

[News story: Gertjan Vlieghe re-appointed to Monetary Policy Committee](#)

Dr Gertjan Vlieghe will be re-appointed for a second three-year term as an external member of the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC), the Chancellor of the Exchequer Philip Hammond announced today (30 January 2018). His second term will start from 1st September 2018.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer Philip Hammond said:

Dr Vlieghe has provided a valuable and effective contribution to monetary policy through his deep understanding of the UK economy.

I am therefore pleased that he will continue to share this expertise as a member of the Monetary Policy Committee.

As an external member of the MPC, Dr Vlieghe will hold one of nine votes to decide the future path of UK monetary policy. The MPC meets eight times a year to set monetary policy in line with the objectives set out in its remit. The primary objective is to ensure price stability.

About Dr Gertjan Vlieghe

Dr Gertjan Vlieghe has been an external member of the Monetary Policy Committee since 1st September 2015. He was appointed following an external appointment process.

Prior to his appointment, he had been a partner and senior economist at Brevan Howard Asset Management. From 2005 to 2007 he was a bond strategist at Deutsche Bank. From 1998 to 2005 he held a number of posts at the Bank of England, including the post of Economic Assistant to Governor Mervyn King.

Dr Vlieghe received his PhD from the London School of Economics where his dissertation focussed on monetary policy, asset prices and credit market imperfections. Dr Vlieghe's published research has largely focussed on the importance of money, balance sheets and asset prices in the economy.

About the Monetary Policy Committee

The Monetary Policy Committee makes decisions about the operation of monetary policy. It comprises the Governor of the Bank of England, three of the four Deputy Governors, the Chief Economist and four outside members with relevant expertise who are appointed by the Chancellor.

The appointment of external members is designed to ensure that the MPC benefits from thinking and expertise in addition to that gained inside the Bank of England. External members may serve up to two three year terms on the Monetary Policy Committee.

With this appointment, the full list of MPC members from 1st September 2018 will remain:

- Mark Carney (Governor)
- Ben Broadbent (Deputy Governor, Monetary Policy)
- Sir David Ramsden (Deputy Governor, Markets and Banking)
- Sir Jon Cunliffe (Deputy Governor, Financial Stability)
- Andy Haldane (Executive Director, Monetary Analysis and Chief Economist)
- Professor Silvana Tenreyro (external member)
- Ian McCafferty (external member)
- Michael Saunders (external member)
- Dr Gertjan Vlieghe (external member)

Press release: HM Courts and Tribunals Service tests fully digital divorce application

The pilot scheme means someone who wants a divorce can apply online – making the process easier to understand and removing some of the stress during a difficult time for families.

Launched last year, the pilot initially allowed people seeking a divorce to use an online system which offers prompts and guidance to assist them in completing their application. They would then print off the form and send it to the court. This month HM Courts & Tribunals Service (HMCTS) has extended the service so that the application is now fully digital – submitting the form, sending the relevant documents, and payment. In the first week we have received 130 online applications.

The online system has drastically cut the number of applications being returned because of errors – showing a 90% improvement from paper forms. It has already gained positive feedback from people welcoming the simplified, streamlined and easy to understand system which delivers their application instantly – without the worry of it being lost in the post.

The next stages will include making the system available for use by legal representatives.

These changes are part of an over £1 billion programme to transform the court system – making it quicker, more accessible and easier to use for all.

Susan Acland-Hood, CEO of HMCTS, said:

We are investing over £1 billion to reform and modernise the

justice system.

These measures are drastically cutting the number of applications returned because of errors – streamlining the process and ensuring we are best supporting people going through a difficult and often painful time.

Other examples of the government's court reforms which are making access to justice easier for everyone include:

- A paperless system, in operation at Lavender Hill Magistrates' Court, which means thousands of offenders caught dodging fares or using fraudulent tickets can now be punished more swiftly and effectively.
- A service which allows people to submit their tax appeals online – drastically cutting the number of applications being returned as incomplete or inaccurate.
- A digital programme which will allow defendants, victims, witnesses and professional users to share legal documents and cases online.

Press release: HGV driver's sentence doubled after fatal crash

Traian Soare, a Romanian national who killed 2 people after crashing into them while driving a Heavy Goods Vehicle has had his sentence doubled by the Court of Appeal.

Soare's original sentence was referred to the Court after Solicitor General Robert Buckland QC MP thought it was too low.

Soare, 51, collided with the victims after checking his satellite navigation system and veering into their lane.

He originally received a sentence of 2 years at Canterbury Crown Court and a driving disqualification of 2 years and 7 months. The Court of Appeal agreed that this was too lenient and increased his sentence to 4 years. The Court also increased the driving disqualification to 4 years and 11 months.

Speaking after the hearing, the Solicitor General said:

The families of Traian Soare's victims have been torn apart by their losses; one victim left behind two young children who will never see their father again.

The offender's actions have had a devastating effect on all those involved and I am pleased that the Court has agreed to extend this

sentence.

Press release: Van driver's sentence is extended after cyclist is killed

A man who killed a cyclist after colliding with him in his transit van will spend longer in prison after Solicitor General Robert Buckland QC MP referred his original sentence to the Court of Appeal as unduly lenient.

Joseph Bills, 22, was under the influence of drugs and alcohol when he crashed into David Thorman, 35. Bills then left the scene, despite the victim being alive at that point, before returning an hour later and turning himself into the police.

In a prepared statement the morning after the crime, Bills admitted to having consumed beer and Sambuca before driving, as well as cocaine the night before. Police then confirmed that Bills was one and a half times over the alcohol limit.

Bills originally received a sentence of 3 years and 4 months in prison at Canterbury Crown Court, reduced from 5 years for an early guilty plea. The Court of Appeal agreed that this was too lenient and increased his sentence to 4 years and 4 months.

Speaking after the hearing, the Solicitor General said:

A man's life was ended abruptly because of Joseph Bills' totally avoidable recklessness. The original sentence neglected to take into account the severity of the crime as well as the offender's actions directly after he committed it. I'm pleased that the Court of Appeal has extended his sentence. I hope that this brings some solace to the victim's family.

Press release: Intelligent cat's eyes to improve road safety

Highways England is installing around 170 of the innovative LED road studs at

one of England's busiest motorway junctions – used by over 90,000 vehicles every day.

The intelligent cat's eyes are being introduced as part of a £3 million project to improve journeys and safety at Switch Island in Merseyside, where the M57, M58 and 3 A roads all join together.

The LED road studs light up when traffic lights turn green so drivers can clearly see which lane they should follow. Cables under the road surface connect them to traffic lights through a nearby automatic controller unit.

The studs can be visible up to 1,000 metres away – far greater than traditional reflective cat's eyes – and have been proven to help stop drivers drifting between lanes, reducing the risk of collisions.

Highways England has already installed the LED studs at Hindhead Tunnel in Surrey to guide drivers through the tunnel but the Switch Island scheme will be the first time they have been linked to traffic lights at a motorway junction.

Phil Tyrrell, Project Manager at Highways England, said:

We're always looking for new ways to further improve journeys and safety for drivers, and I hope the new intelligent cat's eyes will help better guide drivers around Switch Island.

The innovative light-up road studs along with the other improvements we're introducing will make it much easier to navigate the junction, benefitting the tens of thousands of drivers who travel through it every day.

Construction work on the Switch Island scheme, which is being funded by the government's £220 million congestion relief programme, is due to start on Monday 5 February and is expected to take around a year to complete.

The scheme is designed to improve the flow of traffic and enhance safety, following 49 collisions at the junction in the past two years – an average of one every fortnight. New traffic lights will be installed at a height of over 5 metres – higher than HGVs and double-decker buses – so that drivers approaching the junction can clearly see when the lights are changing.

Other improvements will include changes to the road layout and lane markings, new barriers between carriageways, coloured high friction surfaces and better signs. And a new 400 metre shared cycle path will be created through the junction, which will link up with the existing cycle path alongside the A5036 Dunnings Bridge Road.

Jerry McConkey, Sefton Council's Transportation and Highway Infrastructure Service Manager, said:

We have worked closely with Highways England and Merseyside Police to look at the issues at Switch Island and develop improvement proposals.

As a result, we are delighted that these important safety measures are about to be introduced with Highways England implementing the latest technology solutions. This will further improve safety and give drivers a much higher level of confidence when negotiating this busy junction.

The new intelligent cat's eyes which are being installed at Switch Island were designed by Oxfordshire-based company Clearview Intelligence.

Managing Director Nick Lanigan said:

The introduction of intelligent road studs, reacting to traffic light changes on a busy roundabout is a continuation of the traditional cat's eye legacy but takes advantage of new technology available. The new studs have been proven to reduce lane transgression by over 50% in certain conditions so it's a great way to help improve the safety for all road users.

Cat's eyes were invented by Percy Shaw in 1933 after he was driving down a steep winding road in West Yorkshire and noticed his headlights reflect in the eyes of a cat. He realised the potential of improving road safety if he could create a reflecting device that could be fitted to road surfaces and came up with his cat's eye invention.

General enquiries

Members of the public should contact the Highways England customer contact centre on 0300 123 5000.

Media enquiries

Journalists should contact the Highways England press office on 0844 693 1448 and use the menu to speak to the most appropriate press officer.