pilot programme will allow even more commercially-promising ideas to get to market more quickly.

The funding will see the [University of Warwick](#) and [Queen's University Belfast](#) join the programme, which is supported by Innovate UK, part of the new national funding body [UK Research and Innovation](#).

The universities will work alongside delivery partner, [SETsquared Partnership](#) to run and grow the programme across the UK. Final contracts to run this phase of the pilot will be signed shortly.

### **Additional 48 research teams to be supported**

ICURe's focus is on training early-career researchers to find the right route to commercialisation and helping them develop the necessary business skills, connections and expertise. It aligns with government's [Industrial Strategy](#), which emphasises the importance of research, innovation and skills to develop a strong economy and ensure Britain leads the high-tech, highly-skilled industries of the future.

With this funding boost, the pilot programme will be able to support an additional 48 research teams nationwide.

University researchers can get up to £35,000 to take their ideas out of the lab and validate them in the market.

A total of £3 million of the funding will go towards helping the start-ups that emerge from the programme to establish their businesses and support future growth. This will be competitively awarded by Innovate UK.

It builds on the success of the pilot to date. Research estimates that for

every £1 of investment spent through ICURe it generates almost £4 of economic benefits in return. The pilot has engaged 160 university research teams to generate more than 11,000 business links worldwide and create 120 jobs in 44 new companies.

## **Effective translation of research into products**

Business Secretary, Greg Clark said:

Britain is famous for its innovations. From the humble toothbrush to hip replacements, the ATM to the World Wide Web – these inventions have had a huge impact on our daily lives.

Up and down the UK, some of the brightest and best talent are undertaking research which can deliver extraordinary innovations that will transform our society for the better.

Through the Industrial Strategy, the 4 grand challenges, and the funding announced today, we are helping turn innovative new ideas into products and services which could help change our lives and keep the UK as a world leader in developing the products of tomorrow.

UK Research and Innovation Chief Executive, Sir Mark Walport said:

Supporting the very best talent and bridging the gap between research and commercialisation are 2 of UK Research and Innovation's core objectives. We are a world-leading research nation and we must ensure that our innovation ecosystem supports the effective translation of this research into products with real-world impact.

The ICURe programme enables this translation by providing researchers with the funding to move ideas out of universities and into the marketplace, where they will have the greatest impact.

From converting Medtech discoveries into new treatments to developing portable devices to counter infectious diseases, this additional funding will support ground-breaking projects that will enable us to meet future challenges and remain at the cutting-edge of research and innovation.

Don Spalinger, Chairman of the SETsquared Partnership, and Director, Innovation and Entrepreneurship at the University of Southampton said:

SETsquared created ICURe to overcome some of the barriers of getting the outputs from the UK's world class universities research labs into the commercial marketplace.

ICURE's results from its first 3 years of operation go beyond our expectations. This expansion of ICURE's nation roll-out will enable even more research teams at more UK universities to take advantage of its proven capabilities. ICURE enables university research teams to explore all avenues of commercialisation, from collaborative research to consultancy to licensing to spin-outs.

The ICURE experience empowers the university research teams to work more closely with businesses in all of their future activities.

## **The university view**

Professor Stuart Croft, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Warwick, said:

Warwick is renowned for the many ways it acts as a highly effective bridge for innovation between academic research and industry, and we are therefore delighted to be a key part of the national rollout of ICURE with its focus on helping early-career researchers taking their innovations into the marketplace.

Warwick will also draw on the innovation-based partnerships across the Midlands such as Midlands Innovation, the Midlands Engine, and the Midlands Enterprise Universities teams, to ensure that this programme helps create even more innovation-based jobs and business growth across our region.

Brian McCaul, CEO of [Qubis Ltd](#) and Director of Innovation at Queen's University Belfast, said:

Having had 9 teams graduate from ICURE, and having run 3 of our own Lean Launchpad programmes, Queen's and Qubis have been pioneers with lean start-up in tech transfer. The focus on the customer-need is the perfect antidote to tech-push.

We have already seen significant commercial benefits, whether measured by deals done, or learnings achieved, especially with early-career researchers. We are convinced that 'lean changes', change everything.

We're now keen to work with our partners to accelerate ICURE adoption across Northern Ireland, Scotland and the North of England. This is a vital initiative for rebalancing the UK innovation economy.

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# News story: Andrew Tyrie to be Chair of the Competition and Markets Authority

Andrew Tyrie, the former MP, Chair of the Treasury Select Committee and Chair of the Parliamentary Commission on Banking Standards has been nominated to be the new Chair of the UK's independent competition authority.

The primary role of the [Competition and Markets Authority](#) (CMA) is to make markets work well for consumers, businesses and the economy. It is responsible for carrying out investigations into mergers, markets and the regulated industries as well as enforcing competition and consumer law.

Mr Tyrie served as the chairman of the Parliamentary Commission on banking standards, whose recommendations for the reform of governance in major financial institutions are now being implemented. He was also Chairman of the Liaison Committee, the committee of select committee chairs, and Chairman of the Treasury Select Committee from 2010 to 2017.

Mr Tyrie also has experience in finance and commerce including Board roles in investment management and property firms, and as an advisor to the law firm DLA Piper.

Business Secretary Greg Clark said:

The CMA has a vital role to play in promoting competition and making markets work for consumers, businesses and the economy.

Andrew Tyrie is a proven consumer champion and competition advocate, with a strong record of independence as Select Committee Chair, ideally suited to leading the CMA at this critical time. I have no doubt he will make good use of his extensive policy, economic and financial experience to entrench the CMA post-Brexit as one of the world's leading regulatory and enforcement bodies.

Andrew Tyrie said:

Subject to Parliamentary support, I'm delighted to accept this post and look forward to working with the CMA's high quality Board and staff.

Making markets work for the benefit of millions of people is what the CMA is all about. In the years ahead, competition can and should be put even closer to the centre of British economic life, reaching to every sector, rooting out monopoly and unfair trading practices, and enhancing Britain's global competitiveness into the

bargain.

The post of CMA Chair is subject to a pre-appointment hearing by the Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy Select Committee.

The current CMA Chair, David Currie, will step down after the new chair has been confirmed.

The CMA has responsibility for: