

Press release: HS2 appoints Neil Hayward as new HR director

Neil will be a member of the High Speed Two (HS2) Ltd executive team and report directly to Chief Executive, Mark Thurston.

Neil has over 20 years experience working in large and complex organisations, at the most senior levels, delivering organisational improvements. He has held a number of senior human resources (HR) positions in both the private and public sector, including BT, the Ministry of Justice and Serco Group. Most recently as Group People Director at the Post Office Neil was part of the team that restored the company to profit, under public ownership, after some years of significant losses.

HS2 chief executive, Mark Thurston, said:

I welcome Neil Hayward to HS2 Ltd and am delighted that he is to lead our HR team.

HS2's success will come from its people, and Neil's experience in defining and implementing change at FTSE 100 and 250 companies, and in central government will be extremely valuable as we transition from a development company to one delivering Britain's new national high speed rail network.

Neil said:

HS2 is a transformational infrastructure project that can change the economic geography of the country. That's a really important mission and it's hugely exciting to be joining the company now as it moves towards the major construction stages.

I am really looking forward to being part of the team that will deliver Europe's biggest infrastructure project which is of national significance for the UK.

Neil takes up his new position with HS2 Ltd on 13 November.

News story: Joint Nature Conservation Committee Members reappointed

The Government has reappointed Professor Ian Bateman and Professor Colin Galbraith as Independent Members of the Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC) for second terms. The reappointments will take effect from 1 November 2017 for four years.

All appointments to the JNCC are made on merit and political activity plays no part in the selection process. The appointment complies with the Governance Code on Public Appointments. There is a requirement for appointees' political activity (if significant) to be declared. Professor Bateman and Professor Galbraith have not declared any significant political activity during the past five years.

The JNCC was established in the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (2006) as a non-departmental public body. The JNCC advises the UK Government and Devolved Administrations of Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales on UK-wide and international nature conservation.

Remuneration is £9,836 per annum based on a time commitment of 2½ days per month.

Professor Ian Bateman OBE

Professor Ian Bateman is a Professor of Environmental Economics and Director of the Land, Environment, Economics and Policy (LEEP) Institute at the University of Exeter. He is a member of the Natural Capital Committee, Member of the Environment Agency Long-Term Investment Scenarios Development Group (LTIS-DG), Member of the Scientific Advisory Board of the French National Institute for Agricultural Research (INRA), Member of British Standard Institute (BSI) Committee for establishing ISO standards for Evaluating Natural Capital and Determining environmental costs and benefits and Monetary valuation of environmental aspects and impacts, Member of the South West Water Legislative, Resilience and Environmental Investment Board, Chief Editor of the journal Environmental and Resource Economics and former member of the Defra Science Advisory Council. He is also Adjunct Professor of Agricultural and Resource Economics, University of Western Australia, Perth and Adjunct Professor in the Department of Economics in both the University of Waikato Management School, New Zealand and at Lincoln University, New Zealand. He was Head of Economics for the UK National Ecosystem Assessment from 2009-2011.

Professor Colin Galbraith

Professor Colin Galbraith is Director of his environmental consultancy, dealing with a range of environmental issues in Scotland and at the global level. Colin was until early 2010 the Director of Policy and Advice in Scottish Natural Heritage. In this capacity he was the principal adviser on

policy, scientific and technical matters for the organisation for over twelve years. Colin has been involved with the United Nations for a number of years and has made contributions through the Convention on Migratory Species and to the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment in particular. This work area involves Colin in high profile nature conservation issues including the conservation of the African Elephant, developing new international agreements to assist the conservation of Albatross, and in reviewing the impact of climate change on the ecology of threatened species. Colin has been the Chairman and the Vice Chairman of the Scientific Council of the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS) and is presently the Appointed Councillor on Climate Change issues for the Convention. He has been an Honorary Professor in Conservation Science at the University of Stirling since 2002.

Press release: Testing starts for innovative Warrington motorway trial

Highways England is delivering the project at Croft Interchange – where junction 21a of the M6 meets junction 10 of the M62 – to give drivers smoother and more reliable journeys along the eastbound M62, one of the busiest commuter congestion hotspots in the region.

When the testing is completed in December / January, electronic information signs and variable mandatory speed limits on the M62, will combine with traffic lights on the motorway link roads from the M6, to provide smoother traffic flows.

Electronic signs on the eastbound M62 will be used with traffic lights on link road slip roads from the M6 to smooth drivers' journeys

Andy Withington, Highways England's programme delivery manager for the North West, said:

This is an opportunity to combine existing technology and traffic management systems in a novel way to see whether we can give drivers using the frequently congested eastbound M62, lower journey times during peak hours and smoother, more reliable journeys.

Once the system is fully up and running we'll be monitoring its use over a period of up to a year. If it is successful – and we believe it will be – it could well be used on other motorway to motorway link roads across the country.

At peak times drivers leaving the M6 may be required to stop at traffic lights at the end of the slip road onto the eastbound M62

The new motorway to motorway system will be introduced in 2 phases. The electronic variable message signs will be introduced first and drivers travelling between junction 9 and junction 11 of the eastbound M62 will start to see the signs in operation displaying mandatory variable speed limits and other information such as warnings of congestion.

The second phase of the scheme will see the traffic lights switched on at the end of the link roads onto the eastbound M62. Traffic leaving the M6 will be closely monitored and the lights will be controlled to minimise queuing onto the M6.

Mr Withington said:

The key aim of the project is to test the novel technology introduced through this pilot project and tackle congestion at peak travel times, especially during the morning rush hour. The link road traffic lights won't be on all of the time, being limited to the morning peak, but the variable speed limit signs on the M62 eastbound will be working all the time when traffic conditions dictate.

Therefore, when the system is operating, drivers will be expected to obey the traffic lights on the link roads and variable mandatory speed limits displayed on the new M62 electronic signs.

Slip road signs have been installed to warn drivers of new traffic lights

The £7 million construction project involved installing some of the largest gantries ever used in the region to carry the electronic signs – crossing up to 10 lanes of traffic.

Money for the project is coming from a £150 million innovation fund, part of the £15 billion allocated to Highways England in the Government's 2015 to 2020 Road Investment Strategy. The innovation fund is designed to encourage Highways England to look at new technology or novel techniques to improve journeys.

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.

News story: David Davis' closing remarks at the end of EU exit negotiations on 9-10 November

Thank you, Michel.

Last month I welcomed Michel's recognition of the new dynamic in the talks created by the Prime Minister's Florence speech.

That speech set out a clear and pragmatic approach to securing an agreement that works for both the United Kingdom and the European Union.

One that heralds a new era of cooperation and partnership between us.

During the October discussions we isolated the key remaining issues on Citizens' Rights, Northern Ireland, and the Financial Settlement as Michel has just told you.

So this week our focus has been on finding solutions to those issues.

It was, of course, inevitable that our discussions would narrow to a few outstanding – albeit important – issues.

So we have continued to work through these remaining issues – consolidating the progress we've made since June and exploring options for reaching agreement.

And now is the time for both sides to move together to seek solutions.

This is a serious business.

If we are to find a way forward it will require flexibility and pragmatism from both sides as I think Michel also stressed.

We have been clear with the EU that we are willing to engage in discussions in a flexible and constructive way to reach the progress needed.

I will now address each issue in turn.

Northern Ireland

On Northern Ireland we have continued to have good, technical discussions.

We have drafted joint principles on the continuation of the Common Travel Area and associated rights.

We have continued to explore how best we preserve North-South cooperation.

And we are drafting joint principles and commitments which will guide the solutions drawn up in the second phase.

We have also had frank discussions about some of the big challenges around the border.

We remain firmly committed to avoiding any physical infrastructure and we have been clear about that this week.

These discussions will of course continue in the run-up to the December Council but let's be under no illusion.

We will only be able to conclude them finally in the context of the future relationship.

We respect the European Union desire to protect the legal order of the single market and Customs Union.

But that cannot come at cost to the constitutional and economic integrity of the United Kingdom.

As I have said before, we recognise the need for specific solutions for the unique circumstances of Northern Ireland.

But let me be clear.

This cannot amount to creating a new border inside our United Kingdom.

Now in this process, we are resolutely committed to upholding the Belfast/Good Friday Agreement, in all its parts.

We need to approach the challenging issues that arise as part of this process in a spirit of pragmatism, creativity and with a high degree of political sensitivity.

We owe it to the people of Northern Ireland and of Ireland to do so.

Citizens' Rights

We have continued to make progress on Citizen's Rights. We are now seeking political solutions to the last outstanding issues on both sides.

Earlier this week as Michel said, we published a detailed note setting out our new administrative procedures for European Union citizens seeking settled status in the UK.

This delivers on a commitment I made in the last round of negotiations and discussed in the press conference too.

We listened carefully to the concerns raised about this process and we've responded.

As our paper sets out, the new procedures will be as streamlined and straight-forward as possible and will be based on simple, transparent criteria laid out in the Withdrawal Agreement.

This week, we have discussed options for resolving issues ranging from family

reunification to the export of benefits.

For example, we have been clear that we are willing to consider what further reassurance we can give to existing families – even if they are not currently living together in the UK

There are a few areas where our citizens need to see further progress and movement from the European Union.

On the mutual recognition of professional qualifications, the European Union's approach remains more narrow than we would like.

We believe it is only right that people holding qualifications or in the process of acquiring them should be allowed to continue or begin their careers as they do now.

We want to protect their livelihoods in line with our broader approach that people should be able to continue living their lives as they do now.

On voting rights, we are disappointed that the EU has been unwilling so far to include this in the scope of the Withdrawal Agreement. As citizens may lose a right which they currently enjoy.

However, if it does fall out of scope, we will discuss this issue bilaterally with Member States.

Finally, this week we have sought to give further clarity on our commitment to incorporate the agreement on Citizen's Rights into UK law.

This will ensure that EU citizens in the UK can directly enforce their rights in UK courts – providing certainty and clarity in the long term.

We have made clear that, over time, our courts can take account of the rulings of the European Court of Justice in this area, to help ensure consistent interpretation.

But let me be clear, while we share the same aims, it remains a key priority for the United Kingdom, as we leave the European Union, to preserve the sovereignty of its courts.

Financial Settlement

On the financial settlement we have made substantial technical progress across all the issues that will need to be addressed.

The Prime Minister was clear in her Florence speech.

But let me reiterate once again. Our European Partners will not need to pay more or receive less over the remainder of the current budget plan as a result of our decision to leave.

The UK will honour the commitments we have made during the period of our membership.

We are making clear progress in building a common technical understanding on every item.

Conclusion

But as I outlined at the start – this week has enabled us to consolidate the progress of earlier negotiating rounds and to draw out those areas where further political and technical discussion is required.

This is now about moving into the political discussions that will enable both of us to move forward together.

We must now look ahead to moving our discussions onto our future relationship.

For this to happen, both parties need to build confidence in both the process and indeed in the shared outcome.

And we remain ready and willing to engage as often and as quickly as needed to secure this outcome over the weeks remaining ahead of the December European Council.

The United Kingdom will continue to engage and negotiate constructively as we have done since the start.

But we need to see flexibility, imagination and willingness to make progress on both sides if these negotiations are to succeed and we are able to realise our new deep and special partnership.

[News story: Adam Afriyie MP visits Ghana to explore commercial opportunities for UK business in the Infrastructure and Oil and Gas sectors.](#)

This will be the Trade Envoy's fifth visit to Ghana in his role as Trade Envoy to Ghana – and his third since the inauguration of His Excellency President Nana Akufo-Addo on 7 January.

This visit is about showcasing how UK expertise and investment can partner with Ghana to transform the Infrastructure and Oil & Gas sectors in support of the President's drive to move "Ghana Beyond Aid".

Adam Afriyie will meet with key members of the Government of Ghana, including

Vice President Bawumia, the Minister for Rail Development and the Minister Transport. Alongside the newly appointed British High Commissioner Iain Walker, he will also visit Takoradi to explore how UK companies working in Oil and Gas are responding to the opportunities in Ghana after the ITLOS ruling.

The UK and Ghana share common interests and values. Adam Afriyie MP will be encouraging more UK businesses to invest in the infrastructure sector and pushing Ghana as a choice destination for UK exports and investments to strengthen ties and build a shared future. As part of this, he will be discussing an 'Infrastructure is GREAT' Forum which the UK Department for International Trade (DIT), with support from the UK Ghana Chamber of Commerce, will host at The Kempinski Hotel, Accra Ghana on Tuesday 28 November 2017. It will be a unique opportunity to engage with British Businesses to discuss how they and the UK government can unlock private sector opportunities that can deliver jobs, skills and economic growth for Ghana.

On returning to Ghana Adam Afriyie MP said: " It is great to be back. I am looking forward to seeing the scale of Infrastructure plans now that the Government is really pushing ahead with its agenda and understand the opportunities for leading UK companies – not least after the conclusion of the ITLOS international arbitration which has provided reassurance and certainty on the future of Ghana's Oil and Gas sector."

Speaking about the visit, Iain Walker said: "Our trade has dropped 30% since 2012. As Ghana moves "Beyond Aid" I want to see the UK private sector investing and partnering with the Government of Ghana in the areas that will transform Ghana's future, creating sustainable growth and employment opportunities. Our focus is on supporting high value projects to enable Ghana to achieve its development agenda, particularly infrastructure needs, including such as Rails, Roads, Ports. Our bilateral trade stood at a peak of £ 1.5 billion in 2012 and has hovered at about £ 1 billion pounds since. I am committed to doing all I can to get this trade back up to peak levels. "