

Press release: Lower Otter Restoration Project now applying for funding

The Environment Agency has today confirmed its commitment to the Lower Otter Restoration Project while applications for funding grants are made.

This assurance means that work to manage the estuary can press ahead and avoid delays on delivering the £8-9 million scheme.

Ben Johnstone, Environment Agency flood risk manager, said:

We are completely committed to the Lower Otter Restoration Project and, together with our partners, want to drive forward our work to create multiple benefits for people and wildlife.

Following public consultation the project team has selected the best option for the Lower Otter, which will include restoring the Big and Little Marsh floodplain. Most of the existing embankments will be kept with breaches to allow water to flow through. It will also create new intertidal and freshwater habitats with no increase in height to current water levels and flood risk.

The partnership scheme will provide new and improved access and amenities including maintaining the South West Coast Path and relocating the Budleigh Salterton Cricket Club. It will also protect the old municipal tip in the flood plain and deliver compensatory habitat for the construction and maintenance of flood defences in the Exe Estuary such as Starcross, Cockwood and Exmouth.

Dr Sam Bridgewater from the Lower Otter Restoration Project team said:

This is great news from one of the key project partners. We can now seek the necessary consents and permissions from a variety of authorities, so that we are ready to start work on the ground as soon as possible once funding is confirmed.

A public exhibition on the Lower Otter Restoration Project will be held later this year – details to follow.

[Press release: Lower Otter Restoration Project now applying for funding](#)

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[News story: Airport services merger raises competition concerns](#)

The companies both supply UK airlines and airports with support services, including the de-icing of aircraft engines and wings; ground handling (including baggage, ramp, passenger and airside cargo handling); and the cleaning and maintenance of aircraft interiors.

Following its initial (phase 1) investigation, the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) has identified competition concerns regarding de-icing services at Edinburgh, Glasgow and London Heathrow airports, and ground handling services at London Gatwick and Manchester airports.

The merger of Menzies and Airline Services, which are close competitors at these airports, could lead to less choice for the airlines operating there, potentially leading to higher prices and lower quality service.

Menzies has until 14 August to offer acceptable solutions to address the CMA's concerns; otherwise the merger will be referred for an in-depth phase 2 investigation.

More information can be found on the [Menzies/Airline Services case page](#).

[Press release: Techniquest set to receive £3m in UK Government funding to develop STEM hub](#)

- £13 million to be invested in six science centres across the UK to help bring the wonders of science to people around the country
- Techniquest in Cardiff Bay will receive £3m to develop a STEM hub, diversifying its audiences by housing innovative new content.
- The successful Science Centres in Scotland, Wales and England will also use the funding to develop sustainable business models to ensure continued success for years to come

Six science Centres across the UK today received a £13 million injection of funding to help attract thousands of new visitors.

Catalyst in Widnes, Dundee Science Centre, Eureka! Mersey, Glasgow Science Centre, The National Space Centre in Leicester, and Techniquest in Cardiff will all receive new funding after presenting exciting plans to connect with audiences and communities who don't currently visit science centres or engage

with learning in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM).

The funding will help each centre create new learning activities to help reach audiences, improve their facilities and develop sustainable business models.

In Wales, The Science Capital will see a transformation of Techniquest, extending it into a contemporary STEM hub, and diversifying its audiences. It will house innovative new content, developed with businesses and academics at the forefront of STEM in Wales and supported by a programme of community co-production, highlighting the role STEM technologies shape the future of our society.

The new funding will be delivered through the Inspiring Science Fund, a joint initiative by Wellcome and the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy. The Inspiring Science Fund aims to support underserved and underrepresented audiences, delivering science learning and engagement opportunities that are accessible to all through Science Centres around the country.

Visiting Techniquest in Wales, Secretary of State for Wales Alun Cairns said:

Today's funding announcement is a welcome boost to many science centres across the UK, and I can't think of a worthier recipient than Techniquest in Cardiff Bay.

The centre is home to many fond memories of children and adults in South Wales and further afield, who were perhaps taking an interest in science and technology for the first time. This funding will allow Techniquest to leap forward in developing cutting edge STEM technology, attracting some of Wales' sharpest science minds to take a lead role in developing our future society.

Science Minister Sam Gyimah said:

We want to bring the wonders of science to as wide an audience as possible and that's why it is at the heart of our modern Industrial Strategy. Today's investment will help inspire people from across the country to learn about the truly amazing benefits that science and technology has on all our lives.

Simon Chaplin, Director of Culture & Society, Wellcome, said:

At Wellcome we focus on people, and our public engagement activity is about helping everyone to play their own role in improving health. The Inspiring Science Fund enables science centres across the country to bring science, health and research closer to public.

We're looking forward to seeing how the successful centres develop and how they use this funding to involve ever more people in science in a way that is relevant and useful to their own lives.

Lesley Kirkpatrick, CEO of Techniquest said:

We are over the moon to be awarded this funding and are grateful to BEIS and Wellcome for believing in our ambitions. It is the culmination of over a year and a half of hard work from our talented team, who are extremely passionate about this next phase in our evolution.

It means that our plans to expand our science discovery centre and extend our offering to make science accessible to all, can progress in earnest giving our charity a new lease of life, while ensuring a sustainable and long-term future in Wales.

ENDS

Notes to editors:

Inspiring Science Fund

The Inspiring Science Fund is co-funded by the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) and Wellcome. BEIS' role will transfer to UK Research and Innovation in 2018. The scheme supports science centres to rethink what they do and what they offer to the public. The aims of the fund are to revitalise the offer of existing science centres through capital development, such as new exhibition spaces and learning centres, and the opportunity to develop meaningful engagement with underserved and underrepresented audiences. This opportunity to refresh how science centres are operating will lead to more sustainable business models, and contribute to science centre sector development through shared learning.

The Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy

The Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy brings together responsibilities for business, industrial strategy, science, innovation, energy and climate change. The Department is responsible for: developing and delivering a comprehensive industrial strategy and leading the government's relationship with business; ensuring that the country has secure energy supplies that are reliable, affordable and clean; ensuring the UK remains at the leading edge of science, research and innovation; and tackling climate change. The Inspiring Science Fund administration will soon transfer to UK Research and Innovation (UKRI).

Wellcome

Wellcome exists to improve health for everyone by helping great ideas to

thrive. We're a global charitable foundation, both politically and financially independent. We support scientists and researchers, take on big problems, fuel imaginations, and spark debate.

UKRI

UK Research and Innovation (UKRI), the new funding organisation for research and innovation in the UK, will succeed BEIS as co-funder of the Inspiring Science Fund later in 2018. UKRI brings together the seven UK research councils, Innovate UK and a new organisation, Research England, working closely with its partner organisations in the devolved administrations.

Press release: PM confirms Edinburgh and South East Scotland City Deal

Hundreds of millions of pounds of investment for the South East of Scotland will be formally signed off by the Prime Minister and First Minister, during the Prime Minister's visit to the Edinburgh festival today.

The UK and Scottish Governments have each committed £300m to the City Deal which will see over £1 billion overall invested in unlocking economic growth and boosting jobs across the region.

This follows the signing of the terms for the Edinburgh City Deal last year, and is part of the UK government's investment in UK City and growth Deals in Scotland which has now topped more than £1 billion. That support has been matched by over £1bn of Scottish Government investment.

The funds will go directly to scientific research on space, health sciences, agri-tech and food and drink at Heriot-Watt, Queen Margaret and Edinburgh Universities.

The signing of the full deal, backed by the UK government, Scottish Government and local partners, will see the creation of five new innovation hubs, including in robotics and space technologies.

Reaffirming the city's position as the world's Festival City, the investment will also create a new 1000-seat Edinburgh concert hall, building on the contribution of culture to the city's economy.

The Prime Minister will also announce £13 million in funding for six science hubs across the country, including Dundee and Glasgow Science Centres, to help improve facilities, create new learning activities to help reach audiences and attract thousands of new visitors.

On the visit, the PM will experience some of the festival, meet with the

First Minister of Scotland Nicola Sturgeon and with council and university representatives for the signing of the full City Deal.

Prime Minister Theresa May said:

I am pleased to be in Edinburgh today for the city's annual celebration of the arts and culture. From the Fringe, to the International Festival, festivals dedicated to science, books and storytelling, the city is truly a cultural inspiration for the rest of the UK and the world.

Alongside the Scottish Government and local partners, I will be confirming £300 million, as part of a wider £1 billion investment by the UK Government through City Deals in Scotland, to create jobs and open up new economic opportunities throughout the nation.

These City Deals build on existing strengths to open up new possibilities for the future in Scotland and the whole of the UK as part of our modern Industrial Strategy.

Today I have also announced a further £13 million for investment in six science centres in the UK, including Dundee and Glasgow, to drive innovation in science and technology.

As we leave the EU, the UK Government is working in partnership with business, academia and the devolved administrations to create more good jobs and spread economic prosperity across the country.

By making the most of our country's assets and the talents of all of our people, we can build a brighter future for the whole UK.