

[Press release: North East man fined for running illegal scrapyards](#)

A man has been fined for running an illegal scrapyards in Teesside.

Anthony Hanley, 34, of Marton Burn Road in Middlesbrough, appeared at Teesside Magistrates' Court on Tuesday 20 March where he pleaded guilty to two charges of operating a scrapyards without a permit.

He was fined £800, ordered to pay costs of £4,000 and a victim surcharge of £80.

Prosecuting on behalf of the Environment Agency, Simon Crowder told the court that Hanley is the owner of Cliffs Autos which deals with end of life vehicles.

To take end of life scrap vehicles on to a site, the operators need an environmental permit for disposal of vehicle waste to ensure no risk to the environment by preventing fluids from going into the ground or into drainage systems.

Illegal site

On 25 August 2016 Environment Agency officers attended the illegal site at King George Terrace in Middlesbrough where they saw a sign offering to buy vehicles 'dead or alive', leading them to believe Hanley wanted to buy scrap vehicles.

Officers noticed there was in excess of 30 end of life vehicles stored at the premises. The defendant was co-operative with officers and was told to clear the site within 28 days.

On 12 September the same year, officers returned to the site and saw the number of vehicles had now reduced, and a further visit in December saw the site had been cleared.

But on 7 April 2017, the two Environment Agency officers returned to the site to see it had resumed operation again, with in excess of 30 end of life vehicles present, with some leaking fluids on to the ground.



Illegal sites 'impact on the environment'

Rachael Caldwell, Enforcement Team Leader at the Environment Agency said:

Hanley was given the opportunity to clear the vehicles of waste but when we returned to check the site it was full again.

Environmental permits are needed for a reason – they ensure operators have the correct procedures and equipment in place to protect the environment.

Not only do illegal sites impact on the environment but they undermine legitimate businesses. Every day our officers are out on the ground identifying illegal waste sites and taking the necessary action.

To report an illegal waste site contact Crimestoppers anonymously on 0800 555 111.

Press release: Government investment to unlock more homes across England

- a further 44 areas shortlisted for funding for major infrastructure projects worth £4.1 billion and with the potential to deliver over 400,000 homes
- almost £300 million funding in total for housing projects in Greater Manchester, the West of England and Oxfordshire

Almost £300 million government investment in Greater Manchester, the West of England and Oxfordshire is set to help deliver thousands of much-needed new homes for local communities, Housing Secretary Sajid Javid announced today (21 March 2018).

Greater Manchester is set to receive £68 million funding to support the Mayor's ambitious target of delivering 227,200 homes by 2035 and boost economic growth across the Northern Powerhouse.

Government support for the West of England will help to nearly double the number of new homes being delivered historically, increasing from around 4,000 homes to 7,500 homes a year. This will deliver much-needed homes and support the local economy.

Ministers have also approved a housing deal with Oxfordshire worth £215 million that will help deliver a further 100,000 new homes for local people. This follows a similar deal agreed with the West Midlands last week to support the Mayor's ambitious plan to deliver 215,000 homes across the region.

This latest announcement comes as the government has also announced that [Housing Infrastructure Fund bids](#), from a further 44 areas for projects to help unlock more homes across country, have been shortlisted to the next stage of the competitive process.

A potential £4.1 billion funding will be available for vital infrastructure like roads, bridges, new schools and medical centres, which are needed for new communities.

Housing Secretary Sajid Javid said:

This government is determined to build the homes this country needs. That's why we're working with ambitious areas across England and backing them with investment and support.

This new housing investment in Greater Manchester, the West of England and Oxfordshire will help build much-needed homes, giving more people the opportunity to get on the property ladder.

We're also investing in local infrastructure like schools, roads and hospitals, so that we can help unlock even more new homes in the areas where they're needed most and build a Britain fit for the future.

Greater Manchester housing package

This funding will support a focus on developing brownfield land for housing and getting more homes built on small sites.

The [government package](#) includes:

- £50 million for a Land Fund to help councils in the region to prepare brownfield land for housing development
- taking 4 Housing Infrastructure Fund projects through to the next stage of assessment for funding
- up to £8 million for capacity funding to boost support for housing delivery across the region
- £10.25 million funding to help regenerate the Collyhurst Estate in north Manchester
- new flexibilities on the existing £300 million Housing Investment Fund to allow more homes to be delivered through loans to developers

Mayor of Greater Manchester Combined Authority Andy Burnham said:

I welcome this Housing Deal from government and the £50 million Greater Manchester's Leaders have secured that will allow us to build on more of Greater Manchester's brownfield sites.

It brings us closer to our ambitions and is a clear statement of intent as we move towards publishing the rewritten Greater Manchester Spatial Framework.

As we look to build the homes Greater Manchester needs, we must do everything we can to make sure as much brownfield land as possible is made available for development. This is the best way to ensure we minimise the impact on our green spaces.

But this isn't just about numbers of homes and land for development. I've been clear that I want to see more truly affordable homes built and more homes available for social rent across Greater Manchester.

I also want the rewritten Greater Manchester Spatial Framework to specify a date by which all new homes built across Greater Manchester should be net zero carbon. This is all part of my ambition.

West of England housing package

The West of England – covering Bristol, Bath and North East Somerset, South Gloucestershire and North Somerset – is a high housing demand area. Across the region, the average house prices are more than 8 times average incomes, with Bath more than 10 times the average income.

The government's [interim package](#) supports the Mayor's with ambitious plans to deliver more homes and tackle affordability challenges. It includes:

- £3 million of funding for specialist support to help the region deliver large housing development
- taking 2 Housing Infrastructure Fund projects through to the next stage of assessment for funding
- exploring the potential for a deal with housing associations in the region to deliver more affordable homes

West of England Mayor, Tim Bowles said:

We have worked closely with government to secure this announcement, which will see millions of pounds invested in delivering new homes in the West of England. We know that we need more homes, to buy and rent – homes where they are needed at prices people can afford.

This deal will support us to work with our constituent councils, and North Somerset council, to build homes and communities that are well-connected.

Oxfordshire housing deal

The first completed government [housing deal](#) has been confirmed with Oxfordshire's 6 local authorities – Cherwell, Oxford City, South Oxfordshire, Vale of White Horse, West Oxfordshire, Oxfordshire County Council – and the Local Enterprise Partnership, OxLEP.

The deal, which is worth £215 million, will:

- deliver 100,000 homes by 2031 – which is significantly above the Local Housing Need figure in the draft National Planning Policy Framework – playing a key role in the emerging Cambridge-Milton Keynes-Oxford corridor where the government recognises the need to build up to 1 million new homes in the area by 2050 to maximise its economic potential
- provide £150 million of the funding to build much needed bridges, roundabouts and roads
- deliver more than 1300 affordable homes by dedicating over a quarter of the new funding, £60 million, to support these new homes

Oxfordshire is also home to 3 garden towns and villages – at Bicester, Didcot and Oxfordshire Cotswold – where government has invested almost £4 million to deliver an additional 30,000 homes.

Cllr Bob Price, Chair of the Oxfordshire Growth Board said:

I'm pleased that so many councillors of all parties and from all parts of the county have backed the deal. It represents a comprehensive and integrated approach to addressing Oxfordshire's severe housing shortage and infrastructure challenges.

It demonstrates the government's commitment to working with Oxfordshire and recognises the critical role the county will play in driving forward the UK economy post-Brexit, attracting global investment.

The government has said the deal represents a 'downpayment' on a pipeline of infrastructure investment for Oxfordshire – and we in the county will work with them to ensure that happens.

Housing Infrastructure Fund

With the government committed to building 300,000 homes a year by the mid-2020s, the £5 billion [Housing Infrastructure Fund](#) is part of a comprehensive programme to fix the broken housing market.

Last month, ministers confirmed 133 council-led infrastructure projects that received a total of £866 million funding to support local work that will make housing developments viable and get much-needed homes built quicker.

The latest bids from 44 areas across England are for high-impact infrastructure like key roads, rail links and schools with the potential to deliver over 400,000 homes.

They will now move to the co-development stage, where government officials will work with these areas to further develop their bid and assess the projects. However, not all projects will receive funding after this stage or funding amounts could change to the amount originally bid for.

Without this financial support these projects would struggle to go ahead or take years for work to begin, delaying the homes these communities need.

Together with the government's Industrial Strategy, this funding will provide high-quality infrastructure to support economic growth.

Successful bids will be announced from autumn 2018 onwards and local authorities would then begin building the necessary infrastructure to help speed up new homes being built.

Further details

See [further details on the housing packages](#).

The [Housing Infrastructure Fund](#) is a government capital grant programme to

help unlock new homes in areas with the greatest housing demand. Funding is awarded to local authorities on a highly competitive basis.

The £5 billion fund is divided into 2 streams:

- a Marginal Viability Fund – available to all single and lower tier local authorities in England – to provide a piece of infrastructure funding to get additional sites allocated or existing sites unblocked quickly. Bids have a soft cap of £10 million
- a Forward Fund – available to the uppermost tier of local authorities in England – for a small number of strategic and high-impact infrastructure projects. Bids have a soft cap of £250 million

The government will be progressing Forward Funding projects to go through to co-development in the coming weeks, with final funding announced from autumn 2018 onwards. Find more information on the [areas being taken forward to co-development](#).

Office address and general enquiries

2 Marsham Street

London
SW1P 4DF

Contact form

<http://forms.communiti...>

General enquiries: please use this number if you are a member of the public
030 3444 0000

Media enquiries

Email

newsdesk@communities.gsi.gov.uk

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[Press release: New charges announced for regulatory services](#)

The Environment Agency has today published its new charging scheme for regulatory permits and services, which will be effective from 1 April 2018.

The [new charges](#) have been introduced so that businesses and organisations cover the full cost of the services they receive rather than the public – this represents a more financially-sustainable model which is simpler, fairer and more effective and that will lead to long-term environmental improvements. Charges for permits and other regulatory services have remained static for the last 7 years.

The charges were drafted with feedback from industry and were subject to a public consultation. The [consultation response document](#) is also being published today, which includes the changes we have made as a result of comments we have received from customers, trades associations and the public.

The charges reflect the amount of regulatory effort needed at a site and will allow the Environment Agency to invest further in our permitting service. Businesses that are well-managed and low-hazard present a low environmental risk and will be charged less. Higher-risk or poor-performing businesses will be charged more.

Neil Davies, Environment Agency Director of Regulatory Charges, said:

Our work to regulate industry protects and enhances the environment. The changes that have been announced following the recent consultation will mean that businesses and not the public pay for the full services they use. This is more financially-sustainable, will lead to a better service to businesses and long-term improvements to the environment.

We have been engaging with trade associations over the last year while we were developing these proposals. Their input into this process has been really valuable and the feedback has helped shape the new fee structure.

Environment Minister Thérèse Coffey said:

The Environment Agency carries out a valuable role in regulating the impact of businesses and industry on the environment and it is right that those that benefit from this service should cover the full cost.

The new charging structure will create a simpler, fairer and more sustainable system which will enable better regulation and protection for the environment.

The new charges will come into effect on the 1st April 2018 – the start of the new financial year.

[Speech by CS at Exhibition of World's Longest Span Bridge LEGO Bricks opening ceremony \(English only\) \(with photos/video\)](#)

Following is the speech by the Chief Secretary for Administration, Mr Matthew Cheung Kin-chung, at the Exhibition of World's Longest Span Bridge LEGO Bricks opening ceremony today (March 21):

Professor Ken Ho (Chairman of ICE Hong Kong Association); Chai-kwong (Vice President of ICE Hong Kong Association, Professor Mak Chai-kwong); CK (Permanent Secretary for Development (Works), Mr Hon Chi-keung); Robin (Global Long Span and Speciality Bridges Director of AECOM, Mr Robin Sham); Charlton (Regional Executive of AECOM, Mr Charlton Wong); David (Director of Property of the MTRC, Mr David Tang); distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

Good evening! I am delighted to join you all tonight to witness the opening of the World's longest Lego Bridge reassembled in Hong Kong. First of all, my heartfelt congratulations to Institution of Civil Engineers (ICE) on your 200th anniversary and my sincere gratitude to ICE Hong Kong Associate for bringing the world's longest Lego Bridge to Hong Kong!

Lego bricks are clear winner of the most popular toy across all ages and genders. They are fascinating toys for kids and can be turned into creative art work for adults. This evening, it will be presented in the form of an engineering wonder – the world record-breaking Lego Bridge made of 260 000 pieces of Lego bricks. This Lego Bridge was designed by our bridge expert, Dr Robin Sham who is a world-renowned specialty bridge director. The Bridge was first exhibited in the ICE Library in London in 2016. Now it is launched in Hong Kong to celebrate ICE's bicentenary.

The exhibition today showcases the creativity, technical know-how, critical thinking, team spirit of civil engineers, perseverance and helps inspire our younger generation to learn deeply and think critically in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) subjects and understand

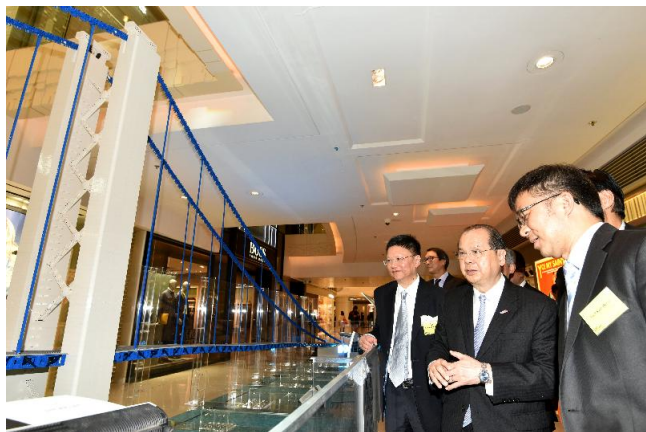
what civil engineering is and why it is important. Indeed, hands-on learning is a critical part of civil engineering. ICE has generously made special arrangements for some 80 secondary students from 8 different schools to gain hands-on experience in assembling the key components of this Lego Bridge.

The Government is committed to promoting STEM education to nurture young talents in face of rapid scientific and technological development worldwide. The Chief Executive, in her inaugural Policy Address last October, stated that the Government will collaborate with tertiary institutions and other relevant organisations to arrange more large-scale quality activities, namely education fairs related to science and technology, to provide more opportunities for students to apply what they have learnt and share their learning with each other. The STEM Education Centre newly set up in the Arts and Technology Education Centre at Lok Fu has also commenced operation to provide training and relevant teaching support to primary and secondary school teachers and students. In parallel, the Education Bureau has updated the curricula of STEM Education Key Learning Areas, and completed the drafting of a supplementary document on “Computational Thinking-coding Education” for use by schools. To further arm the leadership and management tier of all primary and secondary schools with relevant skillsets to plan and implement school-based activities related to STEM, we have launched a series of intensive training programmes as part of their professional development.

However, Government’s effort alone is not enough. We need the support of relevant sectors like the ICE Hong Kong Association and general public, particularly on young people, to promote STEM education and further enrich our students’ learning. The exhibition of the longest Lego Bridge in Hong Kong is a shining example of how the community can help raise the interest of the general public in innovation and technology and allow our students to have positive experience in applying engineering knowledge in daily life.

On this note, I wish the exhibition a great success and ICE many prosperous years ahead! Thank you!





[Scientific Committee on Vaccine Preventable Diseases discusses seasonal influenza situation and enhanced vaccination in upcoming influenza season](#)

The Scientific Committee on Vaccine Preventable Diseases (SCVPD) under the Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health met today (March 21) to review the latest situation of the local 2017/18 winter influenza season and recommendations to enhance seasonal influenza vaccination for the upcoming 2018/19 season among other issues.

At the meeting, members noted that the overall local influenza activity has been on a decreasing trend in recent consecutive weeks and is gradually approaching the baseline level. The predominating virus of this winter influenza season has been influenza B.

According to the latest surveillance data, the percentage of respiratory specimens tested positive for seasonal influenza viruses received by the CHP's Public Health Laboratory Services Branch peaked at 27.21 per cent in the week ending February 17 and declined to 13.23 per cent in the week ending March 17.

The number of institutional influenza-like illness (ILI) outbreaks peaked at 115 cases (affecting 706 persons) in the week ending February 3 and dropped to 30 cases (144 persons) in the week ending March 17.

The weekly average rate of the ILI syndrome group in the accident and emergency departments decreased from the peak of 275.1 cases per 1 000 coded cases in the week ending February 17 to 172.8 in that ending March 17. In the same period, the overall admission rate with principal diagnosis of influenza in public hospitals also decreased from the peak of 1.51 per 10 000

population to 0.46.

While the winter influenza season has shown signs to subside, the SCVPD agreed that vaccination is one of the most effective ways to prevent seasonal influenza and its complications.

Ways to enhance vaccination in school children were also explored at the meeting. Members were briefed that the CHP is proactively preparing for the launch of the "School Outreach Vaccination Pilot Programme" (Pilot Programme). Under the Pilot Programme, it is proposed that the Government will provide free outreach influenza vaccination services to the primary schools either by the Government Outreach Team or Public-Private-Partnership Outreach Team, with the aim of increasing seasonal influenza vaccination uptake among primary school children in the 2018/19 school year.

With the assistance of the Education Bureau, the CHP held briefing sessions to primary schools on the proposed arrangement of the Pilot Programme. They have also been invited to express their interest in participating in the Pilot Programme.

For the upcoming 2018/19 season, the SCVPD endorsed that the composition of the recommended vaccines should be in line with the World Health Organization (WHO)'s recommendations.

â€œIn accordance with the recommendation of the WHO, the quadrivalent influenza vaccines to be used in the 2018/19 Northern Hemisphere (NH) influenza season contain:

- * A/Michigan/45/2015 (H1N1)pdm09-like virus;
- * A/Singapore/INFIMH-16-0019/2016 (H3N2)-like virus;
- * B/Colorado/06/2017-like virus (B/Victoria/2/87 lineage); and
- * B/Phuket/3073/2013-like virus (B/Yamagata/16/88 lineage).

It also recommended that the influenza B virus component of trivalent influenza vaccines for use in the 2018/19 NH influenza season to be a B/Colorado/06/2017-like virus of the B/Victoria/2/87-lineage.

For more information on SIV and CHP's Vaccination Schemes, the public may call the CHP's hotline (2125 2125) or visit the CHP's [Vaccination Schemes page](#) and [frequently asked questions on SIV](#).