

Search to be launched for new Treasury Permanent Secretary

The Chancellor has asked the Cabinet Secretary to begin the recruitment process for a new Permanent Secretary to the Treasury to succeed Tom Scholar, who has left his post as Permanent Secretary after 6 years, and will leave the Civil Service after 30 years of dedicated service.

During his time in the Civil Service, Tom has advised successive Prime Ministers and Chancellors on international and economic issues, served as the UK representative at the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, played a leading role in dealing with the banking crisis of 2007 to 2009, and led the Treasury through the Covid pandemic.

Chancellor of the Exchequer, Kwasi Kwarteng, said:

“Tom has been a dedicated and exceptional civil servant and I thank him for his exemplary service to the Government and the country for the past 30 years.

“He’s helped steer the Treasury and the Government through many economic challenges, from the financial crisis to the Covid pandemic, and he leaves the Civil Service with the highest distinction.”

The Cabinet Secretary, Simon Case, said:

“Both personally, and on behalf of the whole civil service, I would like to thank Tom for his remarkable public service and leadership.

“Tom has been a steadfast and loyal colleague to so many of us – and we will be forever grateful for his wise advice, generosity, humour and decency.”

Tom Scholar said:

“The Chancellor decided it was time for new leadership at the Treasury, and so I will be leaving with immediate effect.

“It has been the privilege of my career to lead this great institution since 2016. I wish the Treasury all the best for the times ahead, and I will be cheering on from the sidelines.”

A successor will be appointed shortly. In the interim, Beth Russell (Director General Tax and Welfare) and Cat Little (Director General, Public Spending) will lead the department as Acting Permanent Secretaries.

NDA showcases commitment to stakeholders at Scottish event

Around 170 stakeholders learned of the progress being made in decommissioning and cleaning up the UK's earliest nuclear sites.

The event, which welcomed representatives from the communities around the NDA's 17 sites, saw £528,000 funding announced to support the creation of three new Post-Doctoral Research Bursaries with the Universities of Strathclyde, Lancaster and Keele.

The bursaries will offer academic researchers, who have completed their PhDs, the opportunity to develop their research career in some of the NDA's key focus areas of Sustainability, the Environment, Engagement and the Management of Risk.

While providing the researchers an important career steppingstone, the bursaries will also allow the NDA to work with new academic talent and fresh thinking regarding the approach to mission delivery.

David Peattie, NDA group CEO, said:

"I'm delighted to announce three new research bursaries in recognition of the contribution and difference individuals can make in our organisation.

"We hold research and learning very close to our hearts, evidenced by the fact we've invested £6.2m supporting more than 50 postgraduate researchers across the UK in the last 5 years.

"Our work with academic institutions to support postgraduates with bursaries, is hugely important in progressing our mission and helping to create the subject matter experts we will need in the future to clean up our sites."

The summit, held on 7 and 8 September, welcomed a Scottish Minister for the first time with Màiri McAllan, Minister for Environment and Land Reform, who discussed the Scottish Government's priorities and the importance of partnership working.

She said: "The Scottish Government is committed to the safe, secure and responsible clean-up of nuclear sites, with care for people and the environment.

"Partnership working and engagement are critical to the successful management of Scotland's nuclear legacy.

"I'm grateful for the close working relationship the Scottish Government has with the NDA as well as the range of other organisations and communities associated with nuclear sites in our region.

"I am especially aware of the contribution decommissioning work continues to

make to local communities and economies around our sites in Scotland.”

Via stakeholder feedback from Strategy 4 and regular surveys, NDA was asked to broaden its engagement to include more young people and also pressure groups and non-governmental organisations (NGOs), to allow greater inclusivity of viewpoints, and challenge.

The NDA/NGO forum agreement was signed at the Summit and underpins the NDA’s commitment to openness and transparency, by encouraging wider scrutiny of NDA activities.

Paul Vallance (right) NDA Group Chief Communications and Stakeholder Relations Officer with Richard Outram (left), Nuclear Free Local Authorities with the NDA/NGO forum agreement

[MHRA launches new conflicts of interest code of practice for independent advisors](#)

Press release

The MHRA is introducing a new, single code of practice for all its scientific advisory committees.



The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) is introducing a new, single code of practice for all its scientific advisory committees, to ensure that experts providing it with advice are independent and impartial, and that processes in place to manage conflicts of interest are robust, consistent and clear to all.

The launch of the new code of practice follows a six-week [public consultation](#), launched in response to a key recommendation of the [Independent](#)

[Medicines and Medical Devices Safety Review](#) for the MHRA to review the way it identifies and manages potential conflicts of interest from members of expert advisory committees. These include the Commission on Human Medicines (CHM) and its expert advisory groups.

The new proposals will help to ensure that the MHRA is a transparent and inclusive independent regulator. They will also support the Agency's commitment to ensuring that the perspectives of those with lived and personal experiences have greater inclusion in regulatory decisions.

Other steps include:

- Prohibiting members of advisory committees from holding personal interests in industries relevant to the work of that committee, such as the pharmaceutical, medical device and/or biotechnology industry
- Clarifying the way we manage any conflicts of interest that arise as a result of patient involvement in discussions with the advisory committees and working groups.

Dr Glenn Wells. MHRA Chief Partnerships Officer said:

The independent committees that advise the MHRA provide an additional layer of expertise and input to our regulatory decision-making so that we can be sure we are delivering the right outcomes for patients and the public.

In recognition of this important role, we are strengthening the code of practice for all independent advisory committees so the public can feel confident that those called upon to give their expert opinions do so in an impartial way.

Part of this means ensuring that those with relevant experience of the topics being discussed as a patient, family member or carer, are invited to committee meetings to inform the discussions that are taking place.

The new proposals will be introduced from 8 September 2022.

1. The new code of practice can be found on the MHRA website alongside the government's response to the [public consultation](#)
2. The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency is responsible for regulating all medicines and medical devices in the UK, by ensuring they work and are acceptably safe. All our work is underpinned by robust and fact-based judgements to ensure that the benefits justify any risks.
3. The MHRA is an executive agency of the Department of Health and Social Care.
4. The MHRA utilises expert and impartial advice from a number of advisory committees, including:
 - The Commission on Human Medicines (CHM), which advises MHRA on the safety, efficacy and quality of medicinal products,

- The Devices Expert Advisory Committee (DEAC) and its successors, which provides MHRA with advice on a wide range of aspects relating to the introduction and safe use of medical devices,
- The British Pharmacopoeia Commission (BPC), which provides official standards for pharmaceutical substances and medicinal products,
- Herbal Medicines Advisory Committee (HMAC), which advises MHRA on the safety and quality of herbal medicinal products for human use,
- Advisory Board for Registration of Homeopathic Products (ABRHP), which advises MHRA on safety and quality in relation to any homeopathic medicinal product for human use,
- UK Stem Cell Bank Steering Committee (UKSCBSC), which oversees the activities of the UK Stem Cell Bank and UK research involving established human embryonic stem cell lines, whether obtained from the bank or from elsewhere.
- The Review Panel, which carries out statutory and non-statutory reviews of proposals, decisions and provisional decisions taken by MHRA.

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[PM Liz Truss's opening speech on the energy policy debate](#)

Mr Speaker, I beg to move the motion.

Earlier this week I promised I would deal with the soaring energy prices faced by families and businesses across the UK.

And today I am delivering on that promise.

This Government is moving immediately to introduce a new Energy Price Guarantee that will give people certainty on energy bills.

It will curb inflation and boost growth.

This Guarantee – which includes a temporary suspension of green levies – means that from 1st October a typical household will pay no more than £2,500 per year for each of the next two years, while we get the energy market back on track.

This will save a typical household £1,000 a year. It comes in addition to the £400 Energy Bills Support Scheme.

This Guarantee supersedes the Ofgem price cap, and has been agreed with energy retailers.

We will deliver this by securing the wholesale price for energy, while

putting in place long-term measures to secure future supplies at more affordable rates.

We are supporting this country through this winter and next, and tackling the root cause of high prices, so we are never in this position again.

For those using heating oil, living in park homes or those on heat networks, we will set up a fund so that all UK consumers can benefit from equivalent support.

We will also support all businesses, charities and public sector organisations with their energy costs this winter – offering an equivalent guarantee for 6 months.

After those 6 months we will provide further support to vulnerable sectors, such as hospitality, including our local pubs.

My Rt Hon Friend the Business Secretary will work with businesses to review where this should be targeted to make sure those most in need get support. This review will be concluded within 3 months, giving businesses certainty.

In the meantime, companies with the wherewithal need to be looking for ways they can improve energy efficiency and increase direct energy generation

We will be bringing forward emergency legislation to deliver this policy. And my Rt Hon Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer will set out the expected costs as part of his fiscal statement later this month.

I can tell the House today that we will not be giving in to calls for this to be funded through a windfall tax.

That would undermine the national interest by discouraging the very investment we need to secure home-grown energy supplies. You can't tax your way to growth.

Instead, we are taking an approach which is pro-growth, pro-business and pro the investment we need for energy security.

This is the moment to be bold. We are facing a global energy crisis and there are no 'cost-free' options.

There will be a cost to this intervention. However we are also acting immediately to defray the cost of this intervention in three ways.

Firstly, by ramping up supply.

Following on from the successful vaccine taskforce, we have created a new Energy Supply Taskforce under the leadership of Maddy McTernan.

They are already negotiating new long term energy contracts with domestic and international gas suppliers to immediately bring down the cost of this intervention.

We are also accelerating all sources of domestic energy, including North Sea oil and gas production.

We will be launching a new licensing round, which we expect to lead to over 100 new licences being awarded.

And we will speed up our deployment of all clean and renewable technologies including hydrogen, solar, carbon capture and storage, and wind... where we are already the world leader in offshore generation.

Renewable and nuclear generators will move onto Contracts for Difference to end the situation where electricity prices are set by the marginal price of gas.

This will mean generators are receiving a fair price, reflecting their cost of production, further bringing down the cost of this intervention.

Secondly, today's action will deliver substantial benefits to our economy, boosting growth which increases tax receipts and gives certainty to business.

This intervention is expected to curb inflation by up to 5 percentage points, bringing a reduction in the cost of servicing government debt.

Thirdly, this morning, together with the Bank of England, we will set up a new scheme, worth up to £40 billion, to ensure that firms operating in wholesale energy markets have the liquidity they need to manage price volatility.

This will stabilise the market and decrease the likelihood that energy retailers need our support, like they did last Winter.

By increasing supply, boosting the economy and increasing liquidity in the market we will significantly reduce the cost to government of this intervention.

As well as dealing with the immediate situation we face, we are also dealing with the root causes.

Energy policy over the past decades has not focused enough on securing supply.

There's no better example than nuclear, where the UK has not built a single new nuclear reactor in 25 years.

It's not just about supply. The regulatory structures have failed, exposing the problems of having a price cap applied to the retail but not the wholesale market.

All of this has left us vulnerable to volatile global markets and malign actors in an increasingly geopolitical world.

That is why Putin is exploiting by weaponising energy supplies as part of his illegal war on Ukraine.

So as well as the action we are taking today on bills, we will use the next 2 years to make sure that the United Kingdom is never in this situation again.

I will be launching two reviews.

Firstly, a review of energy regulation to fix the underlying problems. We want a new approach which will address supply and affordability for the long term.

Secondly, we will conduct a review to ensure we deliver net zero by 2050 in a way that is pro-business and pro-growth. This review will be led by my Rt Hon Friend the member for Kingswood.

We are delivering a stable environment that gives investors the confidence to back gas as part of our transition to net zero.

We will end the moratorium on extracting our huge reserves of shale, which could get gas flowing in as soon as six months, where there is local support.

We will launch Great British Nuclear later this month – putting us on the path to deliver up to a quarter of our electricity generation with nuclear by 2050.

As a result of these steps on shale and nuclear and the acceleration of renewables, I am today setting a new ambition for our country.

Far from being dependent on the global energy market and the actions of malign actors, we will make sure the UK a net energy exporter by 2040.

And my Rt Hon Friend the Business Secretary will set out a plan in the next two months to make sure we achieve this.

I know businesses and families are very concerned about how they will get through this winter.

That's why I felt it was important to act urgently to provide immediate help and support, as well as setting out our plan about how we are going to secure the UK's future supplies.

This is part of my vision for rebuilding our economy.

Secure energy supply is vital to growth and prosperity. Yet it has been ignored for too long.

I will end the UK's short-termist approach to energy security and supply once and for all.

That is what I promised on the steps of Downing Street.

Today we are acting decisively to deliver that pledge.

This will help us build a stronger, more resilient and more secure United Kingdom.

I commend this motion to the House.

Stuart Lyle: international knowledge exchange on urban warfare

The Defence Science and Technology Laboratory (Dstl) has world-renowned expertise in our specialist areas of defence science and technology. Our staff travel abroad to learn from allies such as the United States, and to share our research on an international stage.

In July 2022 Stuart Lyle, principal analyst, travelled to Los Angeles to attend and help deliver the world's only urban operations planners course, as a guest of the U.S. National Guard.

It's 0800 and in front of me is a room full of military personnel from across six nations and ranks ranging from Sergeant to Brigadier General. I had flown for nearly 12 hours, across eight time zones the day before. To add a final kicker, I was still recovering from a bout of COVID-19... Not the ideal context for presenting to an international military audience, both in the room and virtual, but that's where I was, so... best to make the best of it.

The HQ building of the 40th Infantry Division at Los Alamitos, Los Angeles. (Photo credit: Stuart Lyle)

I found myself in Los Angeles in early July as a guest of the U.S. Army's 40th Infantry Division (ID), an element of the U.S. National Guard. The 40th ID is blazing a trail to establish the U.S. Army's (and the world's) only Urban Operations Planners Course to prepare divisional-level staff for the complexity of planning and coordinating urban warfare, specifically in large-scale combat operations, or LSCO (pronounced Lis-Co in U.S. military parlance). There was a proof-of-concept course in 2021, but this was the first established course.

In December 2021 I helped run a NATO Urban training course and, in the audience was Brigadier General Rob Wooldridge, Deputy Commanding General of the 40th ID and the driving force behind the creation of this course. Following the NATO event he invited me to come out and be part of the teaching team for their course and I leapt at the chance to be a part of it.

The course was seven consecutive days long with roughly ten hours of instruction each day. While this could easily have been the proverbial “death-by-PowerPoint” that we’ve all experienced before, the schedule of instruction and calibre of presenters (myself included, I hope) ensured this was not the case.

The course was broken down into two distinct phases, best described as; 1. Admiring the Problem and 2. Overcoming the Problem.

Admiring the problem” focused on providing the context for why urban operations are so different from operations in other environments, and exploring why they can be so complicated. This is where I came in. My subject was the global trends within urbanisation and their likely impact on military operations. This covered the physical environment, demographic shifts, alternative governance and others. It was a condensed version of the [Future Cities study](#) that I led, with the intent to set the scene for why military planners should invest more time into thinking about and preparing for urban operations.

Other topics included subterranean operations, protection of civilians, Civil Affairs operations and employment and coordination of Joint Fires into urban terrain. These were highly complex subjects in their own right, but the instructors did a superb job keeping them accessible and reinforcing the relevancy for higher-formation planners. There were also multiple historical case studies explored throughout to provide tangible context for the lessons being taught. Another fascinating area was the exploration of how different nations approach the same challenges. We had presentations on NATO urban doctrine (past and present), individual nations’ urban doctrine and urban operations from our adversaries’ perspectives too.

The highlight of the course was, undoubtedly, the third day. It was going to be the longest, the hottest and, hands down, the most fun. We were going to visit the U.S. Army’s largest urban training site, known as the City of Razish, out in the Mojave Desert. A complex of over 700 buildings of varying sizes and home to a dedicated opposing force (OPFOR) whose job is to test visiting formations to their limits. But the day wasn’t going to be as simple as just a visit.

We arrived at the base at 0600 to receive final briefings for the rest of the day before making our way to the Flight Operations area. There we were divided into our pre-arranged Chalks (groups) and introduced to our transportation methods and crews. I had never been in a UH60 Blackhawk helicopter before, but this was going to be more than just a familiarisation flight or a simple air movement. As a Chalk Lead, I was tasked with running an Urban Terrain Zone appreciation lessons while flying out over LA towards the desert further inland.

Just after take-off and about to begin my UTZ training serial. Definitely the most unusual presentation/teaching experience I've had so far. (Photo credit: Stuart Lyle)

Cities are divided into general urban terrain zones (UTZs) which are familiar to us all, e.g. low-density residential, business centre, light industrial, etc. Each of these have different characteristics in terms of their physical construction, population, diurnal trends and other things which may influence military operations in various ways. The Blackhawks flew us out of LA on a route that overflowed as many different UTZs as possible and it was my job to impart as much pertinent information as I could and lead discussions throughout the flight.

Not my usual commute. Transport inbound for the return flight. (Photo credit: Stuart Lyle)

When we got to Razish the temperature was already approaching 40°C with the landscape around Razish looking like a moonscape. We were ushered into "the Embassy" where we met the 1* commander who discussed his personal experience of urban combat as a tank company commander in Iraq and how that shaped his understanding of urban operations at higher formations. We were then given a guided tour around the training facility, getting to meet many of the specialist teams who make up the OPFOR and finding out about their experiences employing specialist areas like Engineering, drone/counter-drone capabilities and Fires in the urban environment to really push the visiting formations.

On completion, we climbed back aboard our Blackhawks and flew back over LA, following a different route to continue the UTZ lessons. This flight was particularly interesting as we flew over some of the critical infrastructure which has not only local, but international significance as economic and transportation hubs; Los Angeles International Airport (LAX) and the port of Los Angeles. We were able to see the network of connecting infrastructure that only a bird's eye view can provide and also see how some of the topics discussed so far on the course manifest themselves in reality.

Flying over the Port of LA, the busiest container port in North America and one of the 10 busiest globally. Over 9 million containers are processed each year into and out of the US through this node. (Photo credit: Stuart Lyle)

Observing the low-level sprawl of wider LA. The city is one of only two

megacities (population over 10 million) in the entire United States. (Photo credit: Stuart Lyle)

As an avid student of urban operations, I have lost count of the amount of times I have watched the movie Blackhawk Down, so getting to fly over the rooftops and roadways of the city was as thrilling as it was intellectually fascinating.

The course continued for several more days and I delivered a session on the use of operational and historical analysis techniques to support better understanding of urban operations. I took some of the key lessons drawn from Dstl research and applied them to case studies for context. This was a great discussion (and debate) about some of the misconceptions surrounding urban combat. It also got the students to think more about the role data can play as well as the need to interrogate data to understand where and how best to apply it, something we strive to do here at Dstl.

Staff Sergeant vs. Brigadier General during the urban wargame. (Photo credit: Stuart Lyle)

The course culminated in style with the students getting to play a bespoke divisional-level urban wargame designed by wargame designer Brian Train specifically for this course. The students broke into multiple competing teams and got to put their newly acquired knowledge to the test against one another. I got to assist with introducing the game and facilitating the games, which was a very rewarding experience. We use wargames extensively to support our analytical work at Dstl, with educating the military players being a side benefit. It was great to see it being used solely for education and seeing the students not only put their lessons to good use, but also enjoy the process.

The 40th ID's Urban Operations Planners Course is a unique course, not just in the U.S. military, but anywhere. There is no equivalent course in the British military and there were a great many lessons that I took away from it, even having studied this particular subject for over seven years. This is partly due to the scale and scope of urban operations as well as the unique challenges they pose for military activities, hence the need for the course. However, it was also due to the calibre of the leadership and staff of the 40th ID as well as the incredible instructors they managed to gather to support it.

I got to spend time with long-time urban operations friends and colleagues, like Col. John Spencer of the Modern War Institute and Maj. Jayson Geroux of the Canadian Armed Forces. I also got to make

and know some new ones like BG Rob Wooldridge, Sahr Muhammedally from the Center for Civilians in Conflict (CIVIC) and Dr Jacob Stoil of the School of Advanced Military Studies. It was an honour to be counted amongst them.

The Urban Operations Planners Course, 2022 (Photo credit: 40th Infantry Division)

The course was a huge success and the dates are already set for next year's with the aim being to make this a permanent course available to U.S. and international soldiers to attend. I am grateful for having been offered the opportunity to not only attend, but contribute to this endeavour and represent Dstl and our work.

More information on this unique course: