

Press release: Chief Executive of HM Prison and Probation Service: next appointment

Jo will take up the post on 1 April, following an open competition.

During a career spanning more than 30 years, Jo has gained wide-ranging experience of leading complex public organisations through times of significant change. At present, she is Director General for Local Government and Public Services at the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government – a role she has held since 2016. As part of this, she has helped local government to deal with significant increases in demand in a difficult financial climate.

Before that, she served as Chief Executive first at Bath and North-East Somerset Council and then at Bridgend County Borough Council.

Prior to those roles, Jo spent 16 years in central government – with both the Home Office and Cabinet Office. Her public service career started in the Parole Unit of the Prison Service, in 1987.

She succeeds Michael Spurr who is leaving the role after nine years, as was announced in September 2018.

Jo Farrar said:

I am hugely honoured by the opportunity to lead HMPPS at such an important time. It is a service that is critical to protecting the public and helping people turn their lives around. Early in my career, my work in prisons and probation gave me a lasting commitment to public service and a passion to make a difference. I am delighted to return.

The issues we face in our prisons, and the need to put vital probation services onto a strong footing, are well known. Working alongside the dedicated people in all parts of HMPPS, I look forward to addressing these challenges and delivering improvement over the years to come as we create an outstanding service of which we can all be proud.

Sir Richard Heaton, Permanent Secretary, said:

Jo's record of getting difficult things done in the public service made her an outstanding candidate for this job. She will provide

energy, focus and humane leadership as HMPPS emerges from several challenging years. It is a tribute to Michael Spurr's determination and skill, as well as to the hard work of so many colleagues across HMPPS, that Jo will arrive at a time of cautious optimism for this incredibly important service. I look forward to working closely with her as we consolidate and accelerate this progress.

Rt Hon David Gauke MP, Justice Secretary and Lord Chancellor, said:

This is truly one of the most important jobs in the civil service and I am delighted that HMPPS has secured a Chief Executive of Jo's undoubted calibre. Since taking office, I have worked very closely with Michael's team on an ambitious programme of reform to prisons and probation. His dedication during that time – and for many years beforehand – has been outstanding. As HMPPS enters a new era, under new leadership, I very much look forward to working with Jo as we strive to deliver the world-class service to which we all aspire.

Rt Hon James Brokenshire MP, Communities Secretary, said:

I am extremely grateful to Jo for her relentless dedication and commitment to local government during a period where the system has faced real challenges.

Her focus has been unwavering on doing the best for her staff, as well as turning innovative policies on communities and public service reform in to tangible actions with real results. She is an example of the very best of public service and I wish her all the best in her new role.

Michael Spurr will remain as Chief Executive of HMPPS until 31 March.

Speech: Buses that build a better society

Good morning everyone.

It's a pleasure to join you this morning.

I'd like to thank Transport Times for hosting this key event in the bus

calendar. And ensuring buses remain high on the agenda as an important driver of mobility, economic growth and community cohesion.

One hundred and twenty years after the first motorized bus services were established in Britain – buses remain by far our most popular, effective, and flexible form of public transport.

Over that time, transport technologies have come and gone.

And travel patterns have changed dramatically.

Yet throughout, buses have remained a constant.

Part of the transport fabric of every town, every city and every region.

You may have seen reports last week that passenger journeys were down slightly.

But the fact remains that two thirds of all public transport journeys in Britain were made by bus and coach last year.

4.4 billion individual bus journeys last year in England alone.

And almost nine in ten passengers say they are satisfied with their bus services.

Which is a tribute to the whole industry.

But these numbers are so much more than just a set of statistics.

Mere figures don't reflect the purpose of those journeys – nor the benefits they bring to society. Benefits like taking children to school, young people to job interview and pensioners to medical appointments.

Buses are the glue that binds communities together. And they are a vital link for those who may otherwise be isolated and for those who live in rural areas.

But they also keep our high streets busy while tackling congestion and air pollution.

So I'd like to take this opportunity to talk to you about what we are doing in government to ensure that Britain's bus network not only serves people's transport needs. But is also set up to continue contributing in all these ways to our society and economy.

First – if we want buses to thrive over the coming decades, it's vital that we continue to improve, to innovate and to move with the times.

And to do this we have to ensure that buses participate in the digital revolution all around us.

The rise of technology highlighted by innovations such as CityMapper's journey planning app, as well as ride sharing services like UberPool, are

changing the way we get around and the way we think about transport.

Increasingly, mobility is being viewed more as a service planned and paid for via a smartphone. So if bus services are to continue accounting for three quarters of journeys, the industry has to reach out to customers to provide easy access to information about local bus services, fares, payment method and bus stops.

Customers are going to demand real time data about the journey all through easy and convenient apps. And there's a lot of great work going on to speed up the pace of change.

For example operators are developing contactless and mobile ticketing – making travel more convenient.

But as Secretary of State Chris Grayling said in a speech to the Confederation of Passenger Transport last week the industry also needs to respond to the growth of demand-responsive transport. Through initiatives like travellers being able to request journeys through a smartphone app or minibus services which take passengers where they want, when they want.

That's exactly what ArrivaClick does, which I saw when I visited Kent last week, as well as Go-Ahead's PickMeUp service in Oxford and it can do it at a lower cost than a traditional fixed-route, fixed-timetable bus.

Technology changes like these should be seen as an opportunity for the bus industry – not a threat.

For example, we can use innovation to make buses accessible to all.

Last summer I launched our [Inclusive Transport Strategy](#) – to help disabled people travel easily, confidently and at no additional cost.

And the Bus Services Act 2017 contained a range of measures to harness technology in order to create better, more accessible services.

Measures such as Accessible Information Regulations, which will speed up the delivery of audible and visible information on board local buses, with £2 million government funding to help smaller bus operators meet this commitment.

The Bus Open Data powers in the Act will also lead to improved services, helping passengers to plan their journeys and secure the best value tickets.

I saw this already happening on a trip to Reading Buses last summer for the launch of their Innovation Centre.

Lastly, the Act enables local transport authorities to partner with local bus operators and introduce benefits like multi-operator smart ticketing, connecting bus timetables and ticketing with other modes of transport, such as rail, to provide more seamless journeys.

Today I also want to highlight greener travel.

Buses have a clear strategic advantage over other road transport in terms of the environment because they have the capacity to reduce car use, ease congestion and improve air quality.

Fifteen percent of the fleet already uses low emission technology, with electric buses now on the streets of Liverpool, Guildford and others, such as Harrogate, which I was pleased to see in person.

We're supporting innovators to make buses cleaner than ever and last year the government announced £40 million of funding for 20 local authorities through the [Clean Bus Technology Fund](#) – providing grants of up to £500,000 to upgrade buses operating in areas of poor air quality, with low emission technology.

And today I am delighted to announce that we are awarding [£48 million to operators and local authorities across the country to help buy ultra low emission buses and invest even further in charging technology](#).

This funding will support the purchase of 263 ultra-low emission buses, ensuring that communities from Cardiff to Nottingham, from Yorkshire to London, from Coventry to Newport, from Manchester to Brighton and many more places around the country can enjoy the benefits of cleaner, greener bus services that benefit society as a whole.

It will also provide £14.2 million of investment in charging infrastructure, further supporting our progress towards greener journeys.

Indeed, this latest investment reinforces the bus industry's role as a leading contributor to the government's Road to Zero Strategy and also to our [Future of Mobility Grand Challenge](#), which encourages greener journeys through technological innovation.

But buses also benefit society because of the role they play in improving lives on an individual level.

As lead minister on the role of transport in tackling loneliness, this is a matter close to my heart and it's essential that we act.

Research by campaign group Greener Journeys found that two thirds of people sometimes feel lonely – while a third admitted that they deliberately catch a bus to ease these feelings.

There's some really imaginative thinking going on in the industry to examine if there's more we can do.

For instance, last week [Go Ahead launched the Chatty Bus campaign](#) – meaning that from Newcastle to Brighton, Chatty Bus ambassadors were on board buses talking to anyone who wanted a chat.

Stagecoach also redesigned one of its open topped buses, previously used to transport holidaymakers around Skegness into a community bus which provides a friendly place for people to chat and have a cuppa.

And National Express and First Group have been running their own campaigns

aimed especially at preventing loneliness among older people.

But stopping the scourge of loneliness will require a much more concerted effort.

Which is why we made a commitment last year, in the [government's Loneliness Strategy](#), which was itself inspired by the visionary work of my late colleague Jo Cox to work with the transport sector and take action.

So today I am delighted to make a further announcement. That the department is launching a major collaboration with Greener Journeys to explore how we can use buses to further address the issue of loneliness.

This initiative is supported by a pledge from four bus companies, Go Ahead Group, Stagecoach, National Express and First Group to examine the vital role of buses in addressing loneliness.

Whether that's looking at how bus interiors can be designed to help with social interaction or considering how to roll out even more chatty buses - which have so far proved to be a great success.

This is just the first step and there is huge potential for the transport industry to make a real difference to the lives of people who want more human contact. So I look forward to seeing more great initiatives over the coming year.

I want to finish by talking about a theme which has run throughout this speech - and that's partnership.

I firmly believe that the quickest and most effective way of improving bus services is through partnership - whether it be through initiatives with government, working with local communities or effective collaboration between operators and local transport authorities to tackle congestion.

I know that many of you are already involved in collaborative initiatives - whether they're as a result of the government's £2.5 billion Transforming Cities Fund. Or whether you are taking advantage of the collaborative opportunities afforded by the Bus Services Act. Legislation which provides new and improved ways for local transport authorities to partner with bus operators, like in York, where the city council and operators have launched a customer charter which sets out the standard of service that passengers can expect.

But while we can legislate to encourage partnerships the impetus must come from you.

So I would encourage all of you - operators and local authorities to continue to forge strong relationships which are so critical for achieving many of the goals I've spoken about today.

Because if we can build a bright future for this industry, we will also achieve a bright future for the communities you serve.

This will be built on new technologies, like the ultra-low emission buses we are supporting today.

On effective legislation, like the Bus Services Act.

On understanding what customers want.

And on collaboration to tackle issues like loneliness.

These are our objectives for the future – not just to boost bus services and not just to provide better journeys but to build a better society too.

And we will build it through partnership.

Thank you.

Press release: Environment Agency approves permit variation

The new permit variation includes a number of improvement conditions, required in order to meet the environmental standards within which industry can operate, as laid out in our [sector guidance](#).

In addition to the permit variation a separate new bespoke Radioactive Substances Activities permit has also been issued for the handling of naturally occurring radioactive materials (NORM) which result from standard oil and gas production activities.

In deciding whether or not to issue the permits, all relevant considerations and legal requirements have been taken into account. Comments received during the public consultation period, held between 20 February and 20 March 2017, were also considered as part of the decision process.

An Environment Agency spokesperson said:

This variation is necessary following our review of all oil and gas permits granted before October 2013. Although the activities at Palmers Wood have not changed significantly since the existing permit was issued, this variation updates the permit to the current regulatory requirements.

An environmental permit sets out stringent conditions that all oil and gas sites must adhere to. We do not issue an environmental permit for a site if we consider that activities taking place will cause significant pollution to the environment or harm to human health.

View the [oil and gas mining waste permit](#) issued for Palmers Wood Oilfield, Surrey.

For further information, please email KSLE@environment-agency.gov.uk.

[Speech: A message from the British Ambassador to Ireland on the Common Travel Area](#)

You may have read recent news reports about the Common Travel Area.

I would like to reassure you that the UK and Irish governments have worked intensively on measures to ensure the continuation of the CTA. We have an agreement which is almost ready to sign. This work reflects the fact that, right from the start of the EU Exit process, and throughout the negotiations, the Prime Minister has been clear that maintaining the UK and Ireland's Common Travel Area is a top priority for the UK.

The same is true for Ireland, and the EU has fully accepted that the CTA – a bilateral arrangement – will continue whatever the final outcome of the negotiations. I can assure all British citizens living in Ireland and all Irish citizens in the UK: you don't need to take any action to protect your status under the CTA, or the rights associated with it.

The CTA is a long-standing arrangement between the UK, the Crown Dependencies (Jersey, Guernsey and the Isle of Man) and Ireland that has its origins in the 1920s, long before either the UK or Ireland joined the EU. As Dr Butler said in his article, it is complex, and has never been codified into a coherent collection of documents. So officials across the whole of government in both countries have worked together to create a solid framework for the CTA, to ensure that the rights and privileges UK and Irish nationals enjoy in each other's countries will continue, whatever the circumstances of the UK's exit from the EU.

British citizens in Ireland and Irish citizens in the UK will continue to be able to live and work in each other's countries, and to access healthcare, education, social welfare and benefits including state pensions. They will also still be able to vote in certain elections in the other's country as they do now. The UK has taken steps to ensure legal certainty of the status of Irish citizens in the UK, and to provide clarity for them.

The Immigration and Social Security Coordination Bill that is currently before the UK Parliament preserves the rights that Irish citizens have in the UK. This reaffirms the UK Government's intention to protect these arrangements and preserve the special relationship we have with Ireland after

the UK leaves the EU. Where new domestic legislation in the UK is needed to ensure the continuation of the CTA and the rights that come with it, my Government is taking urgent action to put it in place before 29 March.

On Friday 1 February, the UK and Irish governments signed an agreement guaranteeing continued access to state pension and benefits for UK and Irish nationals and their qualifying family members when in the other's state. The agreement ensures that the rights of UK and Irish nationals living and working in each other's state are protected after the UK leaves the EU.

Specifically it ensures that workers only pay into one social security scheme at a time, and provides for the export of certain benefits between the UK and Ireland. It also ensures that social security contributions paid by UK and Irish nationals can be used to meet entitlement criteria for accessing benefits in each other's state. Other agreements covering all aspects of the CTA are close to completion.

I advise British Citizens living in Ireland to subscribe to alerts on the UK's [Living in Ireland guide](#) and to follow to the Embassy's [Twitter account @briemdublin](#) for updates.

[News story: Resilient technologies to improve UK railways: apply for funding](#)

The [UK rail industry transported 1.7 billion passengers and 110 billion tonnes of freight between 2017 and 2018](#).

New technologies are needed to help meet passenger needs, offer better journeys and increase sustainability in rail services.

£5.5 million is available from the [Department for Transport](#) for organisations to develop 'first of a kind' demonstrators. These should use existing technologies and develop these further for the rail industry.

This is a Small Business Research Initiative (SBRI) competition.

Rail Minister Andrew Jones said:

We have already seen some truly innovative projects developed for the benefit of passengers in these competitions, helping to drive forward a greener, cleaner and more reliable rail network.

This additional funding will spark even more innovation and ideas that deliver for commuters.

We are also investing £48 billion to modernise our railways over

the next 5 years, ensuring people have the safe, frequent and punctual journeys they deserve.

Improving resilience

The competition aims to reduce costs, double capacity, lower carbon emissions and improve customer experiences.

It is across 4 themes:

- infrastructure resilience, including protection against adverse weather conditions
- operational resilience, such as using data to inform train maintenance activities
- freight, including improved routing and tracking capabilities
- noise and environment, including innovations mitigating engine noise

16 projects are expected to be funded across all 4 themes.

Projects should produce an interactive and innovative demonstrator that shows rail industry stakeholders and customers how a technology will work in a real-world rail environment. This can be:

- within a railway station
- in rolling stock
- on railway infrastructure
- in the environment close to the railway

Competition information

- the competition opens on 25 February 2019 and the deadline for registration is at midday on 17 April 2019
- organisations of any size are eligible to apply, working alone or collaborating with others as subcontractors
- total eligible costs can be between £250,000 and £350,000 including VAT
- projects will be 100% funded
- briefing events will be held in London on 26 February 2019, Manchester on 28 February 2019 and Cardiff on 7 March 2019, where organisations can find out more about making an application