

Press release: Green light for North Tyneside sea defence scheme

A revised scheme to strengthen and safeguard sea defences – which has saved more than £1m of public money – has been given the go-ahead.

North Tyneside Council's Planning Committee has approved proposals for the sea defence scheme at the Central Lower Promenade in Whitley Bay, which will protect homes, businesses and the surrounding area.

It means vital work can now get underway to refurbish the structure, which is around 100 years old and is reaching the end of its serviceable life.

Elected Mayor Norma Redfearn said:

This is yet more great news for Whitley Bay. The Central Lower Promenade really needs important structural work to be carried out and the general appearance of the area is in need of improvement.

The scheme promises to achieve just that by strengthening and safeguarding sea defences and giving this stretch of the coastline a major boost. It will also save a significant amount of public money and takes into account ideas and suggestions raised by residents.

The revised scheme, which has received strong public support, involves building a new rear wall and strengthening the existing sea wall on the lower promenade.

It was drawn up after the Mayor decided the original plans and proposed price was unacceptable and a value for money exercise was carried out, which has resulted in savings of more than £1m.

It has also allowed the opportunity to include some suggestions from residents.

The project, which is being funded jointly by the council and partners Northumbrian Water and the Environment Agency, will be carried out in partnership with Hartlepool Borough Council.

An open space will be created on the lower walkway with new seating, providing a great opportunity for leisure activities and events.

The design also incorporates a commercial opportunity for 'pop-up' style stalls/units on the lower promenade.

The wide upper footway will be refurbished and enhanced while the design also includes the Mayor's commitment to replacing the balustrades.

The work, which is due to be complete in winter 2017, will complement the improvements being made to the Northern Promenade.

The Central Lower Promenade scheme is part of the council's £36m Seafront Master Plan, which aims to breathe new life into the coast between Cullercoats Bay and St Mary's Island.

As part of the Master Plan, restoration work to return the Spanish City Dome to its former glory is continuing apace, a new Premier Inn is nearing completion next door, improvement work – including new surfacing and seating – is taking place along the Northern Promenade, efforts are underway to secure funding to refurbish St Mary's Lighthouse and a number of private sector schemes are also underway.

[News story: Air Quality Grant programme](#)

Projects across the country will benefit from almost £3.7 million as part of an annual funding scheme to help combat air quality locally, it was announced today.

The Air Quality Grant programme has awarded more than £52 million to a variety of projects since it started in 1997 and helps local authorities tackle air quality in their areas to reduce the impact on people's health and create cleaner and healthier environments.

This year's Air Quality Grant programme for 2016/17 will focus on supporting schemes set up to tackle nitrogen dioxide levels, and include:

- £163,100 for electric vehicle charging and infrastructure improvements and an electric vehicle car club in East Herts
- £498,600 for a Clean Air Zone study by Bristol and South Gloucestershire councils
- £400,000 to support Nottingham trial fuel cell technology and encourage ultra-low emission vehicles in the local NHS

Environment Minister Therese Coffey said:

"Tackling poor air quality is a priority for the government and we are working closely with Local Authorities so they can play a crucial role in this.

"I was delighted at the broad range of ideas submitted, from using the latest technology to promoting cleaner taxis and increasing the uptake of electric vehicles, and these projects will help to improve the quality of life for people who live and work in our towns and cities, both now and in the

future.”

Transport Minister John Hayes said:

“We are determined to cut emissions and improve air quality for communities across the country; as a father of two, I would want no less for any family than I’d want for my own. These grants will help councils take significant practical steps to clean up the air and to improve communal wellbeing in their area.

“This good work will sit alongside the government’s draft air quality plan which will be published in the spring.”

The government is firmly committed to improving the UK’s air quality and cutting harmful emissions and its air quality plan will go out to consultation later this year.

More than £2billion has already been committed since 2011 to increase the uptake of ultra-low emissions vehicles and support greener transport schemes and set out how it will improve air quality through a new programme of Clean Air Zones. In last year’s Autumn Statement, a further £290m was allocated to support electric vehicles, low emission buses and taxis, and alternative fuels.

Local Authority	Project	Amount £
Birmingham City Council	Parking reform to reduce traffic in city centre combined with awareness raising	350,000
Bristol City Council, South Gloucestershire Council	Clean Air Zone feasibility study	498,600
Cornwall County Council	Fitting council vehicles with oxy-hydrogen electrolyzers	236,650
Derby City Council	Retro-fitting of Council’s HGV fleet with emissions reduction technology	250,000
Derby City Council	Cleaner taxis research and engagement programme	29,750
Doncaster Council (with Barnsley MBC, Rotherham MBC and Sheffield City Council)	Demonstration of electric vehicles with a local communication and engagement campaign to increase uptake of Ultra Low Emission Vehicles	100,000
East Herts Council	EV charging and infrastructure improvements and EV car club	163,100
Gateshead Council	Traffic management measures, fleet upgrade and improved cycling infrastructure	395,957
Leeds City Council	Research real-world emissions from road transport refrigeration equipment and possible mitigations	150,000
Leicester City Council	Work-based active travelling local campaign	67,300

Local Authority	Project	Amount £
London Borough of Islington	Local school focussed awareness and engagement campaign	50,000
Nottingham City Council	Trial of innovative fuel cell technology within the Council's property portfolio	200,000
Nottingham City Council	Improve the uptake of Ultra Low Emission Vehicles in NHS fleet	200,000
Sheffield City Council	Air Aware communications campaign (engaging local GPs, community groups and schools)	50,000
Southampton City Council (with Eastleigh Borough Council)	Supporting the uptake of low emission taxis	253,880
Southampton City Council	Eco-safe driver training and installation of telematics on council fleet	99,000
Southampton City Council (with Birmingham City Council, Derby City Council, Leeds City Council, Manchester City Council and Nottingham City Council)	Air quality awareness and engagement campaign	539,120
Westminster City Council (with London Borough of Camden)	Provide advice and toolkits for SMEs to reduce transport emissions from deliveries associated with their operations	54,077
TOTAL		3,687,434

[Press release: 8 anglers face combined fines of over £5,600 for fishing illegally in Staffordshire](#)

On 20 February 2017, North Staffordshire Justice Centre Magistrates' Court issued a total of £5,680 in fines to 8 anglers caught fishing illegally last summer.

All 8 anglers were caught fishing without a rod licence by Environment Agency officers out on regular patrols, and with an annual rod licence costing £27, these anglers have really been left out of pocket.

Matthew Bamford of Werrington Road in Stoke on Trent, Ricky Fisher of Millfield Road in Walsall, Mark Francis of Sefton Park Road in Liverpool, Robbie Johnson of High Street in Laurencekirk, Carl Johnson of Cowlshaw Way in Rugeley, Anthony Leese of Dawlish Drive in Stoke on Trent, Blain Pickering

of Community Drive in Stoke on Trent, and Richie Wilkes of Nash Peake Street in Stoke on Trent, were all found guilty under Section 27(1)(a) of the Salmon and Freshwater Fisheries Act 1975.

Magistrates heard that on 3 separate days last June and July, Environment Agency enforcement officers found these anglers fishing without a rod licence at pools in Stoke on Trent, Rugeley, Eccleshall and Penkridge.

Andrew Eardley from the Environment Agency said:

The majority of anglers fish legally and purchase a rod licence. With an annual licence costing £27 it seems ridiculous that anglers risk a significant fine like these we've seen here.

The minority of anglers that fail to buy a rod licence are cheating their fellow anglers and the future of the sport. Rod licence cheats risk a criminal conviction, a significant fine and could lose their fishing equipment.

Money from rod licence sales is invested in England's fisheries and is used to fund a wide range of projects to improve facilities for anglers including protecting stocks from illegal fishing, pollution and disease; restoring fish stocks through re-stocking; eradicating invasive species; and fish habitat improvements. Rod licence money is also used to fund the Angling Trust to provide information about fishing and to encourage participation in the sport.

You need a valid Environment Agency Rod Licence if you are aged 12 or over and fish for salmon, trout, freshwater fish, smelt or eel in England.

Anyone witnessing illegal fishing incidents in progress can report it directly to the Environment Agency incident hotline on 0800 80 70 60. Information on illegal fishing and environmental crime can also be reported anonymously to Crime stoppers on 0800 555 111.

[Press release: Still time to have your say on plans to widen A12 in Essex](#)

Highways England has held seven consultation events over the last fortnight, with staff available to speak to over 1,853 members of the public who attended.

The events showcased Highways England's plans to widen the A12 between

junction 19 (Boreham interchange) and junction 25 (Marks Tey interchange), which will reduce congestion, improve safety and boost the economy. It is part of the Government's record £15 billion investment in England's motorways and major A roads.

Highways England programme leader Richard Hofton said:

I want to thank everyone who has taken part in the consultation so far. We've heard some really interesting views and opinions from people and have encouraged everyone to contribute to our consultation. It is vital that we get that local feedback, as well as from wider stakeholders to help us reach a final decision.

There is still time for you to take part, so I urge anyone who is affected by and interested in our improvement work on the A12 to take part and share your views with us. There are important choices to be made and we are keen to get as many views as we can, so be sure to join in with the consultation so you can help us to make these decisions.

Some 89 per cent of respondents were positive about the events, which were held alongside Essex County Council's consultation into plans for widening the A120 between Braintree and Colchester. The figure rose to 94 per cent satisfaction at Boreham, with residents and other interested parties sharing their views and learning more about both schemes at the events.

Despite the last of these events taking place last Wednesday (15 February) in Chelmsford, the public can still have their say by contributing to the consultation, which will close on Friday 3 March.

All responses to the consultation will help Highways England take the best possible improvements forward. The four options shortlisted in the consultation are:

- option 1 – widening the existing A12 corridor (the online option)
- option 2 – widening the existing A12 corridor between junctions 19 to 22 and 23 to 24 and two new bypasses between junctions 22 and 23 (Rivenhall) and between junctions 24 and 25 (Marks Tey)
- option 3 – a variation of option 2 with only one new bypass between junctions 22 and 23 (Rivenhall)
- option 4 – a variation of option 2 with only one new bypass between junctions 24 and 25 (Marks Tey)

For more information about our proposals and to share your views, [visit the scheme website](#).

Alternatively, you can call the Highways England information line on 0300 123 5000 for further information or write to Freepost A12 Chelmsford to A120 Widening

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.

[Press release: Minister for the Middle East visits region for bilateral and regional talks](#)

From:

First published:

22 February 2017

Part of:

Minister for the Middle East and North Africa, Tobias Ellwood, will visit the United Arab Emirates today and Saudi Arabia tomorrow.

During his visit to Abu Dhabi, Mr Ellwood will attend the twice-yearly UAE – UK Joint Working Group Ministerial Taskforce with his counterpart His Excellency Dr Anwar Gargash, to discuss cooperation between the UK and UAE in a number of areas including trade, regional issues and UK participation in DubaiExpo2020.

In Saudi Arabia, Mr Ellwood will meet His Excellency Dr Abdullatif bin Rashid Al-Zayani, Secretary-General of the Gulf Cooperation Council, among other senior Government representatives, to discuss finding a political solution to the conflict in Yemen, and improving access for humanitarian relief in the country.

Speaking ahead of the visit, Mr Ellwood said:

The UK's partnership with the Gulf is an important one: as the Prime Minister said in her address to the Gulf Cooperation Council, Gulf security is our security, and we will be discussing areas where we can further cooperation. I will also be discussing the conflict in Yemen and making clear that an inclusive political solution is the only way to end the suffering of the Yemeni people.

Finding a political way forward will not be straightforward and tough discussions need to be had, but the UK will do everything it can to support that process.

Further information