

[Press release: Sellafield chemical disposal – 25 October](#)

Current status – Wednesday 25 October 2017 (15:45)

Preparations are continuing for the assessment of safe disposal options for chemicals identified during decommissioning work at our analytical services laboratory.

As we announced last night, we have requested the support of the Army's EOD team in doing this.

Update at Tuesday 24 October 2017

As part of work to prepare for the decommissioning and demolition of the historic analytical laboratories at Sellafield, we identified a number of chemicals requiring safe disposal.

Following the safe and successful controlled detonation by the army's Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) team at the weekend we are now seeking further technical advice from the EOD to assist us with further chemical disposals. This work will take place in due course.

Disposal of historic chemicals is a common procedure. The EOD team deal with redundant chemicals including from schools, universities and hospitals, hundreds of times a year.

Operations in the laboratory complex have been stood down to enable these further technical assessments. Employees should attend work as normal.

Key facts:

- Even in a worst case scenario, a release of radioactivity from the site is not credible.
- Our mission is to clean up and decommission the Sellafield site – the oldest and most complex nuclear site in the UK. We discover things like this because we proactively go looking for them.
- The chemicals we are dealing with at Sellafield are contained within a complex of laboratories.
- The chemicals are in sealed containers and the containers are in good condition.
- Sellafield Ltd has engaged with our regulators throughout this process and will continue to do so. Sellafield Ltd's investigation will be made available to them.
- We stood down the on-coming shift in the laboratory complex, in order to make it easier for the EOD team to come in and assess the situation.
- The rest of the Sellafield site (over 1,000 buildings, which are home to over 10,000 employees) is operating normally tonight, and will be tomorrow.

Press release: David Mundell announces membership of Scottish Business Taskforce

Scottish Secretary David Mundell confirmed today (25th October) in the House of Commons that the group will meet for the first time on Friday, chaired by former UK Government Minister Andrew Dunlop.

The Scottish Business Taskforce's aim is to exert a positive influence on the development of UK Government policy, and in so doing help to advance Scotland's interests. In the first meeting the group will discuss the Scottish economy, Industrial Strategy as well as progress made in City Region Deals.

Chaired by former UK Government Minister Andrew Dunlop, the panel comprises:

- Marc Crothall CEO – Scottish Tourism Alliance
- Prof Susan Deacon – Assistant Principal External Relations, University of Edinburgh and Chair, IoD Scotland
- Jayne-Anne Gadhia – Chief Executive, Virgin Money
- Jo Macsween – Vistage Group Chair and ex MD Macsween of Edinburgh
- Prof. Graeme Roy – Director, Fraser of Allander, University of Strathclyde
- Louise Smith – HMT Fintech envoy Scotland and Head of Design, Personal and Business Banking RBS
- Douglas Smith – Chairman – Scotland, CBRE
- Neil Sims – VP, Expro – North Sea
- Chris Van der Kuyl – Chairman, 4J Studios
- Ellis Watson – Executive Chairman DC Thomson Media
- Will Whitehorn – Chair, Scottish Exhibition Centre and Clyde Space
- Brian Wilson – Chair, Harris Tweed Hebrides

The Taskforce's core membership are all business and economic leaders who have been invited to join in their personal capacity and on the basis of their knowledge and experience, rather than representing a particular trade body or organisation.

David Mundell said:

The Scottish Business Taskforce boasts an unrivalled wealth of expert analysis and knowledge. The members represent the diversity and talent of Scottish business and will ensure that the UK Government is seeking the best advice from leaders in their fields.

Chaired by my former colleague Andrew Dunlop who is a business

expert in his own right, this taskforce will provide the insight to ensure we are delivering for Scottish businesses.

The first meeting of the group will take place in Edinburgh on the 27th October, and will discuss the state of the Scottish economy, the UK Government's Industrial Strategy, innovation and the economic powers at the disposal of both governments.

Ahead of the meeting, Scottish Business Taskforce chairman and former UK Government Minister Andrew Dunlop commented:

As a UK Government Minister, I made it my priority to understand the needs of Scottish businesses and to take action to strengthen the Scottish economy. And as someone who has also run my own company I can appreciate the importance of creating the right climate in which business can thrive. That's why I am delighted to be chairing this group, building on both experiences to bang the drum for Scottish businesses.

The group's membership engages some of Scotland's best business and economic brains and draws on experience of diverse sectors from fintech and new media to the iconic Harris Tweed and Macsween's world famous produce.

The UK Government Scottish Business Taskforce will focus on how the UK Government can use its policy levers to improve our productivity, performance and promote strong economic growth in Scotland. Our work will feed directly into the UK Government and provide a constructive contribution to its joint work with the Scottish Government.

[News story: Brathay apprentice challenge winners GSK in Westminster visit](#)

Apprentices from GSK Ulverston were crowned the winners of the Brathay Apprentice Challenge in June following a testing 6-month challenge that saw them compete against teams from the country's leading apprentice employers and training providers.

John Woodcock MP, Brathay Trust and Sue Husband, Director of the National Apprenticeship Service, met with the apprentices to congratulate them on

their efforts.

The Brathay Apprentice Challenge is the search for the apprentice team of the year and supported by the Education and Skills Funding Agency. In 2017, teams of apprentices reached over 70,000 young people to raise awareness of the benefits of apprenticeships and recruited over 500 new employers interested in offering apprenticeships, in addition to delivering 44 community projects to benefit young people.

GSK narrowly beat Nottingham City Homes into second place and JCB who finished third. Teams from Derwent Training Association, IBM, Redrow Homes, Severn Trent Water and WSP also competed in the national finals.

GSK team leader and engineering apprentice, Joseph Hambley, said:

It has been a privilege to be invited to meet with John Woodcock, MP and come to Westminster today. We were ecstatic to have won the top title of the apprentice team of the year out of 650 apprentices that entered the challenge.

The experience and opportunities from the Brathay Apprentice Challenge will stay with us all forever; from producing a film to raise awareness about the dangers of asthma in children and teens to recruiting employers and educating young people about apprenticeships.

We hope that winning the title will support our efforts to inspire young people and promote apprenticeships. Hard work, determination and self-confidence are key for success.

Sue Husband, Director, National Apprenticeship Service concluded:

The Brathay Apprentice Challenge requires commitment, determination and teamwork to succeed and the team from GSK showed all these skills in abundance to be crowned winners. I am so pleased to see them all again today, to celebrate their success and for them to get the opportunity to receive deserved recognition from their local MP at Westminster.

The attributes of this team of apprentices includes optimism, self-control and creativity and I am delighted to be in the company of such successful apprentices today.

[Press release: Government releases £100bn of grant data in push for greater efficiency and transparency](#)

The government publishes grants data in line with the [UK's Open Government National Action Plan](#). The new Government Grants Information System (GGIS) enables grant information on £100 billion (2016 to 17) worth of grants to be recorded and reported across government departments in a simple, standardised and scalable way.

The new system represents the most comprehensive picture of the grants landscape available to government. Grants range from government funding for schools, to UK Sport grants, to funding for bus service operators.

John Manzoni, Chief Executive of the Civil Service and Cabinet Office Permanent Secretary, said:

We spend more than £100 billion a year on government grants. We will continue to ensure that this money is being spent effectively. Through the GGIS, for the first time, we are able to collect more extensive data across government departments, not only on the levels of grant giving, but also how the process is being managed within each department.

The new system will reinforce our drive for efficiency, effectiveness and transparency in how we do our business in government and gives us greater assurance identifying and preventing fraud.

The system, which was launched last year, collects data showing how much each of the government departments are paying out in grants to a range of organisations.

This will allow for greater scrutiny of grant making and will help the government identify areas of inefficiency or fraud throughout the grant making process. The database is available to government departments for policy analysis purposes.

The data for the Department for Transport and the Ministry of Justice has also been released to a standard format developed by the [360Giving initiative](#), which means it is available to the public and can be compared with that of other grant making organisations, therefore providing a bigger picture of the UK funding landscape.

Fran Perrin, Founder of 360Giving, which supports organisations to publish their grants data in an open, standardised way, said:

The government is the UK's largest grant funder, so we are pleased that it is on board with the greater grants data movement in a push towards more transparency, efficiency and efficacy.

By adopting the 360Giving Standard as many grant makers are now doing, their data can be more easily shared and used alongside that of other grant makers.

More open, comparable data will improve the sector's ability to make informed, evidence-based funding decisions and ultimately bolster the impact of UK grant making.

[News story: Independent review on cost of energy published](#)

An independent review into reducing costs in each element of the electricity supply chain [has been published today](#).

Building on the government's Industrial Strategy Green Paper, Professor Dieter Helm CBE [was asked in August](#) to consider the whole electricity supply chain of generation, transmission, distribution and supply.

The review follows the plan set out in July by government and Ofgem to upgrade our network to a [smarter energy system](#), and the publication of draft legislation on an energy price cap to keep families' energy bills as low as possible.

The government remains committed to the ambitious agenda of cutting carbon emissions while driving economic growth, as set out in the [Clean Growth Strategy](#), as well as other recent announcements, including;

- providing up to £557 million for further [Contract for Difference](#) auctions for less established renewable technologies, with the next one planned for spring 2019;
- putting an end to households being charged unjustifiably high prices for their energy – Parliament will continue to scrutinise the draft legislation designed to place a temporary [cap on energy prices](#) and
- continuing delivery of reliable and secure electricity supplies through the [capacity market](#).

We will shortly be seeking the views of industry, businesses, academics and consumer groups on Professor Helm's review.

Business and Energy Secretary Greg Clark said:

Homes and business depend upon reliable, affordable power and the government is ambitious in its plans to keep costs as low as possible for them over the coming decades.

We are already taking significant steps to upgrade our energy infrastructure as part of the Industrial Strategy and have published draft legislation to cap poor value energy tariffs helping millions of consumers across Britain.

I am grateful to Professor Helm for his forensic examination. We will now carefully consider his findings.