

Bernadette Conroy appointed as new Chair of the Regulator of Social Housing

The Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, has today (25 March 2022) confirmed Bernadette Conroy as the new Chair of the Regulator of Social Housing. The appointment follows a hearing by the Housing, Communities and Local Government Select Committee on Monday 21 March, after which they endorsed her suitability for the role.

She has been appointed for a period of three years, commencing on 1 April 2022.

Minister for Rough Sleeping, Eddie Hughes MP, said:

I am delighted to appoint Bernadette Conroy as the new Chair of the Regulator of Social Housing.

Bernadette brings with her a wealth of experience which will be invaluable as we transform how the social housing sector is regulated and I look forward to working closely with her over the next three years.

Chair of the Regulator of Social Housing, Bernadette Conroy, said:

I am honoured to be appointed as the new Chair of the Regulator of Social Housing. This is a challenging time in the sector as we look to implement the enhanced regulation set out in the Social Housing White Paper.

I look forward to building on the strong leadership of my predecessor, Simon Dow, as we create a more diverse Regulator that embraces proactive consumer regulation.

Bernadette Conroy is an experienced Chair and Non-Executive Director (NED) operating across a number of sectors. These include financial services regulation, where she is a NED for the Financial Conduct Authority and housing, where she is Chair of Network Homes. She is also the Independent Chair of the Buildings and Estates Committee of Cambridge University with responsibility for the development and maintenance of the University's estate and its capital build programme and a NED for Milton Keynes Development Partnerships. Prior to taking on a non-executive portfolio, Bernadette held a number of executive roles in financial services, latterly as Global Head of Strategy and Planning for HSBC Corporate, Investment Banking and Markets. She has an MA in Mathematics from Cambridge University and an MBA from INSEAD. In

2020, Bernadette received the Sunday Times Not for Profit Non-Executive Director of the Year award.

The Regulator of Social Housing (RSH) is one of DLUHC's key arm's length bodies. It seeks to promote a viable, efficient, and well governed social housing sector able to deliver homes that meet a range of needs. The RSH is also responsible for regulation of consumer standards, ensuring that existing tenants are provided with homes that are safe, and that landlords deliver good services.

Bodies such as the RSH are one of the ways the government is improving the lived experience of social housing tenants and ensuring they can hold landlords to account. The Charter for Social Housing Residents: Social Housing White Paper, published in November 2020, recognised the fundamental role of effective regulation in protecting and empowering social housing tenants, ensuring that landlords are effectively held to account to deliver the services expected of them.

It set out the government's commitment to significantly expand the Regulator of Social Housing, legislating to remove the 'serious detriment' test (where there is evidence of a standards breach at organisational level) and introduce a new, proactive approach to regulation of consumer issues such as quality of homes, landlord services and transparency, while maintaining robust economic regulation of the sector. Regulation of the social rented sector will also play support delivery of the commitment made in the Levelling Up White Paper to reduce non-decency in the rented sectors by 50%.

The Panel for the campaign was made up of:

- Lord Gary Porter, Panel Chair, Departmental Non-Executive Director
- Tracey Waltho, Director General Housing and Planning, Departmental official
- Debbie Gillatt, Senior Independent Panel Member

Bidding opens for two landmark Green Freeports in Scotland

- From today, consortiums can apply to set up 2 new Green Freeports in Scotland
- The UK and Scottish governments jointly set out their vision for prospective bidders
- Proposals must support ambitious net zero targets, create good quality jobs and deliver investment
- Builds on UK government's plan to level up whole of UK working with the devolved governments.

The UK and Scottish governments have today set out their shared vision for what Green Freeports in Scotland should look like, with bidding now open for the ground-breaking sites (25 March 2022).

A new prospectus for potential bidders sets out how the Green Freeports will regenerate local areas, create high quality jobs and support transition to a net zero economy.

Consortiums will have 12 weeks from today to assess the prospectus and prepare their bids, which will be jointly assessed by officials working together from the UK and Scottish governments, with ministers having an equal say on the final selection.

This comes after a landmark agreement was reached earlier this year by the governments to collaborate on two new Green Freeports, with £52 million in UK government funding provided.

Both governments are looking for Green Freeports in locations that take full advantage of the diverse potential of Scotland's communities and welcome proposals from a wide range of groups.

Secretary of State for Levelling Up Michael Gove MP said:

I'm proud that today we have launched the bidding process for Green Freeports. They are a key part of our levelling up agenda, and will bring jobs and prosperity to the successful areas.

We have worked closely with the Scottish Government to ensure that Green Freeports support their transition to the net zero economy and help to regenerate local areas.

I am excited to see the innovative proposals come forward, and these Green Freeports built so they can start to deliver for the people of Scotland.

Applicants are being encouraged to show how the new Green Freeports will:

- Help boost the Scottish economy. This includes boosting the number of skilled jobs available for local people and creating an economy that makes a positive contribution internationally, delivering high quality, fair work for everyone.
- Support Scotland's transition to a net zero economy by reducing emissions and responding to climate change in a way that is fair for Scotland's communities. For example, making sure that vessels using the port reduce the use of fossil fuels.
- Form strong partnerships with ports, local businesses, academic institutions and local authorities that will contribute to both the net zero and levelling up agendas.
- Bring new investment into the surrounding areas and increase trade. This could be through developing specific spaces to develop and trial new ideas and technologies, and supporting innovative new firms.

- Advance equality and diversity, particularly for groups who are currently underrepresented in the Freeport industries and show how people affected by socio-economic disadvantage can benefit.

Scottish Government Economy Secretary Kate Forbes said:

This joint prospectus recognises the distinct needs of Scotland's economy by clearly setting out how any bids to establish Green Freeports in Scotland must help deliver net zero ambitions and embed fair work practices.

Earlier this month I published a new national strategy to help transform the economy. This included clear commitments that will help create good quality green jobs, deliver fairer working conditions, secure our just transition to net zero and grow international markets that bring new supply chain benefits to all of Scotland. Green Freeports will be an important vehicle to help deliver these ambitions.

Teesside Freeport, which has recently begun operations, is estimated to create more than 18,000 new highly skilled jobs and generate £3.2 billion for the local community over 5 years. It is anticipated that the new Green Freeports will create similar benefits across Scotland.

It is expected that the successful Green Freeport locations will be announced in early autumn 2022, beginning operations in spring 2023.

Secretary of State for Scotland, Alister Jack said:

The UK government is investing £52 million to bring two Green Freeports to Scotland, working jointly with the Scottish Government. UK Freeports are a key part of the UK government's Levelling Up Strategy – they will bring inward investment, jobs, prosperity and regeneration.

It's great news that the prospectus has now been published and bids are now being welcomed. I know there is a huge amount of interest from Scottish operators, and I look forward to a really strong and creative field.

- Read the [bidding prospectus for Green Freeports in Scotland](#).
- Applicants and multi-applicant partnerships must submit their proposals to the Department for Levelling Up and Communities by 10.00 on 20 June 2022, 12 weeks from the date of publication of this prospectus. Proposals should be submitted via the [Green Freeports application portal](#)
- Freeports are special areas within the UK's borders where different economic regulations apply. Freeports are centred around one or more air, rail, or seaport, but can extend up to 45km beyond the port(s).

Read [more information on the ground-breaking deal to establish two new Green Freeports in Scotland](#).

[Accident involving a light aircraft at Beccles aerodrome, Suffolk – 24th March 2022](#)

News story

The AAIB has sent a team to Beccles aerodrome, Suffolk.



An accident at Beccles aerodrome involving a light aircraft has been notified to the AAIB. An investigation has been launched into the accident and a team of inspectors are at the accident site gathering evidence.

[Read more about how we investigate aircraft accidents](#)

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[Animal charity under investigation over prosecutions against pet owners](#)

Press release

Charity Commission opens an inquiry over concerns about the charity's private

prosecutions.



The Charity Commission has announced that it has opened a statutory inquiry into Animal Protection Services (1186401) in relation to significant concerns about private prosecutions the charity brought against pet owners. The regulator is also investigating whether individuals connected to the charity have benefited inappropriately from its work.

Animal Protection Services has charitable objects that include investigating and prosecuting animal cruelty.

The regulator opened an inquiry after the charity's prosecution of several pet owners for the alleged unlawful and unlicensed sale of pets were dismissed at trial. In both instances, the judges raised concerns that the charity had a financial incentive for bringing the prosecutions. Evidence from these trials was submitted to the regulator.

The inquiry will examine the administration, governance and management of the charity and in particular:

- The trustees' decision making around its private prosecutions
- If the trustees have avoided or adequately managed potential conflicts of interest
- If there has been any unauthorised direct or indirect private benefit
- The trustees' failure to comply with legal obligations in relation to the filing of the charity's accounts and annual returns

The Commission may extend the scope of the inquiry if additional issues emerge.

It is the Commission's policy, after it has concluded an inquiry, to publish a report detailing what issues the inquiry looked at, what actions were undertaken as part of the inquiry and what the outcomes were. [Reports of previous inquiries are available on GOV.UK.](#)

ENDS

Notes to Editors:

- The Charity Commission is the independent, non-ministerial government department that registers and regulates charities in England and Wales. Its purpose is to ensure charity can thrive and inspire trust so that

people can improve lives and strengthen society

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[Next steps on future oversight of Open Banking announced](#)

The Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) has today published its recommendations for the future oversight and governance of Open Banking. The CMA's recommendations will be taken into consideration in the design of a future entity to succeed the Open Banking Implementation Entity (OBIE). The future entity would build on the significant progress made to date by the OBIE to encourage innovation and support competition in retail banking.

The CMA, HM Treasury, the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) and Payment Systems Regulator (PSR) have today also published a [joint statement outlining their plans for oversight of the future entity](#), building on the CMA's recommendations, including the establishment of a Joint Regulatory Oversight Committee.

The UK has been a global leader in this area and, as of January 2022, there were over 5 million users of services powered by Open Banking technology. It has been estimated that by September 2023, 60% of the UK population will be using Open Banking payments.

The CMA launched a [public consultation on the future oversight of Open Banking](#) in March 2021. The consultation sought views on what arrangements should be put in place to ensure effective oversight and governance following the implementation of the remaining measures in the Roadmap required under the CMA's Order for Open Banking; and how the CMA should manage the transition process towards this new governance model. The CMA has carefully considered the responses to the consultation ahead of publishing its response.

The CMA's recommendations are that the future entity should:

- have effective regulatory oversight, with a new Joint Regulatory Oversight Committee to agree and implement the next steps led jointly by the FCA and PSR;
- have independent and accountable leadership, with a majority of independent directors on its Board;
- have a clear purpose articulated by the Board;
- be adequately resourced to carry out its functions through a more broadly-based and sustainable funding model;
- effectively serve the interests of consumers and small and medium sized

businesses, including consideration for how these groups will be represented in the governance of the entity;

- be sustainable and adaptable to the future needs of the sector;
- have a system to effectively support the monitoring and enforcement of the Retail Banking Market Investigation Order 2017.

The joint statement published today outlines that the Joint Regulatory Oversight Committee will draw up proposals for the design of the future entity by the end of 2022.

Andrea Coscelli, Chief Executive of the CMA, said:

Open Banking has been a major success in the UK, bringing innovative new services to retail banking and benefiting consumers, businesses and the UK economy.

The CMA has carefully considered the appropriate future arrangements to boost Open Banking so that its significant benefits can be realised even more widely. We have today outlined the core principles that will ensure the new entity successfully picks up the reins.

In 2017, Open Banking was launched in the UK as part of a package of remedies following the CMA's market investigation into retail banking. The CMA ordered the 9 largest retail banks in Great Britain and Northern Ireland to pay for and set up an independent Open Banking Implementation Entity.

Open Banking enables consumers and businesses to share their bank and credit card transaction data securely with trusted third parties who are then able to provide them with applications and services which save them time and money. In a market where larger, established banks have accounted for over 80% of the current account market for many years, Open Banking encourages account switching and drives down costs for small and medium businesses, boosting competition and innovation.

1. The CMA's response to the consultation on the future oversight of Open Banking, published today, also takes into account the findings of the report by Alison White into a number of allegations relating to OBIE; to the then Implementation Trustee; and to certain current and former senior staff members of OBIE. The investigation concluded that [OBIE had not been properly managed](#) and a lack of appropriate corporate governance was a direct contributor.
2. As part of the CMA response to Alison White's review, on 23 November 2021, the CMA appointed Kirstin Baker, an independent non-executive Director of the CMA, to lead a [review to identify the lessons for the CMA in its approach to designing, implementing and monitoring remedies in its market investigations](#). The review is expected to be completed within six months of launch and its findings reported to the CMA Board and published. The CMA will consider the implications of the findings of the review for the future governance of Open Banking once the findings

are published later this year.

3. In [TrueLayer's 2021 report](#), "The Future of ecommerce payments", it was estimated that on its current growth trajectory, 60% of the UK population will be open banking users by September 2023.
4. All media enquiries should be directed to the CMA press office by email on press@cma.gov.uk, or by phone on 020 3738 6460.