

[Press release: Come along to flood scheme update at Forge Mill Farm](#)

If you are planning a visit to Sandwell Valley Park, Forge Mill Farm or RSPB on Thursday 9 August, why not come and talk to Environment Agency staff about the Perry Barr and Witton Flood Risk Management Scheme?

Environment Agency staff will be setting up a stall near the Forge Mill Farm car park on 9 August, from 1pm to 4pm, to talk to local residents and visitors about the progress being made.

The completed scheme will reduce flood risk for 1,400 properties in the area. Phase 2 of the scheme, will provide additional flood storage at Forge Mill in Sandwell Valley, which is upstream of Perry Barr and Witton, and will control the flow of flood water downstream. Park users will have seen construction happening around Forge Mill Farm, at the golf course and along the river side.

Rachel Kelly, Environment Agency Project Manager for the Scheme said:

This is a great opportunity to find out more about what we've been doing so far and we have planned for the coming months. Come and hear more about the scheme, including an additional river crossing providing a circular walking route and environmental enhancements, such as the creation of wet woodland, crassula management (in conjunction with RSPB), tree planting, tree and hedgerow management and creation of new habitats in areas where we are taking material to build the embankment.

The main aspects of this phase include the building of a new embankment, installation of the river outlet and temporarily re-diverting the river.

The scheme, costing just over £32 million, is part of the Environment Agency's programme of £2.6 billion investment into flood defences across the country. The scheme was made possible through funding contributions from Birmingham City Council, Regional Flood and Coastal Committee, Arts Council and crowd-funding.

The first phase of the scheme was completed in spring 2017. Following improvements to the existing upstream flood storage area at Perry Hall Playing Fields, Phase 1 delivered improvement works in Perry Barr and Witton, including wall repairs and wall raising along Brookvale Road, construction of walls along Tame Road and installation of a flood gate at the Atlas Industrial Estate entrance. These measures in isolation do not provide a big enough reduction in flood risk, although they did successfully prevent properties from flooding in May 2018, so Phase 2 will provide the necessary flood water storage during a major flood, such as that experienced in 2007.

Along with flood defences and flood management schemes, knowing your flood risk is also important when protecting your family and property from flooding. People can check their risk and register to receive free flood warnings by visiting our page on [preparing for flooding](#) or calling Floodline on 0345 988 1188.

[Official Statistics: Biofuel statistics: Year 10 \(2017 to 2018\), report 4](#)

User survey

We previously consulted on changes to the RTFO and have since published the [government response to the consultation](#). Alongside the changes to the RTFO, we are proposing modifications to the quarterly and annual reports and tables. We welcome any comments about our proposals, which is why we are conducting a [user survey](#). This survey will close on 24 August 2018. You can also contact us by the email below.

Statistics on the Renewable Transport Fuel Obligation for the year 15 April 2017 to 14 April 2018 (year 10) based on data currently available. This is report 4 of 6 and therefore contains an incomplete dataset for year 10.

The report includes information on the:

- amount of UK road transport fuel from renewable and fossil fuel
- number of Renewable Transport Fuel Certificates (RTFCs) which have been issued to fuel meeting the sustainability requirements
- balance of RTFCs by obligation period
- trades of RTFCs between suppliers and traders
- carbon and sustainability characteristics of the renewable fuel to which RTFCs have been issued
- voluntary scheme data of renewable transport fuel

[National Statistics: Historical](#)

statistic notices on UK egg production and prices, 2018

This publication gives previously published copies of the quarterly National Statistics publication on egg production, usage and prices that showed figures for 2018. Each publication gives the figures available at that time. The figures are subject to revision each quarter as new information becomes available.

The latest publication and accompanying data sets can be found [here](#).

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[Press release: Traffic commissioners report on improved service to industry and better targeting of the most serious offenders](#)

The Traffic Commissioners for Great Britain have used their latest [annual report](#) to highlight progress in reducing application processing times.

Between 2016/17 and 2017/18, the average time for a decision reduced from over 11 weeks to just over 7 weeks.

In addition, 90.2% of digital licence applications were granted within seven weeks against the published service standards provided.

Operators and applicants who apply digitally should now benefit from time savings, swifter correspondence and an intuitive application process that's designed to make sure more complete information is provided.

In his foreword to the report, the Senior Traffic Commissioner for Great Britain, Richard Turfitt, says the regulators' approach better supports innovation and economic growth. He goes on to add that whilst there is relative safety on our roads this does not mean there is room for complacency when it comes to compliance standards.

In 2017/18, the commissioners held 971 hearings into businesses reported for safety or licensing breaches, taking action to prevent the most serious offenders from running vehicles in the future.

The annual report reflects on the real and potential consequences of failing to keep vehicles properly maintained, using the example of an operator who is trusted to transport schoolchildren.

The report says: "It will be hard for anyone to understand why some operators believe it is acceptable to take our children to school in vehicles that are plainly dangerous.

The commissioners call on those responsible for procurement to make sure quality and compliance are foremost in their considerations.

The regulators expect compliance from every operator, saying: "There is no place in our industry for the people who operate vehicles this way and we take decisive action when these licence holders are brought to our attention."

Their role as gatekeepers to the industry and the importance of maintaining a level playing field also feature prominently in the report.

"The vast majority of HGV and PSV operations are committed to running safe vehicles and working within the rules," the regulators state.

"A licence holder is entitled to assume that when they bid for work, a competitor will not be able to get that contract as a result of cutting corners, especially where safety is concerned."

The commissioners recognise the efforts of operators who work hard to meet safety and licensing standards and set out their commitment to engage with business at industry events and meetings.

"Operators who get things right – who abide by the daily discipline of carrying out checks and completing paperwork – need reassurance and guidance to stay compliant," the report points out.

However, in dealing with those in the 'long under-performing tail' of the industry, the commissioners find the underlying causes to be poor management and a failure to access proper guidance.

They urge transport managers – who occupy a key role in the industry – to

keep their knowledge and skills up to date through refresher training. But they also remind businesses to make sure the transport managers they employ are doing the job properly – otherwise they could lose their permission to run vehicles.

The report examines the other activities commissioners have been focusing on in order to deliver their strategic objectives. This includes:

- working to reduce the time it takes to get serious offenders to a hearing for potential action
- publishing average application processing times on GOV.UK
- publishing their written decisions on GOV.UK
- commissioning a study of how effective their sanctions are

The report concludes by reinforcing the critical role played by others in support of traffic commissioners. It recognises the importance of the Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA) in providing evidence for sound regulatory decisions to be made. The report also addresses the need for proper resourcing of the Office of the Traffic Commissioner.