

[Press release: Welsh Secretary kicks off 2018 with EU exit talks](#)

Secretary of State for Wales Alun Cairns will hit the ground running in 2018 when he hosts the next meeting of his EU Exit Expert Panel in Cardiff today (Thursday 11 January 2018).

The panel forms part of the UK Government's nationwide engagement with those with key interests in our exit from the EU.

Mr Cairns will gather representatives from Welsh businesses, universities and the voluntary, farming, food and health sectors at Caspian Point to discuss their priorities for Brexit and to update them on negotiations and the progress of the Withdrawal Bill.

Secretary of State for Wales Alun Cairns said.

As we move closer towards our exit from the European Union, the job of listening to, and understanding the needs of, those who live, work and do business in Wales becomes ever more important.

The UK Government's overriding goal is to make sure that the voices of sectors from all parts of the UK are listened to as we navigate an exit that works for everyone.

That is why I am working with experts from across all sectors in Wales to examine the challenges posed by Brexit and to explore the great opportunities for growth in business and employment.

The EU (Withdrawal) Bill is a key piece of legislation in the national interest which will convert EU law to UK law on exit day, ensuring certainty and continuity as we leave the EU.

The Secretary of State for Wales established the Expert Panel to work with him to deliver a smooth and orderly exit from the EU in Wales. The fifth meeting today builds on the constructive conversations they have already had on how powers returning from the EU should be exercised after exit day.

[Press release: New principles put](#)

people at the heart of road design

Highways England today renewed its focus on design with the launch of a set of design principles which will inform future road schemes – to ensure its roads better serve the people who use them and the environments through which they pass.

The company, responsible for delivering the Government's £15bn Road Investment Strategy, says that as well as connecting people and places, there should be renewed focus on improvements which are long lasting, sensitive to their surroundings, and enhance the quality of life.

The [design principles released today](#) put people at the heart of its work.

Responsible for England's motorways and main A roads, Highways England also announced the launch of a new body, comprised of experts across the industry, to provide support to designers on major projects. Early reviews include the Lower Thames Crossing and the A303 Stonehenge improvements.

Highways England's Chief Highways Engineer Mike Wilson said:

We are delivering the biggest level of investment in England's strategic road network for a generation.

We need to make sure that Highways England and the industry think in the right way when it comes to good design. The ten principles of good road design are to help us achieve that and will underpin our major improvements going forward.

We want roads that not only connect the country and communities, but which achieve a higher quality of life; that are designed in a way that is sensitive to the surroundings; provide greater economic vitality and use resources in a more efficient and innovative way.

The ten principles of good road design were published today following the recommendations of the [Highways England Strategic Design Panel](#). They are that good road design:

- makes roads safe and useful
- is inclusive
- makes roads understandable
- fits in context
- is restrained
- is environmentally sustainable
- is thorough
- is innovative
- is collaborative
- is long-lasting

The panel was set up to support the development of a culture where good design is at the heart of everything within Highways England and the wider road sector. This coincides with Highways England delivering the biggest programme of Government investment in a generation. The panel's focus is on strategic input rather than scheme specific details, targeting where its expertise, insight and guidance will have most positive impact and wider benefit such as standards, procurement and evaluation.

At the start of the Year of Engineering, acknowledging that good engineering changes people's lives, Highways England has set out a design vision that:

We aim to put people at the heart of our work by designing an inclusive, resilient and sustainable road network; appreciated for its usefulness but also its elegance, reflecting in its design the beauty of the natural, built and historic environment through which it passes, and enhancing it where possible.

The new principles and vision have been launched at the start of the Year of Engineering, a government campaign to get many thousands more young people to consider engineering as a career. Highways England will work with suppliers to bring young people face to face with their work, offering them the opportunity to see first-hand the range of jobs on offer and the difference infrastructure projects make to people's lives.

Examples of previous good design include the use of traditional dry stone to reinforce the A590's connection to the Cumbrian landscape. Other examples of good design include the A3 Hindhead tunnel bypass and the decommissioning of the old road and the inclusion of a 'green bridge' on the A556 in Cheshire.

The green bridge over the A556 in Cheshire is seamlessly integrated with the context and allows for wildlife to cross

Earlier today Highways England [released images of a new green bridge](#) on the A556 Knutsford to Bowdon scheme opened last year. The A556 project's green measures earned it a prestigious Green Apple Award for Environmental Best Practice last year.

As recommended by the Strategic Design Panel, Highways England recently established an independent design review panel. This new design review panel provides expert and independent design advice to the Strategic Design Panel, Highways England and their design teams to ensure that the design vision and principles of good road design are applied to individual schemes.

The ten new principles of good road design and vision will underpin the [updated Design Manual for Roads and Bridges](#). The Design Manual for Roads and Bridges was first published in 1992 and is the standard for the design, maintenance and operation of the strategic road network and is widely used for other roads in the UK and across the globe. The new manual will be rolled out in phases and is expected to be complete by March 2020.

General enquiries

Members of the public should contact the Highways England customer contact centre on 0300 123 5000.

Media enquiries

Journalists should contact the Highways England press office on 0844 693 1448 and use the menu to speak to the most appropriate press officer.

[News story: Prime Minister launches 25 Year Environment Plan](#)

Launching the 25 Year Environment Plan, the PM will set out the government's determination to leave our environment in a better state than we found it.

She will outline steps for a cleaner, greener Britain – with avoidable plastic waste eliminated by the end of 2042.

To help achieve this, the government will extend the 5p carrier bag charge to all retailers in England. To date, we have used nine billion fewer plastic bags as a direct consequence of introducing the charge.

The government will also work with supermarkets to encourage them to introduce plastic-free aisles in which all the food is loose.

This will give consumers the choice to make greener decisions and promote the use of less damaging plastic packaging.

To encourage industry to take more responsibility for the environmental impacts of their products and make them easier to recycle, the government will also look at how the tax system or charges could further reduce the amount of waste we create. A call for evidence on how to reduce the use of single-use plastics will begin next month.

In addition we will to inject new funding into plastics innovation through a bid into the government's £7 billion research and development pot.

It is estimated that 8.3 billion tonnes of plastic have been produced since the 1950s.

Research indicates that without urgent action to cut demand this is likely to be 34 billion tonnes by 2050.

In the UK alone, during its recent Great British Beach Clean Up, the Marine Conservation Society found 718 pieces of litter for every 100 metre stretch

of beach surveyed, and of this rubbish from food and drink made up at least one fifth.

In a speech, Theresa May is expected to say:

We look back in horror at some of the damage done to our environment in the past and wonder how anyone could have thought that, for example, dumping toxic chemicals, untreated, into rivers was ever the right thing to do.

In years to come, I think people will be shocked at how today we allow so much plastic to be produced needlessly.

In the UK alone, the amount of single-use plastic wasted every year would fill 1,000 Royal Albert Halls.

This plastic is ingested by dozens of species of marine mammals and over 100 species of sea birds, causing immense suffering to individual creatures and degrading vital habitats. 1 million birds, and over 100,000 other sea mammals and turtles die every year from eating and getting tangled in plastic waste. One in three fish caught in the English Channel contains pieces of plastic.

This truly is one of the great environmental scourges of our time.

Today I can confirm that the UK will demonstrate global leadership. We must reduce the demand for plastic, reduce the number of plastics in circulation and improve our recycling rates. To tackle it we will take action at every stage of the production and consumption of plastic.

Demonstrating global leadership the UK will also do more to help developing nations tackle pollution and reduce plastic waste, including through UK aid.

Mrs May is expected to add:

I want the Britain of the future to be a truly Global Britain, which is a force for good in the world. Steadfast in upholding our values – not least our fierce commitment to protecting the natural environment.

When we host the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in April we will put the sustainable development of our oceans firmly on the agenda.

We will work with our partners to create a Commonwealth Blue Charter and push for strong action to reduce plastic waste in the ocean.

We will direct our development spending to help developing nations

reduce plastic waste, increase our own marine protected areas at home, and establish new Blue Belt protections in our Overseas Territories.

The Prime Minister will also announce plans to help more children engage with the environment. This will be delivered through £10m for school visits and a Nature Friendly Schools programme to create school grounds which allow young people to learn more about the natural world, targeting schools in disadvantaged areas first.

Speech: “I am very pleased to be able to finish my time in New York with a session on Colombia, one of our greatest success stories”

Thank you Mr President,

And let me extend a very warm welcome to Vice President Naranjo. I would like to take this opportunity to pay tribute to you, Mr Vice President, and through you to President Santos for your tireless commitment to peace in Colombia.

Thank you also to Jean for your briefing and for the comprehensive report detailing the progress that has been made under the mandate of the UN Verification Mission. I commend you and your team for your continued efforts, both in support of the FARC Peace Agreement and more recently, in participating in the monitoring mechanism for the ELN ceasefire.

The courage and diligence of both parties have allowed many positive steps to take place since the Peace Agreement between the Government of Colombia and the FARC was signed. Over 11,000 FARC members have registered with the UN and are now beginning their reincorporation to civilian life. The new political party – the People’s Alternative Forces of Colombia – can participate in Colombia’s elections this year. And the FARC have handed over their final caches of weapons to the United Nations.

These are remarkable achievements. But we are now getting to the hardest part and there is much more work to do. As President Santos said in Cartagena last week, less than 10 percent of the time set out for the Peace Agreement to be delivered has passed.

We welcome the continued commitment of both parties to achieve a sustainable peace. We encourage them to continue to work together to overcome the

challenges which are only to be expected following over 50 years of conflict.

As we have just heard, these challenges include increasing levels of violence in some areas affected by the conflict, and the killings of Human Rights Defenders and former FARC members. I share the concerns set out by the Secretary-General in his report.

And so I welcome the important steps taken by the Colombian Government to tackle these concerns. These include the establishment of a more permanent and visible presence by the Police and Security Forces, a strengthened early warning system and a renewed focus on investigations by the Attorney General's office. Security must be established in these areas to allow communities to realise the full benefits of the Peace Agreement. I welcome also the Government's commitment to addressing the issue of access to land for former FARC combatants. All these steps taken together are a clear signal of the Government's commitment to implementation.

Looking ahead, I encourage the Government of Colombia to maintain their focus on passing the remaining peace legislation through Congress. An early ruling by the Constitutional Court on amendments made to some key laws will be important to maintaining momentum. This includes a ruling on amendments to the Special Jurisdiction for Peace, which are vital to make progress in the Transitional Justice system.

I had hoped that today we would be discussing the announcement of a renewed ceasefire between the Government and the ELN. Instead I am concerned and disappointed by the news just in that the ELN have broken the ceasefire and squandered this chance for sustained peace.

I urge both sides to work together to find a way of avoiding further civilian suffering.

Mr President,

President Santos, along with Colombia's leaders, took a bold step in coming to the Security Council for help in 2016. Our support for a sustained peace in Colombia will not waiver. And as Colombia holds elections later this year and goes through political change as all democracies do, it is important to remember that this Peace Agreement belongs to all Colombians, not to any specific government. The United Kingdom will continue to encourage focus and commitment to the peace process to bring about real, lasting change. This process is unique and will continue to inspire us for years to come, as it has inspired me on all of my time in the Security Council.

Mr President,

This is my final scheduled public statement in the Security Council. I am very pleased to be able to finish my time in New York with a session on Colombia, one of our greatest success stories. I wish all the conflicts that we work on could achieve the peace that has been achieved in Colombia. And it is essential that we learn the lessons of this success and apply them to the countless other issues on our agenda, which frankly could do with a little

bit of that success.

As I leave this role I want to thank all Members of the countries on the Security Council, all of you who have shared this horseshoe table in this famous chamber and all of your predecessors. Thank you for your co-operation, for your insights and for all the support over the past nearly three years.

I'd also like to thank everyone who works for the United Nations. Whether here in New York or around the world I have been continually impressed by your expertise and fortitude. You really are the unsung heroes of this organisation.

And finally I'd like to thank my own team at the UK Mission to the United Nations who have supported me with skill, with expertise and dedication. And I wish all of them the very best for the future.

For the last time,

Thank you Mr President.

[News story: HM Treasury welcomes new ministerial team](#)

The new team at the Treasury is:

Chancellor of the Exchequer, Philip Hammond, said:

Ensuring we have an economy fit for the future is vital to families up and down the country, so I'm delighted to be leading a team of ministers committed to creating a prosperous and inclusive economy where talent and hard work are rewarded and where everybody has the opportunity to shine.

I'd like to welcome Robert and John, and welcome back Liz and Mel. Together we will work tirelessly to deliver a truly global Britain.

Chief Secretary to the Treasury, Elizabeth Truss, said:

It's fantastic to be reappointed at this vital time for our country. I'm looking forward to working with my Treasury and government colleagues. We will continue our focus on improving lives across the UK and backing the great businesses and people

that drive Britain's economy.

Financial Secretary to the Treasury and Paymaster General, Mel Stride, said:

A fair tax system is key to building a fairer society and I look forward to continuing our vital work to support families and businesses, crack down on avoidance and evasion, and ensure that our customs system works effectively when we leave the European Union.

Exchequer Secretary to the Treasury, Robert Jenrick, said:

As Exchequer Secretary, I am delighted to carry on this government's fantastic work to boost productivity, deliver better infrastructure and maximise the potential for our country.

Britain is a world leader in infrastructure delivering two of Europe's largest projects, and our record investment will help ensure Britain is fit for the future.

Economic Secretary to the Treasury and City Minister, John Glen, said:

Britain is the financial services centre of the world and I am determined to maintain this leading position at what is a crucial period for the industry. The sector employs over a million people across the nation and its tax take is essential for helping to pay for our hospitals, roads, parks and schools.

I'm incredibly proud to be appointed City Minister and I'm looking forward to working with the industry to plot a course for a prosperous future.