

Open consultation: Energy Performance Certificates in buildings: call for evidence

Energy Performance Certificates (EPCs) are a widely used measure of the energy performance of buildings, both in the residential and commercial sectors, and are a key tool in promoting energy efficiency improvements to buildings.

We're seeking evidence on how EPCs currently perform against 3 attributes:

- quality
- availability
- encouraging action to improve energy efficiency

We also outline suggestions for improvement, many of which have been advocated by businesses and industry representatives. The list of suggestions is not exhaustive, and inclusion or exclusion should not be taken as an indication of government policy. Additional ideas are welcome, as are views about the relative impact of the ideas listed, and how they might be implemented to best effect.

We would like to hear from:

- building owners and occupiers in both the domestic and non-domestic sectors
- estate agents and others involved in the sale or lease of buildings
- all parts of the energy efficiency products supply chain – EPC assessors, accreditation bodies, software providers and enforcement bodies
- anyone else who regularly uses EPCs

Press release: £45 million investment in rural broadband

Rural businesses and communities are set to benefit from improved broadband access as part of a £45 million boost by the government.

The new funding for the government's [Rural Broadband Infrastructure Scheme](#) adds to the £30 million investment announced last year, increasing the total pot of funding available to £75 million.

The money will be made available through grants to local authorities that have already applied for funding, in areas where broadband services at speeds of 30Mbps or faster are not available or planned. The funding will be used to support full fibre wherever possible.

It follows the launch of the Government's [Future Telecoms Infrastructure Review](#) this week which outlined plans to prioritise hard-to-reach rural areas for roll out of full fibre connectivity.

Visiting North York Moors National Park today, Lord Gardiner will announce that North Yorkshire is one of the local authorities to receive funding through the scheme with a grant offer of over £11 million.

Rural Affairs Minister Lord Gardiner said:

I am delighted to announce today that North Yorkshire has been awarded a grant of £11 million towards improving its broadband infrastructure.

Rural areas should not be left behind in the connectivity slow lane, missing out on the opportunities high speed broadband can bring. The funding made available through the Rural Broadband Infrastructure Scheme champions our countryside communities and businesses by opening up access to broadband of at least 30 Megabits per second, in some of the most hard to reach areas.

The increased funding for the Rural Broadband Infrastructure Scheme follows a positive response and a high number of applications from local authorities. It is part of planned investment of at least £3.5 billion into our rural economies by 2020, supporting the quarter of businesses in the UK which are based in the countryside.

The scheme is delivered by the Rural Payments Agency and supports those rural areas which are not currently scheduled to receive broadband as part of commercial delivery plans or under the Government's [Superfast Broadband Programme](#), which expects to give access to superfast broadband to around 97% of UK premises over the next few years.

With nearly a fifth of people living in the countryside, it is important that the needs of rural communities are heard loud and clear across government. In addition to driving forward high speed internet, the government is championing housing availability and supporting job creation.

Lord Gardiner is today visiting the North York Moors National Park as part of National Parks Week where he will also meet a number of young workers and apprentices. North York Moors supported 120 apprentices through its Apprenticeship Programme, amounting to over 50,000 working days.

[Press release: Dover dredging application decision](#)

The Marine Management Organisation (MMO) has approved an application from Dover Harbour Board (DHB) to carry out aggregate dredging at Area 521, known as the South Goodwin Sands.

The marine licence granted by the MMO gives DHB permission to extract up to 3 million tonnes of aggregate by trailer suction hopper dredging, which is proposed to be undertaken between September 2019 and September 2020. This follows an application [DHB originally made to the MMO in May 2016](#). The aggregate is required to provide fill material for the wider Dover Western Docks Revival project.

The decision follows extensive public consultation, during which over 1,300 specific representations from the public were received. Issues raised during this consultation were taken into account by the applicant, the MMO and its primary advisers in determining the application.

The MMO believes it was appropriate to grant the licence because it is satisfied, on the basis of the evidence provided, the assessments that have been undertaken and on advice from its primary advisers, that sufficient measures were proposed to protect the marine environment, prevent interference with legitimate users of the seas and mitigate impacts to any other relevant matters. These measures have been captured in the marine licence conditions.

John Tuckett, Chief Executive of the Marine Management Organisation, said:

“We understand the strength of feeling surrounding this development, both for and against. As a regulator that has to balance and manage competing uses of the marine environment we accept that not everyone will be happy with the decisions we make.

“However we are entirely impartial in our marine licencing process and consider and are satisfied that this decision is based on the best available evidence and is proportionate and complies with relevant policy.”

The MMO is committed to transparency and helping people to access the evidence on which it bases its decisions. Details about this case, including the MMO’s decision report and Marine Conservation Zone assessment are available online via the public register of marine licence applications (case reference MLA/2016/00227) and via a [page on the MMO’s website](#).

Companies wanting to carry out commercial aggregate extraction may also need other permissions, such as from the Crown Estate as the owners of the seabed. More information is also available on the [Crown Estate’s website](#).

It is now up to DHB to decide whether they proceed with the dredging project.

[News story: Suspension of Veterinary Medicines containing the excipient Diethanolamine \(DEA\)](#)

Updated: Update on supply, further batches released

Update 13 August

Further flunixin product is now available to order.

Wholesalers can accept further batches from the manufacturer provided it is accompanied by a "Caution in Use" letter.

Update 9 August

The VMD is actively working with Marketing Authorisation Holders to allow them to release further currently labelled flunixin product onto the market for non-food horses only, provided it is accompanied by a "Caution in Use" letter (to be approved by the VMD) which outlines the conditions of use and restricts supply to non-food horses. We will inform vets when flunixin product is available to order.

Update 1 August 2018 2:30pm

The suspension means that no product containing DEA and indicated for a food-producing animal may be released or placed on the market by the Marketing Authorisation Holder. No products are being recalled. The VMD judges the consumer safety risk to be very low and we are not aware of any problems in animals associated with the use of products containing DEA.

Distribution of products containing DEA

At this stage, no further product may be released by the qualified person or placed on the market (i.e. stock controlled by Marketing Authorisation Holders may not be sent to wholesalers). However, as the products are not being recalled, products already at the wholesalers may continue to be distributed.

Using products containing DEA

Vets may continue to prescribe and use products containing DEA whilst stock is available.

Vets may also continue to obtain stock from wholesalers. Therefore there should not be any immediate availability concerns.

Availability of alternative medicines

Eight of the nine suspended products are solutions for injection for cattle and horses or cattle, horses and pigs containing flunixin meglumine, a non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drug. The other suspended product is a suspension for injection for cattle, horses and pigs containing the antimicrobials trimethoprim and sulfadiazine.

There are other veterinary medicines currently authorised for use in cattle, pigs and horses that either contain the same active substance(s) in a different form or can be used to treat the same conditions.

Treatment decisions are the responsibility of the individual prescribing vet.

Future availability of flunixin for intravenous use in non-food producing horses

The VMD is aware of vets' concerns over the potential future lack of availability of flunixin for intravenous use in non-food producing horses. The VMD is investigating potential ways to maintain the availability of injectable flunixin for use in such horses.

A list of these products is below:

Product	Vm Number	MAH
Allevinix 50 mg/ml Solution for Injection for Cattle, Pigs and Horses	15052/4144	Ceva Animal Health Ltd
Cronyxin Injection, 5% w/v Solution for Injection	12597/4014	Cross Vetpharm Group Ltd
Dugnixon 50 mg/ml Solution for Injection for Cattle, Pigs and Horses	36167/4005	Global Vet Health S.L.
Finadyne 50 mg/ml Solution for Injection	01708/4582	Intervet UK Ltd
Flunixin 50 mg/ml Solution for Injection for Cattle, Horses and Pigs	02000/4170	Norbrook Laboratories Limited
Meflosyl 5% Solution for Injection	42058/4085	Zoetis UK Limited
Norixin 5% Solution for Injection	02000/4137	Norbrook Laboratories Limited
Pyroflam 50 mg/ml Solution for Injection for Cattle, Horses and Pigs	02000/4253	Norbrook Laboratories Limited
Tribrissen 48% Suspension for Injection	01708/4593	Intervet UK Ltd

The VMD has done this in the light of the [scientific opinion of the Committee for Medicinal Products for Veterinary Use](#) (the scientific advisory committee to the European Medicines Agency) that there may be a risk to humans from consuming food from animals treated with products containing DEA.

[News story: Brakes, tyres and road wear call for evidence launched](#)

The government today launches a call for evidence on the impact of emissions from brakes, tyres and road wear.

Air quality has improved significantly over recent decades, but we recognise more needs to be done to tackle all sources of pollution. The new [Road to Zero strategy](#) has already set out a clear pathway to zero tailpipe emissions and Government's plans to make the UK the best place in the world to build and own an electric vehicle but it is also vital we also look at the non-exhaust emissions that all road vehicles can produce.

The call for evidence, which was first announced in the new [Clean Air Strategy](#), will look at ways to address the impact tyres and brakes have on air quality and our environment and will help inform the design of future policy.

Environment Minister Thérèse Coffey said:

While we are all now well aware that fumes from the exhaust pipes on our cars can have a detrimental impact on human health, it is less well known that tiny particles that are released from our brakes and tyres also contribute to air pollution and can harm our precious marine life.

This call for evidence will help us to learn more about how these particles are released as well the actions we can take to reduce their impact. I encourage anyone who has evidence or solutions to share to get involved.

While we're driving our vehicles, the brakes and tyres produce tiny pieces of particulate matter – for example dust and soot – that comes from general wear and tear.

These particles are left on our roads and when it rains can be deposited into our sewers and oceans, leading to harmful consequences to our marine wildlife and food chains.

Transport Minister Jesse Norman said:

Particulate pollution from exhausts has been reduced substantially in recent years. But we must also take action to reduce the very serious pollution caused by the wear of tyres, brakes and roads.

Tackling this issue is crucial for reducing air pollution. We would urge anyone who has expertise in this area to get involved and share their evidence and views.

The government has worked with the University of Plymouth to improve scientific understanding of the impact these tiny particles and we estimate that emissions from tyre wear may contribute as much as 5-10% to the total amount of plastic in our oceans. But further research and data in this area is still required which is why we have launched this call for evidence to improve the evidence base both nationally and globally.

The [Call for Evidence](#) will run until 28 September 2018.