

Michael Jary appointed as Government's Lead Non-Executive Director

Michael Jary has been appointed by the Prime Minister as the Government's Lead Non-Executive Director (NED).

He will work closely with the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, the Cabinet Secretary, the Civil Service Chief Operating Officer, and other senior civil servants across Government. He will join the board of the Cabinet Office. Michael Jary takes over from Lord Nash, who had held the post since July 2020.

Non-Executive Boards Members are drawn from outside Government including from business, academia, think tanks and the voluntary sector, to sit on departmental boards. Their role is to support ministers and officials to strengthen the governance of departments, by bringing a commercial or independent perspective. They help provide constructive scrutiny and internal challenge to the work of Government.

The Government Lead Non-Executive will bring non executives from different departments together to ensure shared issues and concerns are being pursued across Government.

Michael Jary will play a key role in building leadership and management skills in departments, recruiting new non-executive directors and supporting the Cabinet Office and departments to transform the way public services are delivered.

Michael Jary has had a varied career, with extensive experience in both the public and private sector. He was one of the founding team of OC&C Strategy Consultants and was previously the firm's Worldwide Managing Partner. He has been a strategy advisor for over 35 years. His other roles are non-executive director of Barclays Bank UK plc, chair of Itad Ltd, and chair of Duchy Originals. He is a trustee of The Prince's Foundation and of Opera Holland Park. He has been the Lead Non-Executive Director at the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities since February 2019.

Chief Operating Officer for the Civil Service and Permanent Secretary of the Cabinet Office Alex Chisholm said:

Our Non-Executive Directors provide independent expertise, challenge and scrutiny to the work of departments. They bring invaluable external insight to support the Government to achieve its objectives and deliver for UK citizens.

Michael Jary brings a huge wealth of experience from business and Government to the role, and I look forward to working together on the Government's top priorities.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank Lord Nash for his drive and commitment in leading the non-executive board cadre over the last two years.

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[New robotics hub opens in West Cumbria](#)

Sitting on a headland above Whitehaven harbour, the first of a network of robotics and artificial intelligence hubs across the UK opened its doors to stakeholders this week.

The facility, known as RAICo1, will ultimately be used by Sellafield Ltd, supply chain partners and academia to develop the technology needed to decommission Sellafield and other sites like it.

Offering the ability to test technology in environments that mirror those on the Sellafield site, such as gloveboxes and water tanks, the facility removes some of the challenges associated with working on the nuclear site.

Head of robotics and artificial intelligence at Sellafield Ltd, Rav Chunilal said:

A big factor is where RAICo1 is situated, in Whitehaven itself, at the heart of our community. We see it bringing in skilled people, but we also see it as being fundamental to developing skills in the area too.

Sellafield's Chief Operating Officer Rebecca Weston added:

We know we can deliver the UK's nuclear decommissioning challenge safer, faster and at less cost by using robotics and artificial intelligence.

RAICo1 is a real step towards achieving that. It brings together the owners of the challenges with the people who have the ideas and

technology that can solve them.

RAICo1 is a joint initiative developed by Sellafield Ltd and the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority (NDA) in collaboration with the UK Atomic Energy Authority (UKAEA), Manchester University and the National Nuclear Laboratory.

Rob Buckingham, director of remote applications in challenging environments, UKAEA's robotics facility, said:

UKAEA and NDA need remotely operated tools that are efficient, reliable, cost-effective and re-usable.

The next generation of robotics and smart machines will deliver our mission faster, cheaper and at lower risk. Learning together, in collaboration to avoid duplication, has to be the best way.

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[A major milestone for the Oxford flood alleviation scheme](#)

The Environment Agency has submitted the planning application to build the Oxford flood alleviation scheme.

This is a significant step towards reducing flood risk to homes, businesses and transport links in Oxford.

A major project led by the Environment Agency in partnership with 9 other organisations, the Oxford flood alleviation scheme is one of the biggest flood schemes currently planned in England.

Oxford has a long history of flooding, with significant floods in recent decades damaging homes and businesses and closing the railway and major roads into the city.

Working with the natural floodplain to the west of Oxford, the proposed scheme will create a new stream meandering through a gently sloping floodplain of grazing meadow with wildflowers and wetland. People will be able to enjoy walking and cycling alongside the new stream, and looking out for wildlife in the wetland and meadows.

Route of the Oxford Flood Scheme showing area of lowered flood plain

When water levels in the River Thames are high, the stream will start to fill its floodplain, reducing flood risk to built-up areas of the city.

Oxfordshire County Council will decide whether to approve the application following its online public consultation. People can submit comments on the planning application via [the council's ePlanning system](#).

Joanne Emberson Wines, Flood Risk Manager at the Environment Agency, said:

The Oxford flood alleviation scheme will reduce flood risk to all properties in Oxford currently at risk of flooding from the River Thames. It's a long-term solution that will help the city adapt to our changing climate and make it more resilient to future floods.

The scheme has also been designed to bring environmental and community improvements to the area, creating a new wetland landscape that will benefit wildlife and local people for generations to come. Submitting this planning application is a huge step in making this a reality for communities in and around Oxford.

Councillor Emily Smith, Leader of Vale of White Horse District Council, said:

With climate change, flood risk is increasing, and therefore the need to protect our communities has never been more pressing. The Oxford flood alleviation scheme will provide much needed reassurance to the Vale communities of South Hinksey, Kennington and North Hinksey, which are at regular risk of flooding.

The Oxford Flood Alliance, made up of local residents affected by flooding, has worked closely with the Environment Agency over many years on the development of the Oxford flood alleviation scheme. A representative said:

We're proud to have helped get the scheme to this point; it has been a huge effort across multiple partners bringing their expertise to the table.

We believe the Oxford flood alleviation scheme is the best option for Oxford, its communities, its economy and biodiversity. Risk of severe flooding is increasing all the time and we need to ensure we are in a position to manage this.

- The project team considered more than 100 combinations of options to reduce flood risk from the River Thames in Oxford, working with the community every step of the way.
- The Oxford flood alleviation scheme will be effective against the scale

of the largest Oxford flood in living memory – 1947.

- The new stream will be approximately 5 kilometres long, running from just north of Botley Road down to south of the A423 near Kennington, where it rejoins the River Thames. Most of this area is farmland and flood meadow.
- The scheme will see improved footpaths, and a new permissive walking and cycling path alongside the stream between Osney Mead and the Devil's Backbone in South Hinksey.
- The scheme will create over 20 hectares of new wetland habitat and around 16 hectares of floodplain meadow. It will be maintained largely through traditional land management techniques such as grazing.
- We are working with environmental charity Earth Trust on our plan for the long-term environmental benefits of the scheme. This will help make the most of the unique opportunity to improve the local environment and further enhance the new landscape and habitats of the scheme over time.
- Hard engineering will be kept to a minimum, but there will be new structures where needed, such as bridges for footpaths to cross the new stream, culverts (tunnels) for floodwater to pass under main roads, and earth embankments and flood walls.
- The scheme partners are: Environment Agency, Oxfordshire County Council, Oxford City Council, Vale of White Horse District Council, Thames Water, Thames Regional Flood and Coastal Committee, Oxford Flood Alliance, Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership, University of Oxford and Highways England.
- The scheme is projected to cost £150 million to build, and will save £1.4 billion in avoided damages, by reducing flood damage and impacts on the city over the next 100 years. It is part of the record £5.2 billion investment in new flood and coastal defences to better protect hundreds of thousands of properties across the country.
- For more information see the [Oxford Flood Scheme web page](#).