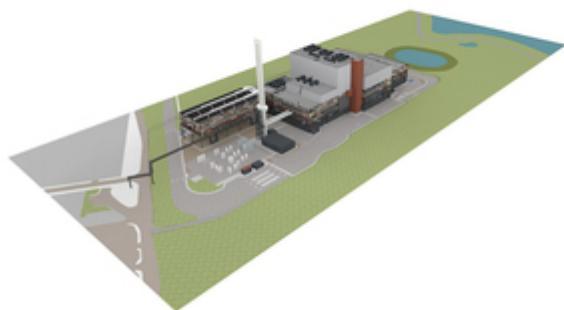


Wheelabrator Kemsley Generating Station (K3) and Wheelabrator Kemsley North (WKN) Waste to Energy Facility development consent decisions announced

Press release

Today, Friday 19 February 2021, the application for the Wheelabrator Kemsley Generating Station (K3) has been given development consent by the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy. Wheelabrator Kemsley North (WKN) Waste to Energy Facility was not granted consent.



The Order grants development consent for this Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project comprising a power upgrade and increase in tonnage throughput to the existing Kemsley Generating Station (K3) to allow for generation of up to 75MW.

The Secretary of State has decided, following consideration of the report of the Examining Authority which conducted the examination of the application, to accept the Examining Authority's recommendations to grant development consent only to Wheelabrator Kemsley K3 Generating Station.

The application was submitted to the Planning Inspectorate for consideration by WTI/ EFW Holdings Ltd on 11 September 2019 and accepted for examination on 08 October 2019. Following an Examination during which the public, Statutory Consultees and Interested Parties were given the opportunity to give evidence to the Examining Authority, a recommendation was made to the Secretary of State on 19 November 2019.

This is the 102nd Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project and 61st energy application to have been examined by The Planning Inspectorate within the timescales laid down in the Planning Act 2008.

The Planning Inspectorate's Chief Executive, Sarah Richards said:

The Planning Inspectorate has examined more than 100 nationally significant infrastructure projects ensuring local communities had the opportunity of being involved in the examination of projects that may affect them. Local people, the local authority and other interested parties were able to participate in the six-month long examination. The Examining Authority listened and gave full consideration to local views and the evidence gathered during the Examination before making their recommendation.

The decision, the recommendation made by the Examining Authority to the Secretary of State and the evidence considered by the Examining Authority in reaching its recommendation is publicly available on the [project page of the national infrastructure planning website](#).

Journalists wanting further information should contact the Planning Inspectorate Press Office, on 0303 444 5004 or 0303 444 5005 or email: Press.office@planninginspectorate.gov.uk Notes to editors:

The Planning Inspectorate, [National Infrastructure Programme of Projects](#) details the proposals which are anticipated to be submitted to the Planning Inspectorate as applications in the coming months.

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Homes England set to launch bidding for strategic partnerships

Strategic partnerships at Homes England

Strategic partnerships are an exciting approach to increase the delivery of affordable housing. Rather than applying for funding on a scheme-by-scheme basis, strategic partners enter into a multi-year grant agreement with Homes England to deliver affordable housing. This allows partners to benefit from the certainty of grant for the duration of the partnership, as well as access to Homes England's wider expertise, insight and influence.

We first launched strategic partnerships in 2018 – since then, we have signed 23 partnerships with 27 housing associations, delivering around £1.8 billion grant investment and over 40,000 additional affordable homes.

We know there is more appetite, experience and capacity across the sector to

deliver affordable housing. So, for the new affordable homes fund, we've redesigned our strategic partnership model, with an increased focus on the relationship element, and are opening this offer to a broader range of partners from across the housing sector.

Strategic partnerships play a pivotal role in Homes England's mission to use everything at our disposal to intervene in the market to make homes happen.

We are looking for ambitious, successful organisations that share our aims and values to become strategic partners, so that together we can do just that.

Read more about the requirements in the [affordable housing funding guide](#).

Who can be a strategic partner

For 2021, we're offering our strategic partnerships to a broader range of organisations than ever before, including not for profit registered providers, for-profit providers and developers, and local authorities.

We're utilising our expertise and influence to support our strategic partners as much as possible, but in return we ask that our partners can demonstrate a significant commitment to Homes England's broader aims, from increasing the use of Modern Methods of Construction (MMC) to promoting great design.

Read about the [different types and requirements of strategic partnerships](#).

The benefits of becoming a strategic partner

The certainty and flexibility of grant funding is just one element of a strategic partnership – it is the collaborative, working relationship with Homes England that really sets it apart.

Our first cohort of strategic partners told us that working with Homes England in this way has allowed them to do things that wouldn't otherwise have been possible – for example:

- unlocking difficult sites for development
- attracting finance and investment
- accelerating delivery of much needed homes.

Strategic partners will benefit from a broad range of support from across Homes England. That means providing advice for accessing other funding from Homes England, brokering relationships across the sector, co-developing delivery plans and so much more.

Strategic partners will also have access to our technical expertise in delivery, land, infrastructure and investment to address local capacity and capability challenges.

To ensure our strategic partners get as much out of the relationship as possible, each of our partners will have a dedicated Key Account Manager

(KAM) – a senior colleague from Homes England that will act as a conduit to the rest of the agency's resources.

How to become a strategic partner

We expect to launch a competitive bidding round for proposals to access Affordable Homes grant funding through the strategic partnership route in March 2021. We anticipate that the window for submitting proposals will be around 6 weeks, however this may be subject to change.

We will publish the confirmed timescales in due course.

You can read our guidance for updated timescales and to understand more about [how to apply for affordable housing grant funding in a strategic partnership](#).

If you are not seeking affordable housing grant

If you're still interested in working with us to deliver new homes at scale, then there is no need to wait. You can get in touch with us to discuss how we can work together, and whether a strategic partnership could be right for you. You can contact your regular Homes England contact, or email us: enquiries@homesengland.gov.uk

New Trade Commissioner for LATAC announced

Press release

International Trade Secretary, Liz Truss, appoints Jonathan Knott as a new HM Trade Commissioner (HMTC)



As the UK announces its intention to join the Comprehensive and Progressive Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP), International Trade Secretary Liz Truss, appoints Jonathan Knott as the new HMTC for Latin America and the Caribbean

region, to champion British trade with important economic partners in the region.

As HMTC for the LATAC region and Consul General São Paulo, Jonathan will look to grow trade and investment between the UK and Latin America and the Caribbean, as the UK moves forward with its new independent trade policy. Joining CPTPP would see the UK deepen its access to fast-growing markets and major economies including Mexico, Chile and Peru.

Jonathan joins the Department for International Trade (DIT) from the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO), where he was most recently British Ambassador to Poland and Director of the UK government's Central Europe Network. Jonathan speaks 5 languages including Spanish, Portuguese and French.

Secretary of State for International Trade Liz Truss said:

I am delighted to welcome Jonathan to his new role, he brings a wealth of experience and expertise working with international partners and promoting the UK overseas.

The LATAC region has enormous opportunities for UK businesses and is home to some of the largest economies in the world.

HMTC Jonathan Knott said:

I am thrilled to be appointed as Her Majesty's Trade Commissioner for Latin America and the Caribbean. We already enjoy a strong relationship with the region, and I look forward to building on this. My focus in this new role will be to create more opportunities for our countries to forge deeper trading ties and helping our businesses recover from the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic.

The UK will be taking a leading role in promoting the benefits of free and fair trade, including at the WTO, our potential future membership of CPTPP, and pushing the global climate agenda through our COP26 Presidency this year. I look forward to working closely with our friends and partners across the LATAC region.

The UK enjoys a thriving trade and investment relationship with countries across the Caribbean and Latin America. Total trade between the UK and LATAC was £26.3 billion in the year to Q3 2020.

UK government welcomes the European Commission's draft data adequacy decisions

- Today's draft decisions follow months of discussions and pave the way for continued free flow of data between the EU and the UK
- The UK now urges the EU to fulfil its declared commitment to complete the technical approval process swiftly, so that we have final data adequacy decisions as soon as possible
- This will provide certainty for businesses, enable continued cooperation between the UK and the EU, and will ensure law enforcement authorities can keep our citizens safe

The government welcomes the European Commission's draft data adequacy decisions, which recognise the UK's high data protection standards and set out that the UK should be found 'adequate'.

The UK has a world-class data protection system, currently the same as the European Union's, so it is logical that the Commission should find the UK 'adequate'.

The EU already recognises other countries around the world as adequate including Argentina, Canada, Israel, Japan, New Zealand, Switzerland and Uruguay – and the UK freely exchanges data with these countries.

Positive data adequacy decisions under both the EU General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the Law Enforcement Directive (LED) would allow for personal data to continue to flow freely from the European Union (EU) and wider European Economic Area (EEA) to the UK.

Seamless international data flows are essential in a hyper-connected world. They underpin the exchange of information and ideas supporting trade, innovation and investment, assist with law enforcement agencies tackling crime, and support the delivery of critical public services sharing personal data as well as facilitating health and scientific research.

Technical confirmation of the draft adequacy decisions will help make sure UK businesses and organisations in everything from logistics to legal services, healthcare to human resources, can continue to receive personal data from the EU and EEA without additional compliance costs. This ensures they will avoid potential knock-on effects for consumers and boost UK startups and smaller firms which operate in EU markets and sell to EU customers.

The UK formally provided the Commission with [comprehensive explanatory material](#) nearly a year ago at the start of the adequacy assessment in March 2020. The UK has already recognised the EU and EEA member states as

'adequate', as part of its commitment to establish a smooth transition for the UK's departure from the bloc and manage data flows on an objective basis.

Since then, UK officials led by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) have held a series of discussions with their European Commission counterparts to reiterate carefully and fully the UK's legal and regulatory framework and demonstrate beyond doubt that the UK clearly meets the EU's data adequacy requirements.

The draft decisions published today by the Commission will now be shared with the European Data Protection Board for a 'non-binding opinion', before being presented to EU member states for formal approval.

The UK made its representations to the EU in a timely manner but the Commission did not finalise draft decisions in time to complete the adoption process by the end of the transition period. For this reason, as part of the UK/EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement, a time-limited 'bridging mechanism' for personal data flows was agreed. This currently allows personal data to continue to flow as it did before the end of the Brexit transition period for up to six months, while the EU completes the adequacy process.

The UK government now urges the EU to swiftly complete this technical process for adopting and formalising these adequacy decisions as early as possible.

Secretary of State for Digital Oliver Dowden said:

I welcome the publication of these draft decisions which rightly reflect the UK's commitment to high data protection standards and pave the way for their formal approval.

Although the EU's progress in this area has been slower than we would have wished, I am glad we have now reached this significant milestone following months of constructive talks in which we have set out our robust data protection framework.

I now urge the EU to fulfil their commitment to complete the technical approval process promptly, so businesses and organisations on both sides can seize the clear benefits.

Julian David CEO of techUK said:

The European Commission's decisions that the UK's data protection regime offers an equivalent level of protection to the EU GDPR reflects the UK's high data protection standards.

Today's decision is warmly welcomed by the tech sector which has been making clear the importance of a mutual data adequacy agreement since the day after the referendum.

Receiving data adequacy, alongside the EU-UK Trade and Cooperation

Agreement, will set a solid foundation for digital trade with the EU, including strong non-discrimination clauses and positive data flows provisions, that will give businesses the confidence to invest.

Notes

- The ‘bridging mechanism’ will remain in place until June 30 or until the adequacy decisions come into effect, whichever is sooner.
- The UK has a long and proud tradition of defending privacy rights. In the 1970s, the UK developed pioneering committees to explore the protection of personal data, and in 1981 the UK was one of the first to sign Council of Europe Convention 108. More recently, the UK played an active role in developing the GDPR and LED. The UK Government will continue to promote high data protection standards.
- Read the [European Commission's press statement here](#).
- Read the [GDPR decision here](#).
- Read the [Law Enforcement Directive decision here](#).

DCMS press office is on 020 7211 2210.

£180m Army vehicle contract protects 700 Glasgow jobs

Press release

A £180 million contract to deliver cutting edge threat detection technology for the British Army's new Boxer vehicles will support hundreds of jobs in Scotland, it is announced today.



The Remote Weapons Stations will deliver cutting-edge technology for the Army's Boxer vehicles. MOD Crown Copyright

The 10-year Remote Weapons Stations (RWS) contract will protect over 700 jobs at Thales UK's Glasgow site while supporting 30 apprenticeships.

It uses a 360degree high definition long range cameras attached to the outside of the vehicle to scan for enemy threats, even when Boxer is moving at speed. The RWS then alerts soldiers inside the armoured Boxer through a digital display – so they can keep a permanent watch outside while remaining safely inside the vehicle.

The system also offers key defensive capabilities, including a multi-barrel smoke grenade launcher, thermal imaging, and infra-red pointers.

Defence last year secured a substantial settlement of more than £24 billion over four years to modernise the Armed Forces to meet the threats of the future and support British across the Union.

Minister for Scotland, Iain Stewart said:

We look forward to working with Thales UK on the delivery of these Remote Weapons Stations, knowing this contract will not only contribute to the safety of British military personnel on the front line, but also support industry growth here in Scotland.

Protecting hundreds of jobs and supporting 30 apprenticeships, this £180 million UK Government investment further demonstrates our commitment to supporting the defence sector in Scotland and underscores the many opportunities available within the United Kingdom economy.

Minister of State for Defence, Baroness Goldie said:

This £180m contract with Thales UK will deliver pioneering surveillance and protection for our front line soldiers and our new Boxer fleet. We depend on skills and technology from across the United Kingdom and this order will secure 700 Scottish jobs.

Our troops face a myriad of new and emerging threats so it is imperative we invest in critical detect and destroy technology such as this.

Following the sonar contract for Dreadnought submarines last year, this is Thales UK's second multi-million-pound contract within 12 months, further showcasing the government's commitment to levelling-up across the UK.

DE&S Director Land Equipment, Major General Darren Crook said:

This is another significant step forward for Boxer and I am delighted to see the different threads of the programme coming together. This is a military capability of the future to be proud of.

The UK re-joined the Boxer programme in 2018 and has committed £2.8 billion to deliver over 500 vehicles to the British Army. The first vehicles are scheduled to be ready for service in 2023.

Steven Lockley, Managing Director of Thales in the UK's vehicle integration business in Glasgow, said:

Thales' sub-contract is a great step forward after months of hard work. Working with our strategic partners, Thales is bringing new skills and technologies into the programme, our facilities in Scotland and the UK supply chain.

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