

News story: Coal Authority publishes Annual Report and Accounts 2017-18

It's been an inspiring year for the Coal Authority as we've continued to grow and transform into an organisation that's increasingly sustainable to enable us to deliver our next 5 year plan.

Our next plan is an evolution of the strategy we've followed over the last 5 years. It balances a strong focus on core operational delivery to keep people safe and improve environments impacted by the UK's mining legacy with a continued clear focus on innovation and continuous improvement. This enables us reduce costs to the taxpayer, support and develop our people and ensure we sustain the specialist skills we need to deliver for the future.

Over the past year we've worked to:

- grow our customer base, diversify our income and make significant progress in saving costs through innovation
- adapt and respond to major events, including flooding, and significant subsidence events
- enable a mining reports market, and seen competition develop in line with our business plan
- respond to our customers' needs, launching a new report for consultants and conveyancers
- develop our mine related services to enable those in government, infrastructure and development sectors to manage risk and cost
- support the development of ochre, a by-product of our mine water treatment, as a fine art product
- engage with water industry partners to examine various opportunities for water including co-treatment, supply and drought alleviation

We've contributed to the delivery of the UK's Industrial Strategy by adopting solar power at some of our mine water treatment schemes and by evaluating the clean energy potential stored in our mine workings.

We're proud of the progress we've made this last year. We are more relevant now than at any other time in our 24 year history, managing more social,

economic and environmental impacts across an even broader range of customers. Discover more about us, our work and our plans for the future.

[Coal Authority annual report and accounts 2017-18](#)

Press release: Government leads energy charge across public sector, saving up to £320 million

At a speech celebrating the Northern Powerhouse in Newcastle today (Thursday 5 July), the Business and Energy Secretary Greg Clark announced a range of measures to place the UK at the forefront of the global shift towards clean growth as part of our [Industrial Strategy](#).

Following a speech by the Prime Minister last month, Greg Clark outlined how the government will deliver the Clean Growth Grand Challenge's first 'mission' to halve the energy use of new buildings by 2030, saving families money.

Building on the momentum of ambitious energy efficiency measures within the public sector, the Secretary of State announced that central government will work towards a more stretching target with a reduction of 43% greenhouse gas emissions by 2019 to 2020 compared to 2009 to 2010 levels, potentially delivering £340 million in savings. We will also be publishing guidance on targets for the wider public and higher education sectors.

Business and Energy Secretary Greg Clark said:

Our new, ambitious target for reducing emission across our central estate shows how this government is continuing to lead the world and rise to the challenge of tackling climate change. We have made significant progress so far, meeting our previous target 3 years early and saving just over £100 million last financial year as a result.

The potential savings from this can make a big difference across the wider public sector, with the NHS saving £2 billion over the last decade; money that can be put straight back into frontline services where it's needed most.

Industry energy efficiency

We need to revolutionise the way we heat our homes and businesses, to support this, the Business Secretary announced that government will be launching the £18 million Industrial Heat Recovery Support programme with applications invited in the autumn. This is intended to encourage industry to invest in heat recovery technologies, harnessing the power of heat which would otherwise go to waste to help improve the efficiency of industry and reduce costs.

Speaking today, Greg Clark said:

Of the more than £11 trillion investment expected in global power in the next three decades, 86% – is expected to be in low carbon. And by 2040, electric vehicles could make up over half of global car sales, compared to 1% today.

We will be working with businesses to highlight these opportunities during the first ever annual Green GB Week starting on the 15 October.

The Business Secretary also launched the [Construction Sector Deal](#) will bring together the construction, manufacturing, energy and digital sectors to deliver innovative approaches that improve productivity in construction and accelerate a shift to building safer, healthier and more affordable places to live and learn that use less energy.

Notes to editors

1. The [Greening Government Commitments](#) require central government departments to adopt sustainable practices, including greenhouse gas emissions.
2. We have announced a new target to reduce emissions by 43% by 2020, compared with 2009/2010 levels. This has the potential to deliver savings of £340 million in 2020 compared to a 2009/2010 baseline.
3. The previous target for government, as a whole, was to reduce emissions by 32% by 2019/2020, compared with 2009/2010 levels. This was exceeded 3 years early with a 33% reduction by the end of 2016/2017, resulting in a saving of £104 million in 2016/2017 compared to the 2009/2010 baseline.
4. We are also publishing guidance for wider public and higher education sectors to report against a voluntary target of more than 30% reduction in emissions by 2020/2021: [Emissions Reduction Pledge 2020: emissions reporting in public and higher education sectors](#)

5. The [Industrial Heat Recovery Programme](#) will open for applications in Autumn 2018.
6. The [successful applicants from the two £10 million innovation competitions](#) include northern companies such as Free Running Buildings in Leeds who are pioneering low energy ventilation technology, and Hull University who will develop a high efficiency, low carbon heating system for public buildings in Yorkshire.

[Guidance: Emissions reduction pledge 2020: emissions reporting in public and higher education sectors](#)

In the [Clean Growth Strategy](#) the government introduced a voluntary target for the wider public and higher education sectors in England. This target would aim to reduce greenhouse gas emissions across these sectors by 30% by 2020 to 2021, compared to a 2009 to 2010 baseline.

Some parts of the wider public and higher education sectors already have carbon targets in place or are subject to mandatory or voluntary reporting schemes. It is also recognised that some sectors and local areas have already set ambitious 2020 targets which aim to deliver more than a 30% reduction in emissions, however we are keen to establish a common approach as the first reporting period up to 2020 is short.

We welcome further ambition and would encourage any organisation to exceed the 30% reduction target, if possible.

This guidance is for public and higher education sector organisations in England that want to support and report against a voluntary emissions reduction target.

[Press release: Natural flood management scheme for Yorkshire Dales](#)

communities

Running through the dale from just south of Kidstones to its confluence with the River Ure just down from Aysgarth Falls, Bishopdale Beck can quickly overtop and cause flooding in heavy rain.

The main road through the dale, the B6160, can become impassable and result in local residents in villages, such as Kidstones and Newbiggin, being unable to access vital infrastructure including schools, doctors' surgeries and shops.

But now a natural flood management (NFM) scheme aims to better protect the community in Bishopdale, which was chosen as one of three schemes in Yorkshire to benefit from an equal share of £501,000 of Government funding NFM initiatives.

Measures will be selected from a range of NFM interventions, including run-off management, using earth bunds and leaky wooden dams, peatland restoration, woodland creation, riparian buffer strips and management of floodplain grazing.

Simon Stokes, of the Environment Agency, said the scheme has been made possible by partner organisations coming together.

He said:

We look forward to working with the Yorkshire Dales Rivers Trust, the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority and the local community in delivering this project.

We hope that this project will really showcase partnership working and deliver a noticeable increase in resilience to flooding for the communities in the Bishopdale Beck catchment as well as improving the environment for both people and wildlife.

The Yorkshire Dales Rivers Trust has been working with landowners to create individual farm plans, something which the partner organisations say they are keen to do more of in the Dales.

Tarja Wilson, of Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority (YDNPA), said:

The idea is simple: farmers in the hills can take measures to slow down flood waters, both benefitting their businesses and lowering the risk of homes being flooded downstream.

In Bishopdale farmers are working collaboratively through the Wensleydale Facilitation Fund to consider how they can carry out natural flood management on their holdings.

Natural flood management isn't a silver bullet which will solve flooding downstream, but it has multiple benefits for farmers, such as improving water quality and reducing flood risk. It can be a genuine win-win, for farmers and the wider community.

The scheme will be developed in close consultation with communities and landowners to ensure interventions complement existing agricultural businesses.

Local farmer and landowner Robert Brown said:

It's great to see investment in the uplands for natural flood management. Previous projects have been very successful and it's good to see lots of local farmers and landowners getting involved.

Dan Turner, of the Yorkshire Dales Rivers Trust, said:

The Yorkshire Dales Rivers Trust is really looking forward to working in partnership with the YDNPA and EA on the Bishopdale natural flood management project.

We believe that this could be a real flagship project, delivering natural flood management on a catchment scale while also providing other benefits, such as wildlife, and reducing diffuse pollution.

We have been working closely with farmers in the catchment for many years, so it's great to once again, work together to creating a more resilient catchment, that's both profitable, sustainable and working with the natural environment.

The scheme will complement peatland restoration work delivered through Pennine PeatLIFE, an EU LIFE project co-funded by the Environment Agency and water companies.

The project delivery partners, the Yorkshire Peat Partnership, have been working with land owners in Bishopdale to restore upland blanket bog habitat in the area.

These habitats are vital for water storage, with healthy bogs storing and

holding more water and sediment.

The two other areas to get a share of the £501,000 Government funding announced in the 2016 autumn budget for natural flood management schemes in Yorkshire are Brompton Beck, near Northallerton, and Backstones Beck in Ilkley.

The funding was part of a national £15million NFM programme which, in addition to delivering flood risk reduction and environmental enhancements, aims to contribute to the growing evidence base for NFM.

[News story: Water resources during hotter summer months](#)

The Environment Agency is urging people to follow water company advice to use water wisely during these hotter summer months to help manage demand and reduce the impact on the environment.

The overall water resources situation across England is looking generally healthy. Groundwater levels throughout England are now starting to naturally decline as expected for the time of year but remain within normal levels the start of summer. Rivers, lakes and reservoirs are also broadly where they should be for this time of year. Although during dry spells it's not unusual for some rivers and lakes in faster responding water catchments to drop quickly but they tend to recover quickly when the rain returns.

Environment Agency operational teams and hydrologists continually monitor water levels throughout the year and will determine what action is needed. During hot weather we work with water companies and other organisations to reduce the impacts of the hot weather on the environment. The action we take includes incident response, regulating water abstraction, advising businesses and farmers on water usage and monitoring for environmental impacts.

The Environment Agency also takes action to ensure water companies have made robust plans for managing water supplies, although water companies themselves would decide on proposing water restrictions.

Paul Hickey, Deputy Director and head of water resources for the Environment Agency said:

A natural reduction in river flows and groundwater levels at this time of year is to be expected and water companies plan for these summer months. The summer started with river flow and groundwaters at normal levels in most areas, including the south east following the rain in spring.

There is enough water for companies to maintain supplies if water resources are managed properly. There are no water use restrictions in place. It is always helpful, in terms of future supplies and protecting the environment, for everyone to follow advice on saving water from their water company and use water wisely. At this time of year the Environment Agency is always ready to respond to pressure on rivers caused by low flows and we continue to monitor the situation.

If the public see fish gulping for air that could be because of reduced oxygen and river flows, please report it the Environment Agency incident hotline on 0800 80 70 60.

More detail on the current water situation is available on the Environment Agency's Creating a Better Place blog:

[Summer has started – what does that mean for the water situation in England?](#)