

Press release: GREAT British Infrastructure Forum brings the best of the UK Private Sector to Ghana

The UK is committed to supporting His Excellency President Akufo-Addo's 'Beyond Aid' vision to transform Ghana's economy, create jobs through industrialisation and add value to goods. The UK is proud to have played a part in driving Ghana's development gains through tens of millions of pounds worth of UK Aid, but as Ghana Changes, so do we. The UK is transitioning its development support to focus squarely on Ghana's long-term economic development. Building the nation's infrastructure through private sector investment is the key to unlocking this potential and it is an area where the UK has much to offer.

Through the Department of International Trade, the UK has brought together over 15 of the UK's top blue-chip infrastructure companies to finalise proposals on how they can deliver flagship projects for Ghana. Over three days they visited Takoradi, Tarkwa, and Tema, meeting a wide variety of stakeholders such as His Excellency Vice President Bawumia, and local partners who would be at the centre of their work. The Trade Mission then culminated at the GREAT British Infrastructure Forum on 15 February.

The Forum itself was a visible demonstration of the UK's ability to bring together world class expertise on a wide range of areas from design consultancy, project management to specialist constructions and operations delivery to put forward a credible and competitive proposal. In doing so, they offer a unique capability to deliver simple solutions to complex challenges.

At the Forum, leading UK financial institutions such as UK Export Finance, the Private Infrastructure Development group and CDC set out how they can help the Ghanaian Government, Ghanaian business and UK companies to deliver the President's ambition – ensuring local content, creating thousands of jobs, up-skilling Ghana's workforce and improving the livelihoods of many more.

Central to discussions were railways, ports, roads and mining infrastructure – with presentations from key Ministers to world leaders: the UK boasts of a railway system that is among the best in the world and UK mining sector has the technological solutions to revolutionise Ghana's mining industry. The message in return was that the UK and its companies are serious about investing in and working closely with the Government and private sector in Ghana. Speaking about the event, the British High Commissioner to Ghana, His Excellency Iain Walker, said:

I am delighted that the UK is hosting a GREAT British Infrastructure forum. His Excellency President Akufo-Addo and his

Government are in a hurry. I have made it my number one priority to help ensure the UK's offer matches Ghana's ambition with the same pace and sense of urgency. I am delighted that this week we have world class British companies talking about delivering for Ghana. We have consortia bringing together unique expertise and a distinct advantage in providing world class infrastructure projects, in particular in rail, roads, and ports. That's backed up with structured finance packages from UK financial institutions. I will continue to press more UK businesses to invest in Ghana to create jobs and prosperity for both Ghana and the UK. We will do our part – and I look forward to understanding where Government and business wants the UK private sector to focus. Today there was a clear message – that if Ghana wants a credible, competitive solution to ambitious infrastructure plans it should partner with the UK. I hope to see Ghanaian firms and partners actively making that choice.

About the Department for International Trade

The Department for International Trade (DIT) has overall responsibility for promoting UK trade across the world and attracting foreign investment to our shores. DIT works to promote UK exports of goods and services to support a growing economy that creates wealth for all, supports jobs and meets our wider national interests, deliver the best international trading framework for the UK outside the EU, including through building our capacity to negotiate and administer a national trade policy; and maximise opportunities for wealth creation through supporting Foreign Direct Investment, with a renewed focus on outward FDI (overseas direct investment).

List of UK Companies participating in the GREAT British Infrastructure Trade Mission and Business Forum.

- SHARD CAPITAL
- LIBERTY GROUP
- BHM INTERNATIONAL LTD
- PORTCULLIS INFRASTRUCTURE
- AECOM
- IMPACTAGRI
- COLAS GROUP
- KLEGTECH
- MOORE STEPHENS
- BAM NUTTA LTD
- UNATRAC
- WSP
- STODEC
- ADVISAN
- BHM
- IRBARIS
- HOLDTRADE(UK)LTD
- ARUP
- WARDOUR

[News story: Customer satisfaction survey](#)

We are surveying:

- directors
- creditors
- bankrupts
- DRO debtors
- redundancy claimants
- witnesses
- approved intermediaries
- insolvency practitioners.

The survey consists of a ten to 15 minute telephone interview. Respondents will be asked about their experience and perceptions of our services. Interviews will be conducted in accordance with the Market Research Society Code of Conduct, ensuring responses are kept anonymous. Personal or sensitive case issues will not be discussed.

The research helps us to measure performance against our published Customer Satisfaction target. It also helps us understand how we are doing and where we can improve. You can find out more about the results of the last survey by reading the [2017 to 2018 Customer Satisfaction Report](#).

[Press release: Wrexham murderer to spend longer behind bars](#)

A man who went on a violent spree which resulted in the death of an elderly man will spend more time in prison. Solicitor General Robert Buckland QC MP thought Jordan Davidson's original sentence was too low and referred it to the Court of Appeal.

After committing 2 burglaries, Davidson, 26, who was already on police bail for a knife offence, attempted to rob staff at a hair salon, threatening them with a machete. He then went to the home of 67 year old Nicholas Churton and attacked and killed him with the machete and a hammer.

The following day he committed a robbery against another elderly man, again while armed with a machete, and an aggravated burglary at a dwelling, also while carrying the same weapon.

A few days later Davidson committed a further offence of robbery against a 53 year old man whom he struck on the head with a hammer, fracturing his skull. Davidson was arrested on 29 March last year, and while detained he attacked the arresting officer with a hammer. He also assaulted another police officer with his fists during his interview, and while on remand he slashed a prison officer's neck with a makeshift knife.

Davidson was convicted of 14 offences, including murder, aggravated burglary and robbery and sentenced to 23 years and 4 months in prison in December at Mold Crown Court. The Court of Appeal has quashed his original sentence and increased it to 30 years minimum term.

Speaking after the hearing, the Solicitor General said:

Davidson is an extremely violent individual and his crimes deserved tougher punishment. His actions resulted in the tragic death of a vulnerable man and have had an impact on numerous people's lives. I am pleased the Court has now seen fit to increase the prison term.

[Press release: Pupils help their schools prepare for flooding](#)

Community Engagement Officer Taryn Al-Mashgari has helped youngsters develop flood plans and 'grab bags' so they are prepared in the event of a flood.

The series of themed weeks – which have so far involved 1,200 primary school children – kicked off at North Fawdon Primary School in Newcastle in January, before moving to South Tyneside ahead of the start of Monkton flood alleviation scheme.

Taryn works with the children in all year groups to help them understand different types of flooding and how it happens. They learn what to do before and during a flood, and learn what the flood warning symbols used by the Environment Agency mean.

They then record mock radio broadcasts about flooding in their community.

Important to understand flooding

Each week ends with a community event attended by parents, Northumbrian Water and Northern Powergrid where children launch the flood plan they've created for their own school.

At schools in South Tyneside – St James' RC Primary School and Hebburn Lakes Primary School – Monkton flood scheme project manager Tom Pitman, working for

South Tyneside Council and the Environment Agency – and partners at the Tyne Rivers Trust attended to give parents an overview of the project. Taryn said:

It's important that younger people understand what flooding is, how it happens and what the different organisations that deal with flooding do.

We also teach them how to prepare for and what to do during a flood in a series of interactive sessions. It leads to them being able to create a flood plan for their own school, and in turn their parents having a greater understanding.

We know it is absolutely devastating to be flooded and that's why we work closely with our partners to develop schemes to reduce the risk of flooding – such as the project due to start at Monkton.

But we can never completely eliminate the risk and that's why we work hard to educate people and our future generations about what they can do to keep themselves and their valuables safe.

Prepare, Act, Survive

Taryn will visit Toner Avenue Primary School in Hebburn before moving on to Washington with flood weeks at Springwell Village and Albany Village Primary Schools.

She has also developed a teaching pack which will be delivered by secondary schools across the region as part of Personal, Social, Health and Economic (PSHE) curriculum.

The Environment Agency is urging people to 'Prepare, Act, Survive' by visiting the [Floods Destroy website](#) and do three things to prepare for flooding.

- check your postcode and find out if you are at risk of flooding
- sign-up for free flood warnings if you are at risk
- view and save the 3-point flood plan so you know how to 'Prepare, Act, Survive' in a flood

[Press release: Video hearing pilot launched](#)

The first hearings will take place this spring, and will enable people to have their tax appeal heard through a video hearing. This will save them the time and money spent travelling to court and waiting for their hearing –

which can mean taking an entire day off work. It will also make it easier for people with health problems that can make it harder to attend a physical court building.

By testing and evaluating the pilot, HMCTS will explore how video hearings might be used to improve access to justice and help cases progress faster.

Video technology is already used in criminal courts to allow some victims and witnesses to give evidence without having to come face to face with the accused – examples include a 97 year old victim of an aggravated burglary, and a witness to a gang murder who was not comfortable giving evidence in court. This pilot is taking this concept a step further – with all attendees, including the judge, participating in the hearing via video technology. Making use of technology to hold video hearings for technical parts of cases that mainly involve legal professionals and judges could save court time and help cases to progress faster. Technology is used in a variety of ways in courts and the various ways in which video links are used in proceedings are kept under regular internal review by HMCTS.

Justice Minister Lucy Frazer, said:

We are spending £1 billion on transforming and modernising the justice system. Video hearings have the potential to improve access to justice and speed up cases.

This pilot will provide important information – together with an increasing body of evidence from other countries – to drive innovation to make the wider system quicker, smarter, and much more user-friendly.

HMCTS are writing to potential participants this week to invite them to take part in the pilot. The video hearings will take place over the internet, with each participant logging in from a location of their choice, using a webcam and, for the purposes of the pilot, the judge located in the court room.

HMCTS are working closely with the judiciary to ensure the majesty of a physical courtroom will be upheld. The choice to use this new type of hearing would always be made by the Judge in the case. It will be possible for private online conversations to be had before the hearing, and the format and process of the hearing will be the same as in a usual court room.

The move is part of the Government's £1 billion investment to modernise the court service, making it swifter, simpler, and easier to access for everyone. HMCTS is exploring how justice can best be served in the digital age.

Other examples of the Government's court reforms which are making access to justice easier for everyone include:

- Launching the first divorce application services online at four sites – making the process easier to understand for divorce applicants and helping to progress applications.

- A new paperless system, in operation at Lavender Hill Magistrates' Court, which means thousands of offenders caught dodging fares or using fraudulent tickets can now be punished more swiftly and effectively.
- A new service which allows people to submit their tax appeals online – drastically cutting the number of applications being returned as incomplete or inaccurate.