

Major upgrade that will reshape Hull gets started

Work started today to improve the A63 Castle Street, which will create a much better connection between the city centre and the retail and docks area.

This major Highways England project will support Hull's economic growth, improve journeys to and from the city centre, and help the Port of Hull to flourish.

Highways England chief executive Jim O'Sullivan said:

We are really pleased that we are now starting this long-awaited project. This major upgrade will greatly improve journeys into Hull and the Port of Hull.

Transport Secretary Grant Shapps said:

We're working right across the country to level up infrastructure and the upgrades to the A63 Castle Street will provide the right tools to support Hull's economic growth.

As Northern Powerhouse Minister I welcome this vital improvement, which has the potential to cut journey times, improve reliability and boost businesses in the North.

Castle Street is a key scheme in Transport for the North's strategic transport plan, and will see the creation of a new junction by lowering the level of the A63 at the Mytongate junction.

Peter Molyneux, Major Roads Director at Transport for the North, said:

It's great to see on-site works commence on this vital project just a few months after it was confirmed in the March 2020 Budget. This scheme will have a significant impact on local connectivity, reducing congestion and opening up the waterfront area for people and freight.

Alongside other road and rail schemes across the North the A63 scheme is part of Transport for the North's long-term vision for a sustainable, multimodal transport network that will support economic growth in our region for years to come.

The improvements will also see Ferensway and Commercial Road cross the A63, creating a split-level junction. The eastbound carriageway between Princes

Dock Street and Market Place will be widened to three lanes, and a new bridge built over the A63 at Porter Street.

Work has begun at the Trinity Burial Ground, and a compound will be set up as offices on Wellington Street West.

Work at the burial ground, which lies partially within the area where the scheme improvements need to be carried out, is being done with permission from the Church of England. Contractors are relocating monuments and removed walls in a careful and respectful manner, and are installing hoarding.

Councillor Daren Hale, portfolio holder for economic regeneration and planning at Hull City Council, said:

To see this long-awaited scheme finally start on site is a momentous occasion for this city. Over the past 20 years, we have worked hard to bring this crucial transport upgrade to fruition. This long-term investment will deliver significant benefits for those thousands of motorists who use this arterial route on a daily basis.

Meanwhile Hull's new bridge, which will be named after the city's first female GP Dr Mary Murdoch, opens this summer, having been built in advance of the main scheme to ensure connectivity during the work. It will connect the city centre to the marina, waterfront and fruit market. The bridge is going to cross the dual carriageway of the A63, allowing pedestrians and cyclists to safely cross the road, as well as reducing congestion on the A63.

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.

[UN Human Rights Council 43: UK statement under item 10](#)

Madam President,

The United Kingdom strongly supports the vital role of technical cooperation.

The international community must challenge States with egregious human rights situations, but it is equally important to support States cooperating with the UN and striving to meet their human rights obligations.

We welcome Ukraine's continued co-operation with OHCHR. It is crucial that the Mission can access all of Ukraine, including illegally annexed Crimea, where Russian authorities commit human rights violations and limit fundamental freedoms.

The UK commends the continued co-operation between Georgia and OHCHR. We remain deeply concerned by the human rights situation in its regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia.

In Uganda, we welcome the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding between OHCHR and the Government, renewing the mandate of the UN Human Rights office in Kampala.

We urge Cambodia to take further steps to restore democracy and freedom of expression. We appreciate cooperation with special rapporteurs and technical work with OHCHR.

We welcome progress on Sudan's commitment to tackle human rights issues, notably establishing a Khartoum OHCHR Office, and commitment to open field offices to support further progress.

We also welcome Afghanistan's commitment to improving human rights and we urge further steps to implement commitments. As Afghanistan moves closer towards peace, human rights protections must be safeguarded and expanded.

Thank you.

[National Underground Asset Register project update](#)

News story

The Geospatial Commission have published a project update report on its recently completed National Underground Asset Register (NUAR) pilots.



Our national infrastructure keeps the lights on, water flowing, internet connected and transport moving. All this needs to be done in a way that is well designed, and affordable for the government and the public.

There is huge potential for location data to improve the way that national infrastructure is planned, built and managed. Our [initial analysis](#) suggests that more accessible and better quality location data in infrastructure and construction could be worth over £4 billion per year.

The Geospatial Commission launched its National Underground Asset Register in 2019 with the aim to realise some of this value through better mapping underground assets. Every construction and infrastructure project has to source information on buried utility assets such as cables, pipes, sewers and ducts when preparing ground investigation and excavation work. Multiple different organisations have to be contacted with their data delivered in varied formats, scales, quality, and on different timelines.

This [project update document](#) celebrates NUAR's successful twelve month pilot phase that ended in April 2020 and outlines our next steps, as well as celebrating NUAR's shortlisting for a Digital Leaders cross sector digital collaboration award.

Thalia Baldwin, Director of the Geospatial Commission, said:

Our National Underground Asset Register pilots demonstrate the benefits of good geospatial data within the construction and infrastructure industries to improve safety and drive efficiencies. Accidental strikes on underground assets are estimated to cost the sector £1.2bn a year. It is the first time that the UK government has brought major utility companies and Local Authorities together to share data through a single data platform for safe digging and I am pleased our pilots have successfully proved the value of this approach.

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UK-Qatari Typhoons take off as joint squadron

News story

The Royal Air Force and Qatar Emiri Air Force (QEAF) Typhoon Squadron have commenced flying as a Joint Squadron.



RAF and Qatari Air Force pilots. Crown copyright.

The Royal Air Force and Qatar Emiri Air Force (QEAF) Typhoon Squadron, known as No.12 Squadron, have marked an important milestone as they commenced flying as a Joint Squadron

Based at RAF Coningsby, No.12 Squadron is a unique initiative between the UK and Qatar and will provide the QEAF with valuable experience operating the Typhoon as they prepare to receive their first aircraft. With deliveries commencing in 2022, the aircraft are part of a £5.1 billion deal between BAE Systems and the Government of Qatar.

The flags of both nations were raised at RAF Coningsby this week as Typhoons with new Squadron markings flew for the first time, signalling the Squadron's readiness to train pilots and ground crew from both air forces.

Defence Secretary Ben Wallace said:

No.12 Squadron is a testament to our enduring friendship and commitment to Qatar, the only nation with which the UK has a Joint Squadron. Together we are protecting populations and securing our mutual interests across the Middle East.

His Excellency Dr Khalid bin Mohammad al Attiyah, Minister of State for Defence Affairs said:

The first flight of No. 12 Squadron marks an important milestone in the commitment of the Qatari Emiri Air Force and the Royal Air Force to deliver on excellence.

The raising of the flags of The State of Qatar and the United Kingdom side by side in commemoration of the first joint flight represents the alignment of vision and strategy in building for a stable and prosperous future for both nations and the world.

The UK has a long history of working with international partners in our Armed Forces, with such defence engagement recognised as key to strengthening partnerships and promoting our national interest. However, No. 12 Squadron is the first Joint Squadron in the RAF since the Second World War and Battle of Britain.

The Joint Squadron was stood up on 24 July 2018 and will drive closer collaboration between the RAF and QEAF, putting our bilateral security and defence relationship on a long-term and sustainable footing.

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Billion pound Covid catch-up plan to tackle impact of lost teaching time

Children in England are set to benefit from a £1 billion Covid “catch-up” package to directly tackle the impact of lost teaching time, the Prime Minister and Education Secretary have confirmed.

As plans continue for a full return to education from September, the government has announced £650 million will be shared across state primary and secondary schools over the 2020/21 academic year.

Whilst head teachers will decide how the money is spent, the government expects this to be spent on small group tuition for whoever needs it.

This one-off grant to support pupils in state education recognises that all young people have lost time in education as a result of the pandemic, regardless of their income or background.

Separately, a National Tutoring Programme, worth £350 million, will increase access to high-quality tuition for the most disadvantaged young people over the 2020/21 academic year.

This will help accelerate their academic progress and prevent the gap between them and their more affluent peers widening.

This £1 billion package is on top of the £14 billion three-year funding settlement announced last year – recognising the additional work schools will need to do to help students to catch up.

Prime Minister Boris Johnson said:

I want to once again thank teachers, childcare workers and support staff for the brilliant work they have been doing throughout the pandemic.

This includes providing remote education for those not in school, as well as face-to-face education for vulnerable children and the children of critical workers.

This £1 billion catch-up package will help head teachers to provide extra support to children who have fallen behind while out of school.

I am determined to do everything I can to get all children back in school from September, and we will bring forward plans on how this will happen as soon as possible.

Education Secretary Gavin Williamson said:

We cannot afford for any of our children to lose out as a result of Covid-19. The scale of our response must match the scale of the challenge.

This package will make sure that every young person, no matter their age or where they live, gets the education, opportunities and outcomes they deserve, by spending it on measures proven to be effective, particularly for those who are most disadvantaged.

The plan will be delivered throughout the next academic year, bringing long term reform to the educational sector that will protect a generation of children from the effects of this pandemic.

The National Tutoring Programme is designed to reach up to two million of

England's most disadvantaged children.

The Government's ambition is that all providers running holiday clubs and activities for children over the summer holiday will be able to open, if the science allows.

Guidance will be provided to the sector on how to implement the protective measures necessary to open safely, and to parents on how to minimise the spread of the virus if they choose to attend.

Today the Education Endowment Foundation has also published a guide to help school leaders and staff decide how to use this funding to best support their pupils and their outcomes.

It provides advice on support strategies schools can use in deciding how to support pupils, including intervention programmes, extra teaching capacity, access to technology or summer schools.

The new package builds on the government's work throughout the pandemic to support the children most in need.

Nurseries, schools and colleges remained open to children from the most vulnerable families and have gone above and beyond to keep in contact with them.

The Department for Education has also invested more than £100 million in remote education – including delivering laptops and internet access to those who need them most.

Sir Peter Lampl, founder and chairman of the Sutton Trust and chairman of the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF), said:

Despite the heroic efforts of schools, many pupils' learning has suffered as a result of school closures. These children are drawn disproportionately from disadvantaged communities and need extensive support.

We are delighted that the government is announcing a large sum today to benefit those pupils who need it the most. We are proud to support the tutoring programme. Extensive trials show that high-quality tuition is a cost-effective way to enable pupils to catch up. Through a collaboration of organisations across the country, our aim is to make this tuition available to tens of thousands of primary and secondary school pupils. Our hope is that it becomes a powerful tool for teachers in the years to come.