

Press release: Colleges benefit from multi-million fund to drive up standards

A further 17 colleges been awarded funding totalling £2.5 million from the third and final round of the Strategic College Improvement Fund (SCIF), Apprenticeships and Skills Minister Anne Milton announced today (Thursday 6 June).

Colleges including Northampton College and Cheshire College South & West have been successful in their bid for funding from the final application round. They will now partner up with a high performing college to share their knowledge and expertise to help tackle issues – such as raising the standard of teaching or boosting learner attendance

The results of the final application round come as a [new report](#) is published today reveals that the SCIF has been widely welcomed by the sector. Colleges reported a number of positive benefits including how the programme has helped boost attendance rates, as well as the quality of teaching and learning and supported college-wide improvements in culture and leadership. The report also underlines the strong support for the collaborative working approaches, with many college partnerships pledging to continue this work even though the programme has come to an end.

Anne Milton, Apprenticeships and Skills Minister said:

I'm pleased to announce the colleges that have been successful in securing funding from the third and final round of the Strategic College Improvement Fund.

The fund will have supported 80 colleges in total to drive up standards and help to make sure all students get the best education and training possible.

We've seen some great success stories as a result of the programme. It's excellent news that colleges are making progress. Many colleges are intending to continue working together beyond the programme's end, which can only be for the good of students.

The SCIF was first launched in October 2017. In total 80 colleges across England have been successful in securing funding totalling £12.3 million. This includes Macclesfield College and Sir George Monoux Sixth Form College in London have been successful in securing funding from the fund.

Andrea Murphy, Vice Principal, Macclesfield College said:

We originally applied for the SCIF bid in November 2017 as although we had made significant progress in English and mathematics provision over a three year period, with the introduction of the new grading system we saw an opportunity to continue this trajectory by working with other providers to share and implement good practice from the sector.

Our first application was supported by a visit from the SCIF team who advised us as to how we could make improvements to the bid. Unfortunately, in that round we were unsuccessful. However we decided to apply again, as although by this time we had been through a successful Ofsted inspection, we felt that a resubmission could still support us. We reapplied in July 2018, again we were supported well by the SCIF team with the stage 2 application.

Our SCIF bid will focus on 'Raising the Bar through a Coaching and Growth Mindset – Engagement and Appropriate Intervention for English & Maths and Access to HE Learners'. We are now delighted to be embarking upon a journey towards becoming outstanding and feel that this bid will support us in this aim.''

David Vasse, Principal, Sir George Monoux Sixth Form College said:

Our application for Strategic College Improvement Funding has enabled us to construct a cohesive set of projects that will extend the scope of what we were already doing but also allow some new initiatives to take shape which we simply did not have the resources to start.

All of the projects will be delivered over a 10 month period but are designed to have a lasting impact on the social and academic norms of the college. From a student's perspective this will include significantly extended opening hours for study, an increase in academic mentoring, the opportunity to visit and network with students in outstanding settings else in the country and the chance to work towards status as a Monoux "leader of learning". From a staff perspective this will include the chance for us to access our Monoux Teacher training suite online, more expert-led training and increased opportunities for co-teaching.

Bill Watkin, Chief Executive, Sixth Form Colleges Association:

The SCIF has been a welcome and important opportunity for colleges to work together to raise standards in the sector. I am sure that many of the relationships established through SCIF activities will be sustained for years to come and students will benefit well beyond the end of this programme. We hope that the government will soon be launching SCIF 2!

Deputy Further Education Commissioner, SCIF Lead, Teresa Kelly:

The SCIF programme has been very well received by the sector and in particular colleges like that the focus of the programme is about improving quality with the support of another college

The SCIF has been the first of its kind across the sector with a real emphasis on quality improvement. Many colleges involved have reported that through the SCIF they have been able to tackle key issues such as improving attendance, improving their provision for apprenticeships or working on getting consistency in teaching standards across all curriculum areas. Having the resources available to drill down and concentrate on very practical issues has been of great value to teachers and curriculum managers.

SCIF programme funding has transformed the way that many colleges have delivered their CPD [continuous professional development] programmes. In particular there has been much direct link up with between teachers and colleges that they have identified as their improvement partner. Experiences of how others go about tackling practical teaching challenges have been identified as of the greatest value to those working with students in the classroom.

Almost three quarters of eligible colleges applied for the fund and 91% of applicants were successful in securing funding ranging from £60,000 to £500,000.

The fund has played an important role alongside the Government's National Leaders of Further Education (NLFEs) programme which also aims to share best practice and boost standards throughout the further education sector, giving more people the opportunity to access high quality education and training.

For more information on the SCIF, visit [here](#)

Press release: New national strategy to tackle Gypsy, Roma and Traveller inequalities

Communities Minister Lord Bourne has today (6 June 2019) launched a national strategy to tackle entrenched inequality and improve the lives of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities.

The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) is to lead the national strategy, working with several government departments and the Cabinet Office Race Disparity Unit to improve outcomes in areas including health, education and employment.

Communities Minister Lord Bourne said:

We recognise that members of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities continue to face some of the steepest challenges in society. Despite ongoing government work in this area, it's clear that more needs to be done.

Health, education and housing inequalities are considerable, and we know that there are disproportionate levels of violence experienced by some women and girls within Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities.

To bridge these divides and tackle these vital issues, we are launching an ambitious programme of work, to be undertaken across government, which will aim to tackle the serious disparities faced by Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities.

The announcement comes as communities across the country celebrate the start of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller History Month and will build on the government's ongoing work to support Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities.

In order to address the serious disparities highlighted by the [Race Disparity Audit](#), the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government has provided £200,000 of funding between 6 projects aiming to improve outcomes for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities in the areas of educational attainment, health and social integration.

The department has also funded 22 projects which support Roma communities across England through the Controlling Migration Fund.

In addition, the department has provided funding to 2 projects to improve the reporting of hate crime by Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities.

Statement to parliament: High Speed 2 Phase 2b update

I have today (6 June 2019) published a [government consultation](#) on 11 proposed refinements to the route of HS2 Phase 2b, the section of HS2 running from Birmingham to Leeds via the East Midlands, and from Crewe to Manchester. These include the first proposals for infrastructure to one day allow Northern Powerhouse Rail (NPR) trains to use the HS2 route and vice versa.

HS2 is making progress and work on Phase 1 (from London to the West Midlands) is well underway. Around 9,000 jobs are now supported by the delivery of HS2, with 300 apprentices on board and 2,000 businesses working on building the new backbone of Britain's rail network.

HS2 Phase 2b will complete the full 'Y network' and deliver the full benefits of HS2 in terms of capacity and better connections between cities and towns. Phase 2b will be a catalyst for regeneration and economic growth across the North and Midlands. In July 2017, I confirmed the route from Crewe to Manchester and Birmingham to Leeds via the East Midlands. In November 2018, I consulted on [working drafts of the environmental statement](#) and [equalities impact assessment](#) for Phase 2b, a major milestone in preparing the hybrid bill. I am today publishing a summary of the responses to those consultations, which are informing HS2 Limited's ongoing design work.

The proposals I am putting forward today mark another major milestone for HS2 Phase 2b and follow extensive work to ensure that the route offers the best value for taxpayers' money as well as minimising disruption for residents and impacts on the environment.

This consultation includes proposals to allow for 2 future junctions that could see the HS2 line into Manchester used as part of Northern Powerhouse Rail (NPR). These proposals have been developed in partnership with Transport for the North, and, in the future, would open up the opportunity for a potential new route between Manchester and Liverpool that could also be used for services between London and Liverpool.

Design work on the scheme continues and where further change is needed we will consult again ahead of bill deposit. Further scope to support the interfaces with NPR (including at Leeds) and Midlands Connect is currently being considered and is subject to future funding decisions. This consultation also considers some works on the existing rail network that will allow for HS2 trains to run between the south and our great northern cities.

It is an opportunity for communities affected by all the proposed changes to have their say in how the scheme develops. Good quality community engagement is crucial to HS2 and we want the input of those who will be affected.

In addition to today's consultation, I am also publishing updated safeguarding directions for the Phase 2b route to reflect the project's updated land requirements. I am also extending the rural property support zones for Phase 2b in certain areas, this brings a greater number of property owners in scope of these compensation schemes, or a higher value payment, enabling more people to benefit.

Copies of the command paper and safeguarding directions will be laid in the House of Commons and House of Lords libraries.

[Speech: PM Statement – Inauguration of the British Normandy Memorial: 6 June 2019](#)

Thank you President Macron for your support to ensure a lasting monument to the service and sacrifice of those who fought in the Battle of Normandy – something which means so much to our veteran community and to the whole of the British nation.

It is incredibly moving to be here today, looking out across beaches where one of the greatest battles for freedom this world has ever known took place – and it is truly humbling to do so with the men who were there that day.

It is an honour for all of us to share this moment with you.

Standing here, as the waves wash quietly onto the shore, it's almost impossible to grasp the raw courage that it must have taken that day to leap out from landing craft and into the surf – despite the fury of battle.

No one could be certain what the 6th June would bring. No one would know how this – the most ambitious – amphibious and airborne assault in all of human history, would turn out.

And, as the sun rose that morning, not one of the troops on the landing craft approaching these shores, not one of the pilots in the skies above, not one of the sailors at sea – knew whether they would still be alive when it set once again.

If one day can be said to have determined the fate of generations to come – in France, in Britain, in Europe and the world – that day was the 6th June 1944.

More than 156,000 men landed on D-Day – of which 83,000 were from Britain and the Commonwealth.

Over a quarter million more supported operations from air and sea – while the French Resistance carried out extraordinary acts of bravery behind enemy lines. Many were terribly wounded.

And many more made the ultimate sacrifice that day and in the fierce fighting that followed, as together our allied nations sought to release Europe from the grip of fascism.

Men like Lieutenant Den Brotheridge of the Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry. 28 years old. Husband. Father-to-be. Thought to be the first Allied soldier to be killed in action after leading the charge over Pegasus Bridge.

Marine Commando Robert Casson of 46 Royal Marine Commando, who was killed on the approach to Juno Beach, three weeks before his brother Private Joseph Casson was also killed in Normandy.

And twins Robert and Charles Guy, 21, who both served in the RAF and were shot down and buried separately. Their names will now be reunited here.

These young men belonged to a very special generation, the greatest generation. A generation whose unconquerable spirit shaped the post war world. They didn't boast. They didn't fuss. They served. And they laid down their lives so that we might have a better life and build a better world.

The memorial that will be built here will remind us of this. Of the service and sacrifice of those who fell under British Command in Normandy, of the price paid by French civilians – and of our duty, and our responsibility, to now carry the torch for freedom, for peace and for democracy.

I want to thank all those involved in this memorial. George Batts and the veterans who have campaigned so hard to make it happen. The people of Ver-sur-Mer, and Phillipe Onillon the town's mayor.

Here in Normandy, the names of those British men and women who gave their lives in defence of freedom, will forever sit opposite their homeland across the Channel.

Here, in Normandy we will always remember their courage, their commitment, their conviction.

And to our veterans, here in Normandy, I want to say the only words we can: thank you.

[News story: Government launches new](#)

campaign to inform drivers about greener fuels

- filling stations are to clearly identify biofuel content of road fuel to increase awareness among drivers
- uniform EU-wide labels will also prevent drivers from filling up with the wrong fuel abroad
- biofuels supplied in the UK reduce greenhouse gas emissions by over 70% compared to fossil fuels, helping combat climate change

Drivers are being urged to think more carefully about the environmental impacts of their journeys through a new [government campaign](#) launching today (6 June 2019).

From today, filling stations across the UK will start rolling out new labels, which will help educate drivers on the benefits of biofuels.

Petrol, which contains up to 5% renewable ethanol, will be labelled 'E5', while diesel, which contains up to 7% biodiesel, will be labelled as 'B7'.

This is the latest step in the government's drive to get consumers thinking more actively about the environmental impact of their transport choices, and follows a commitment to [end the sale of diesel and petrol cars by 2040, set out in the Road to Zero strategy](#).

Michael Ellis, Transport Minister, said:

Drivers should be aware of the environmental impact of their travel choices, and seeing this when they are buying fuel can help remind them why decarbonising transport is so important.

Biofuels are a key way of achieving the emissions reductions the UK needs, and their use reduced CO2 emissions by 2.7 million tonnes last year alone – the equivalent of taking around 1.2 million cars off the road.

Our new campaign will help drivers understand the role of biofuels, while also choosing the right fuel for their vehicle at home and abroad.

Biofuels can reduce greenhouse gas emissions by up to 90% compared to fossil fuels, and the campaign is set to highlight the crucial role that they will play during the transition to electric vehicles. Last year, 1.6 billion litres of renewable transport fuels were supplied in the UK.

Erik Rietkirk, CEO of Argent Energy, said:

These labels are crucial for informing the public about what the UK is doing to decarbonise transport.

Making the most of the huge environmental benefits of sustainable biofuels makes complete sense, and can help reduce emissions during the transition to a low carbon future.

Biofuels are made from a range of materials, including oil, fats, and grease waste, which are often recovered from sewage systems and water treatment works.

As even greener fuels, such as E10 – a petrol grade with up to 10% renewable ethanol – come onto the market, the labels are set to have an increasingly important role to play in raising consumer awareness of alternatives to traditional fuel.

The campaign follows a government push to help people make more conscious transport choices and understand how these contribute to greenhouse gas emissions, such as encouraging the use of cleaner vehicles.

These include a commitment to end the sale of new conventional diesel and petrol cars and vans by 2040, investment in hybrid trains, the doubling of investment in cycling and walking since 2010, along with the £2.5 billion [Transforming Cities Fund](#) which will develop innovative public transport schemes in some of England's biggest cities.