

# [Press release: Work starts on multi-million pound North East flood scheme](#)

Work has started on site on a £2.5million project which will help protect around 100 homes and businesses in a South Tyneside community from flooding.

Monkton flood alleviation scheme will also see a section of the Bede Burn running underground opened up – known as ‘daylighting’ – and green space created for the community to enjoy.

The scheme is being delivered by South Tyneside Council and its partners at the Environment Agency and Tyne Rivers Trust. It’s expected to be completed in the winter.

It will tackle surface water flooding, which happens when rainwater does not drain away or soak into the ground, but lies or flows over the ground instead.



## **Communities better protected**

Councillor Moira Smith, Lead Member for Area Management and Community Safety at South Tyneside Council, said:

We are delighted to see work get underway to reduce the risk of

flooding to properties which have been badly affected in the past.

It is never possible to guarantee that an area will be flood free. However by working with our partners we can certainly help to increase the level of protection and reassurance by delivering long-term sustainable schemes such as this.

These measures will go a long way to controlling the flow of surface water and diverting it away from local residents and businesses. Once complete, communities will be better protected with the added benefit of an enhanced local environment.



## **Wider social and environmental benefits**

The scheme involves managing surface water where problems have been identified around the Monkton Burn, Lukes Lane Estate and Leam Lane area, Mill Lane, Lilac Walk/College Road, Devon Road, Campbell Park Road/ Thirlmere Court and Mountbatten Avenue areas.

The plan includes improved drainage and landscaping next to Toner Avenue School and as part of uncovering the Bede Burn an attenuation basin to store run-off water during storms will be created.

The scheme will have wider social and environmental benefit, encouraging local people and children involved in creating valuable new habitat.

The scheme is largely funded by the Environment Agency, as well as a



contribution from the local levy – which is money raised by local authorities for flood projects.

Leila Huntington, Flood Risk Manager for the Environment Agency in the North East, said:

This is an excellent example of partners working together to not only develop a scheme which reduces the risk of surface water flooding but also creates valuable habitat and a space for the community to enjoy.

We've been working with the council and Tyne Rivers Trust to raise awareness of the importance of understanding flood risk and taking care of their environment and there'll be opportunities for the community to get involved. This is something they really can be proud of.

Liz Walters, Project Manager at Tyne Rivers Trust added:

This is a great example of using environmentally friendly ways to reduce the risk of flooding. As part of the project we'll be working with the local community and schools to create a green space for local residents to enjoy as well as creating new habitats for wildlife.

Anyone who'd like to volunteer to help with planting at Bede Burn should get in touch with Tyne Rivers Trust on 01434 636904.

The latest information on the scheme can be found at the [Monkton Flood Alleviation Scheme website](#)

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## [News story: Foreign Office Minister for Europe and the Americas visits Chile](#)

Minister Duncan arrives in Santiago de Chile today (9th March) to attend the inauguration of the new President of Chile, Mr Sebastian Piñera and discuss the future of UK-Chile bilateral relations with the incoming administration.

As well as meetings with Interior Minister Andres Chadwick and Minister of Foreign Affairs, Roberto Ampuero, Sir Alan will meet Chilean business leaders to discuss future commercial opportunities under the Global Britain agenda,

host an event for Chilean alumni of the UK's Chevening Scholarship and International Leaders programmes, and deliver a foreign policy lecture to students at the prestigious Universidad del Desarrollo.

Sir Alan Duncan said:

My first official visit to Chile comes at an important time, as our two countries continue to work closely on regional and international issues such as human rights, security and peace keeping, climate change and protection of the oceans.

The UK and Chile have strong historical links that go back over 200 years. Our relationship will continue to go from strength to strength in the 21st century, as we further our collaboration in fields as diverse as trade and investment, science and innovation, and green sector growth.

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## **Press release: Waste vehicle seized from gang**

A vehicle belonging to an organised gang operating in South East England has been seized by the Environment Agency and Thames Valley Police, as part of an ongoing waste crime investigation. The vehicle is believed to be linked to the operation of an illegal waste site in the Maidenhead area.

The seizure, which took place last week, comes as the Environment Agency and the police move forward in their investigation to capture those responsible for occupying land unlawfully and accepting tonnes of waste, often from unsuspecting sources, leaving behind the rubbish to be cleared at the expense of the landowner or taxpayer.

Illegal waste crime drains the UK economy of £1 billion each year in clean-up costs and lost tax revenues. It has a devastating effect on the environment and local communities with pest infestations and fires, which could lead to water and land contamination plus air pollution from smoke.

Nick Daykin, Environment Agency Enforcement Team Leader, said:

This is a great result in an ongoing investigation with Thames Valley Police to apprehend a group of unscrupulous individuals. The power to seize vehicles is a relatively new and is now an important weapon in our armoury for disrupting this type of criminal activity. This is a big message to the criminal fraternity: you set

up site yesterday, we will have one of your vehicles off the road today and we will do it again tomorrow!

Using illegal waste dealers may seem tempting in terms of cost, but it can help fund organised crime. Everyone has a responsibility for their own waste and if your waste is found at an illegal site you could be facing fines of up to £5,000. To avoid this, we encourage members of the public and local businesses to ask their waste carrier for proof of their Waste Carrier's Registration and to ask to see a 'waste transfer note' and if possible take a photo of it on their phone.

## Contact

All press enquiries: 0800 141 2743

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## [News story: Government publishes call for evidence on cycle safety](#)

Cycling Minister Jesse Norman has set out his plans to help people to walk and cycle more, as part of a push for the UK to leave cars behind for shorter journeys.

This comes as the Department for Transport publishes a [call for evidence on cycling](#) in this country, asking for a range of views and opinions from the public on everything from improved infrastructure to education for all road users.

This is part of the government's drive to make cycling and walking safer, while encouraging more people to take up cycling at all ages as part of a green revolution in transport.

Mr Norman also announced today (9 March 2018) that he has awarded £100,000 of seed funding to 3 innovative cycling safety projects. These pilots aim to tackle a range of issues, including reducing the cost of e-bike batteries through recycling used laptop batteries.

Cycling Minister Jesse Norman said:

We need to become a nation of cyclists, and this government wants to make cycling the natural choice of transport for people of all ages and backgrounds.

The call for evidence published today will support an open,

comprehensive and thorough review across government to encourage active travel and improve safety for all road users, and I hope that as many people as possible take the time to read and respond to it.

We are determined to make cycling safer and easier across the country, and we are continuing to invest. Today we're announcing an investment of £100,000 each in 3 innovative cycle safety projects, in addition to the recent £7 million of funding to improve cycle safety. This is all part of the first-ever statutory Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy.

This announcement comes as a report, recommending that there is a case for a new offence to be introduced to tackle dangerous cycling, has been published by the Department for Transport.

The [independent report, written by legal expert Laura Thomas](#), finds there is a strong case for changing the law to tackle the issue of dangerous and careless cycling that causes injury or death. If this were to be introduced, it would bring cycling in line with serious driving offences.

This follows a multimillion pound government funding boost for cycle safety in February. 8 cities, which the government has already been helping to lead the way in promoting cycling, were given the chance to bid for an additional £6.5 million of funding to trial new schemes which improve safety. This will support the government's aim of encouraging more people to cycle as part of everyday journeys.

Paul Tuohy, Chief Executive of Cycling UK said:

Cycling UK has long campaigned for a review of all road safety laws and enforcement, so it is encouraging that these points will be considered in the call for evidence.

We want to see more people cycling safely, and will actively engage with the review to ensure it addresses the causes of dangers for cyclists and the barriers to more cycling.

Xavier Brice, CEO of walking and cycling charity Sustrans said:

We welcome the government's 'Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy safety review' and especially the inclusion of pedestrians in the review. This is something we advocated. Safety concerns are some of the greatest barriers to more people choosing to walk and cycle and we are pleased that the review is seeking to make it easier for everyone to travel on foot or by bike, and recognises the wide benefits that active travel brings to individuals and societies.

Road safety applies to everyone, regardless of travel mode and we broadly support the case for a new offence to tackle dangerous cycling. However, it must remain proportional as people on bikes rarely cause harm to others through their own actions but, like pedestrians, are particularly vulnerable to motor vehicles which are by far the largest cause of death and serious injury on our roads. It is therefore good to see this as only one part of a much wider safety review to enable more people to walk and cycle every day.

In April last year, the government published the [Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy](#), setting out its vision to remove barriers and double the number of cyclists by 2025.

Therefore, the remaining £500,000 will be set aside to support Cycling UK's Big Bike Revival project – a successful initiative which is helping to get more people cycling safely and confidently across the country.

The government wants cycling and walking to become the norm by 2040 and will target funding at innovative ways to encourage people onto a bike or to use their own two feet for shorter journeys.

## **Roads media enquiries**

Media enquiries

020 7944 3021

Out of hours media enquiries

020 7944 4292

Switchboard

0300 330 3000

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## **[Speech: Call for the Need to Protect Women's Rights in Afghanistan](#)**

Thank you Madame President,

I would like to pay tribute to my Dutch colleagues for their tireless efforts to reach a consensus on this important resolution.

I would also like to thank all our briefers, and the Special Representative of the Secretary General, Ambassador Yamamoto, for his briefing and for his and his team's continued efforts in challenging circumstances.

Madame President,

I am delighted to share the chamber with so many women on International Women's Day. I am especially pleased that we are discussing Afghanistan today, as I had the privilege to spend several years in Afghanistan, working to support education for Afghan girls, and a future in Parliament for Afghan women. As Ms Safi and Dr. Sarabi have demonstrated in their briefings, and their own impressive work, women have a vital role to play in securing Afghanistan's future and we should all stand beside them.

Afghanistan cannot find a lasting peace with only half its population. The UN must maintain a strong role in promoting and protecting the rights of women across Afghanistan, and continue to support the Afghan Government to implement its National Action Plan for women, peace and security. Ensuring accountability and equal access to justice for all are essential to long-term peace and stability. We welcome the adoption of Afghanistan's revised penal code and the clarity it brings. We encourage the Government of Afghanistan to ensure its full implementation in line with the Law on the Elimination of Violence against Women which we hope will continue to be used to guarantee Afghan women the protection and accountability they deserve.

Madame President,

The United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan is an essential mechanism to support Afghanistan's recovery from conflict. The continued presence of UNAMA, and the resolve, resourcefulness and skill, with which its staff support the Afghan people, are a strong signal of the international community's commitment.

The United Kingdom welcomes the Secretary-General's decision to host a Ministerial Conference on Afghanistan in Geneva on the 28th of November.

Implementing the findings of the strategic review and the Secretary General's report of August 2017 will allow UNAMA to be as efficient as possible and to adapt as circumstances change. I am pleased to see that this is reflected in the resolution before us today and I hope it will send a strong signal to the Mission's hardworking personnel that we fully support them.

Madame President,

UNAMA's mandate to support peace and reconciliation in Afghanistan remains at the core of the mission. This will only be delivered sustainably through a credible, inclusive, Afghan-led and Afghan-owned political process, where all Afghan citizens, whatever their background, can resolve grievances through dialogue.

Of course, for peace to be sustainable it must be inclusive. The strong focus on the involvement of women in peace and security in this Mandate renewal is particularly welcome. With inclusiveness in mind, we highly commend the bold offer laid out by President Ghani, Chief Executive Abdullah and Afghanistan's National Unity Government at the recent Kabul Process for Peace and Security meeting. We welcome the credibility, flexibility and openness of this offer,



which gives the Taliban the opportunity to be part of a political process towards peace. While the Council was not able to reflect these recent developments in the Mandate renewal, I hope that we will find another opportunity to endorse it and lend our full support to these Afghan-led efforts.

Finally, the UN must play a strong role in supporting free and fair elections. Elections, both this year and next, are an opportunity for the nation to communicate their aspirations to the political parties. These elections are a crucial point at which political trust can be renewed and stability forged. We commend the progress made by Afghanistan's Independent Electoral Commission towards electoral reform, and we encourage them to redouble their efforts to ensure that voter registration is completed according to an agreed timeline. We hope that UNAMA will support these efforts fully.

Madame President,

In conclusion, we fully support UNAMA and we welcome the renewal of its mandate today. As a Council, we have collectively endorsed the importance of inclusion, including of women, and of upholding and promoting human rights. We call on all parties to engage meaningfully in a political process to bring lasting peace and stability to the people of Afghanistan.

Thank you very much.