

[News story: New Blue Belt stakeholder newsletter published](#)

The [Winter 2017-2018 Stakeholder Newsletter](#) provides an update on a number of recent work projects that are being undertaken as part of the [Blue Belt programme](#).

The Blue Belt programme is a four year programme (2016 to 2020), delivered by the Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture Science (Cefas) and the Marine Management Organisation (MMO) with the UK Overseas Territories on behalf of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) and the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra).

The programme supports delivery of the UK government's manifesto commitment to provide long term protection of over four million square kilometres of marine environment across the UK Overseas Territories.

You can sign up to receive the [newsletter by e-mail](#) and get more updates about the work of the programme [on Twitter @ukgovbluebelt](#)

[Press release: The next steps towards the 5G Future](#)

The positioning of the UK as a world leader in the development and deployment of 5G technology has received another boost as the government sets out the next steps of its ambitious plans.

Government has today published an [update to its 5G strategy](#), first published at Spring Budget 2017, which outlines our progress to date in delivering against the recommendations of the strategy. It also details the next phase of work aimed at preparing the UK for a 5G future including the steps that the government will take to support investment, and the ongoing programme of 5G Testbeds and Trials.

In October, the 5G Testbeds and Trials Programme launched a £25 million competition to fund an initial series of testbeds and trials. This "Phase 1" competition is focusing on new and innovative use cases for 5G in order to help identify new revenue streams and business models for all parts of the supply chain. At Budget in November, we announced specific funding for 5G projects, and government has today announced that "Phase 2" programme activity will include funding for the first large scale projects.

As part of this, the government has launched a [call for views](#) on the

appropriate scale and scope of deployment pilots that will help to establish the conditions under which 5G can be deployed in a timely way and help foster the development of 5G in the UK. This includes the timescales over which they should be delivered, the amount of funding contribution which would be appropriate, and the method by which funding should be allocated.

Minister for Digital, Matt Hancock said:

We want the UK to be a global leader in 5G so that we can take early advantage of the benefits that this new technology offers. The steps we are taking now are all part of our commitment to realising the potential of 5G, and will help to create a world-leading digital economy that works for everyone.

And while the Phase 1 and Phase 2 projects will shortly be underway, it's important for the government to create the right environment for long-term investment in 5G and other technologies like full fibre broadband.

DCMS is therefore also launching a [call for evidence](#) to understand what makes investing in fibre and 5G attractive, and what government could do to support this. The responses will inform the [Future Telecoms Infrastructure Review](#) which was announced last month as part of the [Industrial Strategy](#), which set out the need to do more to increase our productivity and to make the most of our untapped potential right across the nation.

Our aim is to be the world's most innovative economy, and as part of this, the UK needs an integrated, long-term strategy for fixed and mobile networks and this review will determine what conditions will encourage the long term investment needed to secure world-class digital connectivity, that is seamless, reliable, long-lasting and also widely available and affordable to UK businesses and consumers.

Also announced today are the chosen partners for running the 5G innovation Network. A consortium led by CW, in partnership with the Knowledge Transfer Network and TM Forum, have been selected to provide a significant boost to the development of the UK's 5G ecosystem, whilst contributing to increased inward investment and UK leadership. The Network will:

- Facilitate the coordination and engagement of organisations working on 5G activities in the UK
- Create and maintain an accessible and up to date source of information about 5G activities for industry and
- Establish a global marketing brand as part of a strategy to encourage inward investment and participation in 5G activities in the UK.

ENDS

Notes to Editors

1. The Terms of Reference for the Future Telecoms Infrastructure Review (FTIR) are available online. The FTIR call for evidence outlines a

- number of different market and policy models, and we are particularly keen to hear how these could generate effective outcomes for consumers in the next decade and beyond, and the pros and cons of these models.
2. The government has committed over £1 billion from the National Productivity Investment Fund to support the next generation of digital infrastructure in the UK including through the delivery of two programmes: the Local Full Fibre Networks (“LFFN”) Programme and the 5G Testbeds and Trials Programme. These programmes aim to stimulate investment in next generation fibre and wireless networks.
 3. 5G has the potential to transform communications and is likely to lead to new business models and innovation in service provision. Given the potential size of the global 5G prize – a recent report estimated 5G will enable USD\$12.3 trillion of global economic output in 2035 – we need to ensure that the UK is at the forefront of 5G developments, so that we can maximise the potential benefits to our economy and citizens.
 4. The business case for 5G is not just about the technology. It’s about discovering new business models. With 4G, the primary use case is consumer mobile services. 5G will be the first network with multiple use cases, serving multiple needs. The Phase 1 competition will focus on new and innovative use cases for 5G in order to help identify new revenue streams and business models for all parts of the supply chain.
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[Press release: Government launches plan to increase participation in democracy](#)

The government has launched the first ever [Democratic Engagement Plan](#) today (19 December 2017) to tackle democratic exclusion and outline how it will increase participation among under registered groups.

The Minister for the Constitution Chris Skidmore launched the Plan today at the first meeting of the National Democracy Week Council, made up of organisations from across the civil society sector, working in partnership with government.

The Council has been established to plan activities for a week of unified national action that will take place between 2 to 6 July next year in celebration of two significant anniversaries – 100 years since women won the right to vote and 90 years since women won equal voting rights to men.

The Democratic Engagement Plan, launched today, follows the ‘Every Voice Matters’ tour, which over the last year has visited every region and nation in Great Britain. The Minister met over 100 organisations that represent people who are underrepresented on the electoral register, gathering insight on the barriers these groups face engaging with the democratic process.

The Plan sets out our approach to creating an inclusive democracy by:

- building on record levels of voter registration and identifying where there is more to do
- further encouraging participation to make our democracy more inclusive than ever
- launching National Democracy Week to promote democratic engagement
- identifying the barriers faced by specific groups that are currently under-represented on the electoral register

Also, today is the next stage of the government's plans to make changes to anonymous registration, making it more accessible for those who need it most. The draft legislation will be laid in Parliament, if it is approved we anticipate the changes will come into force in time for the May local elections in England.

Minister for the Constitution, Chris Skidmore said:

I am pleased to publish the first Democratic Engagement Plan which sets out our longer-term approach to encouraging democratic participation.

We now have a better understanding of how participation differs between different groups and areas and this plan sets out how best we can engage with those who are under-registered so ours is a democracy that works for everyone.

We want to ensure that everyone eligible who wishes to register to vote and participate in our democracy is given the opportunity to do so. There are still millions of people who are not enrolled on the electoral register or choose not to vote. But as this Plan shows, in our democracy, every voice matters.

[News story: Home Secretary's open letter to EU citizens in the UK](#)

I'm proud that so many EU citizens like yourself have built your lives in the UK and made it your home. We value your contribution which is why the government put safeguarding your rights as the first priority in the Brexit negotiations.

I am absolutely delighted that we have now reached an agreement with the EU that does this. I know that at times you've had an anxious wait while the fine details were ironed out, but we wanted to get it right and we have

always had you at the forefront of our thoughts.

We have always said that we will continue to recognise the value you bring to our society, and that we will remain an open and diverse country. Hopefully this deal provides reassurance that we will do just that.

The agreement we have reached ensures the rights you and your family currently have remain broadly the same with access to healthcare, benefits and pensions protected. And your existing close family members living outside the UK retain the right to join you in future. These rights will be cemented in UK law meaning you can live your life as you do now with the security of knowing they won't change. Irish citizens also have their existing rights, associated with the Common Travel Area arrangements, protected.

Away from the negotiations, my team at the Home Office has been working hard to build the digital system that you'll use to get your new status. It's being designed from scratch to be quick and simple to use. There won't be bureaucratic hurdles – those processing applications will work in your favour.

What's more, it will cost no more than the fee a British person pays for a passport and if you already have valid permanent residence documentation it will be free. There will be support for the vulnerable and those without access to a computer, and we're working with EU citizens' representatives and embassies to ensure the system works for everyone.

You do not need to do anything just yet. You will see more detail about the settled status scheme from us in the new year and we expect applications will open during the second half of 2018. In the meantime, please do share this message with your friends and family so that they too can stay up to date through [our mailing list](#).

I hope that the agreement we have reached provides certainty to you and your family ahead of Christmas. EU citizens, like yourself, who have made the UK their home are our family, our neighbours and our colleagues and we want you to stay.

[Further guidance for EU citizens in the UK is available on GOV.UK.](#)

[Press release: Justice Secretary pledges commitment to tackling racial inequality in the Criminal Justice](#)

System

The Lammy review, published in October, found evidence that people from black and minority ethnic backgrounds have a worse experience of the CJS. David Lammy's findings included striking statistics which show starkly the work that will be required to address this deep-rooted problem – this includes the fact that BAME men and women represent 25% of prisoners, despite making up just 14% of the population.

David Lammy made a range of recommendations, including that data should be published and analysed regularly on ethnicity and the CJS, and that deferred prosecution models should be explored further.

The Justice Secretary today pledged to take forward work around each of the 35 recommendations – making clear that action had been taken on several already – and went even further by challenging all parts of the criminal justice system to seek out further opportunities to challenge race bias.

While some of the changes will take longer to achieve than others, the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) has already made progress on several recommendations. For example, prison governors have been asked to immediately implement the recommendation to establish a diverse forum in prisons to review the use of force. Meanwhile, the Ministry of Justice has met several recommendations by publishing data that has never been compiled or released before on race bias in the CJS. This includes a breakdown by ethnicity of parole board hearing outcomes and the educational background of offenders, linking with data held by the Department for Education – and the MoJ will take every opportunity to keep adding new data.

Today's response builds on the work already announced by the Prime Minister earlier this year when she published the Race Disparity Audit. The Prime Minister challenged society to "explain or change" the disparities which were uncovered.

Academics, campaigners and think-tanks will have an open invitation to scrutinise data on race bias. Where the MoJ cannot explain discrepancies in the way different groups are treated – it will make reforms to address them.

Where a recommendation in the Lammy review cannot be implemented in full or exactly as recommended, further work will be carried out and an alternative approach will be found that achieves the same aim.

The Ministry of Justice also committed to doing everything possible to encourage and support other organisations to take action to meet their specific recommendations.

Justice Secretary David Lidington said:

This Government is committed to exposing injustice wherever it exists. Where we cannot explain differences in outcomes for

different groups, we will reform.

Effective justice simply cannot be delivered unless everyone has full confidence in our Criminal Justice System.

This is the very first step in a change of attitude towards race disparity that will touch on every part of the criminal justice system for years to come.

Ministers have also started discussions with the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime about piloting a deferred prosecution scheme in the capital.

Work will be driven forward by a new Race and Ethnicity Board, made up of the key partners in the CJS responsible for implementing the Lammy recommendations. The Board will work with external stakeholders to inform and encourage challenge on its progress. Extensive publication of data will ensure the Ministry of Justice and partners across the CJS are held to account for reducing race bias.

Notes to Editors:

- The Government's response to David Lammy will be published on the Ministry of Justice web page on Gov.UK at 9.30am on Tuesday 19 December.
- The Government's 'Ethnicity Facts and Figures' website can be found at <http://www.ethnicity-facts-figures.service.gov.uk>