

# Marico Marine wins ADMIRALTY Offshore Renewable Energy Innovation Challenge

The UK Hydrographic Office (UKHO) and Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture Science (Cefas) have announced Marico Marine as the winner of the third ADMIRALTY Marine Innovation Programme challenge.

Led by the UKHO's Research, Design and Innovation team, the programme has given innovators and start-ups the chance to develop solutions that solve some of the world's most pressing challenges when it comes to our oceans. For the programme's third innovation challenge, which was run in partnership with Cefas, participants were asked to demonstrate how marine geospatial data could help identify new areas for offshore renewable energy infrastructure.

In response to this challenge, [Marico Marine](#) developed a geospatial constraints mapping toolkit that helps developers and regulators to understand the impact shipping could have on projects early in the planning process. By combining ADMIRALTY data with advanced GIS analysis and professional mariner expertise, the toolkit will allow the identification of potential hotspots within proposed project boundaries.

The impact projects could have on shipping and wider maritime navigation is a key consideration for consenting authorities, yet it is often considered late in the licence application process. Marico Marine's solution will make it commercially viable for shipping and wider maritime navigation implications to be considered at an earlier stage, potentially saving millions of pounds of investment.

Commenting on the solution, Marico Marine's UK Director, André Cocuccio said:

We are extremely proud to be selected by the UKHO as winners of this innovation challenge and have ambitious plans for the solution in the offshore renewables market.

Through this partnership, the opportunity for Marico to develop an alpha product supported by expertise and authoritative data supplied by the UKHO is an exciting one. Shipping and navigation is a complex receptor to evaluate, and our product is targeted at reducing the likelihood that proposed projects are rejected on these grounds. We are looking forward to the months ahead and developing a powerful product with the UKHO that we hope will have a real impact in the industry.

Commenting on Marico Marine's winning entry, Mark Casey Head of the UK Hydrographic Office's Research, Design and Innovation team said:

I'd like to congratulate Marico Marine on developing this fantastic

solution.

As we enter the UN's 'Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development', we need to find new ways to grow our marine economy whilst reducing our impact on the environment.

Ocean renewables can help us to achieve this balance by reducing our dependency on damaging fossil fuels and helping communities around the world to access a more sustainable source of energy.

Marico Marine's solution will help to grow this sector by giving developers access to marine geospatial data that helps to identify the best locations for new offshore energy infrastructure. We look forward to working with Marico Marine over the coming months and will continue to collaborate with partners on further projects that help to build safer, more secure and thriving oceans.

## **Find out more**

You can find out more about the programme on the ADMIRALTY website:

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## **Landmark proposals to strengthen free speech at universities**

Tougher legal measures to strengthen free speech and academic freedom at universities in England have been announced by the Education Secretary today (16 February), to stamp out unlawful 'silencing' on campuses.

Following an increasing number of cases of individuals being silenced, the Education Secretary has warned of a 'chilling effect' where students and staff feel they cannot express themselves freely.

The [proposed measures](#) deliver on a manifesto commitment, and include a new free speech condition placed on higher education providers in order to be registered in England and access public funding. The regulator, the Office for Students, would have the power to impose sanctions, including financial penalties, for breaches of the condition.

The strengthened legal duties would also extend to Students Unions, which for the first time would have to take steps to ensure that lawful free speech is secured for their members and others, including visiting speakers.

In addition, a new legal measure would enable individuals to seek compensation through the courts if they suffer loss as a result of breach of the free speech duties – such as being expelled, dismissed or demoted.

Education Secretary Gavin Williamson said:

Free speech underpins our democratic society and our universities have a long and proud history of being places where students and academics can express themselves freely, challenge views and cultivate an open mind.

But I am deeply worried about the chilling effect on campuses of unacceptable silencing and censoring. That is why we must strengthen free speech in higher education, by bolstering the existing legal duties and ensuring strong, robust action is taken if these are breached.

Under the plans, the Education Secretary would also appoint a new Free Speech and Academic Freedom Champion to investigate potential infringements, such as no-platforming speakers or dismissal of academics, and higher education providers would be legally required to actively promote free speech.

The new Champion would be appointed to the board of the Office for Students and would be able to investigate potential infringements of the new registration condition on freedom of speech and academic freedom in higher education. The registration condition would work alongside strengthened legal duties on free speech and academic freedom and the Champion would also be able to recommend that the Office for Students imposes fines.

The [policy paper](#) also includes Government expectations that go beyond the minimum legal duties, setting out what universities should aspire to.

The Government will continue to work alongside the sector on guidance and further research, and the next steps for legislation will be set out in due course.

Tom Simpson, Associate Fellow at Policy Exchange, and an Associate Professor of Philosophy and Public Policy, at the Blavatnik School of Government, University of Oxford, said:

This policy paper by the Department of Education is a very welcome step towards ensuring that viewpoint diversity is protected in British universities.

As Cambridge University's recent Senate House vote shows, there is a substantial majority of academics who favour academic freedom. The problem, as Policy Exchange's research has explored, is that a very online culture allows the views of a minority to exert disproportionate influence on administrators, and to exert a chilling effect on other academics. Promoting a norm of political non-discrimination, and incentivising administrators to do what they are already legally obliged to do, is a crucial step towards ensuring a culture of free discourse in our universities.

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# The Secretary of State has appointed Professor Geoff Thompson MBE DL and Ama Agbeze MBE to the Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games Organising Committee

News story

Professor Geoff Thompson MBE DL has been appointed as Deputy Chair and Ama Agbeze MBE as a Board Member of the Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games Organising Committee until 30 June 2023. Ama will serve as Chair of the Committee's Athletes Advisory sub-committee.



## **Professor Geoff Thompson MBE DL**

Geoff Thompson is a former five time world karate champion and sports administrator, which has seen him deliver social and human initiatives with specific emphasis on equality, diversity and inclusion. He is Founder of Youth Charter, a UK-based international charity and UN NGO. Geoff has also held a number of private and public board appointments including: London Legacy Development Corporation, Muhammad Ali Center and is Chair of the Independent Advisory Panel of the PFA.

He has delivered strategies within the bidding, hosting and legacy of major games including the Manchester 2002 and Glasgow 2014 Commonwealth Games. Geoff was awarded an MBE for his services to sport.

## **Ama Agbeze MBE**

Ama gained her first cap for the England Roses in 2001 and captained the Team England netball team to its historic gold medal at the 2018 Gold Coast Commonwealth Games in Australia. She received an MBE for her services to

netball in 2019.

An in depth knowledge of international sport combined with her legal qualification provided the basis, in recent years, for her taking roles as ambassador, trustee and/or board member to various charitable organisations and Commonwealth Games England. In the corporate space Ama delivers motivational talks focussing on leadership, development, team cohesion and striving for success. She has used her experience and platform to be a thought leader in racial equality, youth, and female empowerment. Ama also provides coaching centred around body positivity and participation.

These roles are not remunerated. The appointments have been made in accordance with the [Cabinet Office's Governance Code on Public Appointments](#). The appointments process is regulated by the Commissioner for Public Appointments. The Government's Governance Code requires that any significant political activity undertaken by an appointee in the last five years is declared. This is defined as holding office, public speaking, making a recordable donation or candidature for election. Professor Thompson and Ama Agbeze have not declared any activity.

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## **NDA appoints Lawrie Haynes as new Chair Designate for Dounreay**

News story

David Peattie, Chief Executive Officer of the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority, has today announced the appointment of Lawrie Haynes as Chair Designate of Dounreay Site Restoration Ltd. (DSRL)



NDA appoints Lawrie Haynes as new Chair Designate for Dounreay

DSRL will become the newest Operating Company of the NDA when the current Parent Body Organisation, Cavendish Dounreay Partnership, transfers DSRL's ownership to the NDA on 31 March 2021.

Lawrie brings extensive experience in senior executive and non-executive roles across a range of major private sector companies and high-profile public sector organisations.

He comes with a strong track record in the nuclear sector including his roles as President of Rolls-Royce's Land and Sea Division, Chair of Magnox Ltd, Chief Executive of British Nuclear Group and Non-Executive Director at Network Rail.

David Peattie said:

Dounreay has a special place amongst our civil nuclear sites, and I'm delighted that Lawrie has accepted such a key role.

As one of the UK's most important legacy civil nuclear sites, Dounreay is now transferring to NDA ownership, I am delighted that Lawrie has made this commitment.

He joins DSRL just as Mark Rouse is appointed as the new Managing Director, and as DSRL continue the process of appointing a new Executive Leadership Team. Lawrie's experience will truly enhance that new team and further promote the fundamental role Dounreay has to play within the NDA family.

Lawrie Haynes said:

Dounreay is unique with an incredible history and tradition. The role and influence it has had within the communities of Caithness and North Sutherland cannot be underestimated, and I'm very proud to be given the opportunity to help shape its future and influence within the wider NDA Group as we deliver the site's important mission.

Lawrie Haynes will continue in his role as Chair of Magnox Ltd and takes up his appointment as Dounreay Chair on 31 March 2021.

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# Appointment of non-executive member of the Independent Monitoring Authority

The Lord Chancellor, the Rt Hon Robert Buckland QC, has appointed Joyce Cullen as a non-executive member of the Independent Monitoring Authority for the Citizens' Rights Agreements (IMA) with knowledge about conditions in Scotland relating to the matters in relation to which provision is made in the citizens' rights parts of the Withdrawal and Separation Agreements ("the relevant matters") for a tenure of 3 years. Her appointment commenced on 10 February 2021 and will run until 9 February 2024.

## **Joyce Cullen biography**

Joyce Cullen has practiced as a litigation solicitor in private practice for 39 years. She was admitted as a Solicitor Advocate in Scotland in 1995. She has held a public appointment as Non-executive Director of the Joint Management Board of the Office of the Secretary of State for Scotland and the Office of the Advocate General for Scotland, since 2015.

Ms Cullen was Chair of Brodies LLP from 2004 to 2013; Convenor of the Law Society of Scotland's Employment Law Reform Sub-Committee from 2006 to 2018; Chair of the steering group of Elevate-Scotland from 2016 to 2019 and was appointed as Chair of the Board of Governors of George Heriot's School in Edinburgh in 2020.

## **Independent Monitoring Authority for the Citizens' Rights Agreements**

The IMA is a brand-new public body, which has been established under the [EU \(Withdrawal Agreement\) Act 2020 \(EUWAA\)](#). The IMA became operational at the end of 2020. The chair and members of the IMA will play a crucial role in establishing the IMA's early direction and effectiveness, and in winning the confidence of its stakeholders.

Under the provisions set out in EUWAA, the IMA will have the power to receive complaints, launch inquiries and initiate legal proceedings. The IMA will also have a role in reviewing the effectiveness of the citizens' rights legislative framework, for instance by reviewing draft legislation. The legislation also provides that it is important for the IMA to focus on general or systemic failures in the implementation of the citizens' rights agreements, as well as receiving and investigating individual complaints. The IMA will have to publish guidance on how it will exercise its functions.

In terms of non-executives, Ms Cullen joins the chair and 3 other non-executive members on the IMA board (including those with knowledge of conditions relating to "the relevant matters" in Northern Ireland and Gibraltar). A further campaign to appoint a non-executive member with knowledge of the conditions in Wales relating to "the relevant matters" is

also underway, with the appointment expected to be announced in March 2021.

Non-executive appointments to the IMA are not currently regulated by the Commissioner for Public Appointments. However, the chair and members have been appointed following fair and open competitions run in line with the process set out in the Governance Code on Public Appointments.