

Press release: Biggest road upgrade leads the way on environment

The biggest road project currently in construction in the UK is aiming to leave a positive footprint on the local environment once completed by the end of 2020.

People living and travelling in South Cambridgeshire will by now be familiar with the scale of the A14 Cambridge to Huntingdon project just by looking at the great number of yellow lorries and diggers working away along the sides of the existing A14 and A1, and the size of the new structures emerging along the route.

Less obvious but central to the project is the industry-leading care for the environment that the team is delivering while building the new road.

Patrick Howard, ecology lead for the A14 Cambridge to Huntingdon project for Highways England, explains:

An important part of any road construction project is the planning of environmental mitigation so that, by the time a project is completed, its footprint on the surrounding natural environment is as small as possible.

Protecting the environment now and in the future is one of the golden threads that runs through all aspects of the scheme, from design to construction, project management to efficiency and delivering value for taxpayers' money. What the A14 team is doing in terms of both environmental mitigation and environmentally-minded project management goes well above and beyond the usual requirements. It sets the standard high in terms of reducing the overall impact of a road scheme on the local environment during construction and after the scheme completion.

Pat continues:

We began thinking about the environment at a very early stage in the project, well before construction started.

There are a number of things we have to do by law, like survey the land where the road will be built to assess how the scheme might affect wildlife, or talk to environmental organisations to get their advice and give them the opportunity to feedback on our proposals.

And we have to look after protected wildlife species such as great crested newts, water voles, bats, badgers and a number of birds

that breed on the site of the scheme.

But we've also decided to build into the project ways to minimise our environmental impact now and to leave a positive legacy for the future.

One of the ecologists at work releasing some of the water voles into their new habitat in August 2017

Initiatives include: creating 271 hectares of new, connected habitats for wildlife, replanting trees at a ratio of two trees planted for every one felled, gathering rare wildflower seeds and specimens to replant after the end of construction, using renewable energy where possible, and making the most of naturally-occurring materials on site to build the road – more can be found in the list of facts below:

Plants and trees

- Twice as many trees will be replanted which had to be felled to build the road once the project is finished
- All the vegetation cleared ahead of construction starting, including trees felled, has either been used within the local community or to a biomass facility for energy production locally
- 866,000 plants from 50 different species will be replanted once the scheme is completed
- The trees that will be replanted will be in keeping with existing local woodland and include:
 - oak
 - field maple
 - elm
 - hawthorn
 - blackthorn
 - elder
- A number of rare plant species have been found across the route and have been moved so they can be replanted in the same area along the road verges once the scheme is finished. These include bee orchids, common spotted orchids and slender tare – a rare wildflower found near Girton.

Wildlife

- Ecologists working on the project are caring for a range of protected species along the route including:
 - great crested newts
 - water voles
 - bats
 - breeding birds such as yellow wagtail, skylark, corn bunting and yellowhammer
 - badgers
- Overall, the scheme will build 1.05 square mile (271ha) of new wildlife habitat across 18 areas around the new road, connecting them where

possible to help wildlife move more freely than is currently possible. That's the equivalent of 269 rugby fields.

- More than 200 bat boxes are being installed to provide additional habitat and help bats during migration.
- 5 barn owl boxes have been installed already and more will be installed by the end of the project. All of the ones currently up have been used for nesting this year and 3 of the birds have successfully reared chicks.
- Two bird species, the grasshopper warbler and Cetti's warbler, will benefit from additional, newly created habitat
- New habitats are being created at 3 different locations along the scheme for water voles, Britain's fastest declining wild mammal. The 10 water voles being re-located to their new Alconbury home moved all in over the summer.
- Once the scheme is complete, boxes for kestrels will be installed to nest around borrow pits and balancing ponds.
- Activity around 5 badger setts is being monitored along the route and the team is in the process of deciding how best to help the badgers relocate so they are not disturbed or endangered by the new route.
- The team is trapping great crested newts and relocating them at a safe location until the scheme is complete, and will create 3 new habitats for them when the scheme is closer to completion.
- Hedges with native species found in the local area will be planted near Brampton woods to create corridors and food sources for recently reintroduced dormice.

Energy, water and construction materials

- The project team is trialling hybrid generators, solar powered lights and hydrogen powered vehicles throughout site in an effort to reduce our use of fossil fuels.
- 100% of the energy used across the project compounds comes from renewable energy sources including wind and solar powers.
- Only non-drinking water is being used for construction purposes so as to minimise the impact on the local drinking water supply. The water comes from water treatment plants, the scheme's borrow pits, and local watercourses (up to a maximum of 20m³ per day).
- Instead of having to source externally the 5 million tonnes of materials needed to build the new road, more than half of it is being supplied from the site itself through borrow pits within site. The project also has onsite concrete batching plants to create the building blocks for the scheme's 34 bridge and other structures. This means less long-distance transport needs and less energy used. It also means less impact on the busy road network locally.

Work on building the £1.5bn upgrade to the A14 between Cambridge and Huntingdon started in November last year. The project includes widening a total of seven miles of the A14 in each direction (across two sections), a major new bypass south of Huntingdon, widening a three-mile section of the A1 and demolition of a viaduct at Huntingdon, which will support improvements in the town.

For the latest information about the A14 Cambridge to Huntingdon improvement scheme, visit [the project page](#), follow @A14C2H on Twitter and like our [Facebook page](#).

General enquiries

Members of the public should contact the Highways England customer contact centre on 0300 123 5000.

Journalists should contact the Highways England press office on 0844 693 1448 and use the menu to speak to the most appropriate press officer.

[Press release: Commission opens consultation on 'more dynamic' annual return](#)

The Charity Commission, the independent regulator of charities in England and Wales, has today announced a [consultation for next year's annual return](#). This consultation is the second part of a two-year project that is reviewing the key information that we collect and display from charities.

The annual return is a key regulatory tool that is used for two main purposes. It enables the Commission to collect information about charities that it can use to identify issues of concern, either in specific charities or areas of broader risk across the charity sector. It is also the source of much of the information that is displayed on the Register of Charities – a key driver to allow the public and donors to find out more information about charities.

The Commission's intention is to shift to a more dynamic annual return, that is better targeted and easier to use for charities – those charities that are smaller and have more simple operating structures will answer fewer questions, whereas those that are larger and more complex will be required to answer more.

The consultation also proposes some changes to the questions that are being asked, including the addition of some new questions and the removal of others. These changes will help ensure that the questions reflect the priority risk areas in our strategic plan and help us tackle new regulatory risks as they emerge, we also hope they will strengthen the sector's accountability and provide information that the public and others expect to be able to see.

For each new question we have considered how the information will help meet a regulatory aim and further our statutory function. However, we are also

mindful of balancing these needs with the need not to create an undue additional burden on charities.

Further changes made to the service itself, in line with the improvements across our digital services, will mean that the annual return is easy-to-use and intuitive for charities regardless of their size and structure.

Helen Stephenson, Chief Executive of the Charity Commission, said:

The annual return is an essential regulatory tool for the Commission, but also a window for the public to see important information about charities. Ensuring that we are collecting the right information, in a way that is simple for charities to understand, is absolutely vital.

We believe the changes that are proposed will help strengthen our ability to regulate charities and improve public trust and confidence. The improved digital service being offered will also result in a much easier service to use that is based on the needs of charities. The voice of charities and their umbrella bodies will be important to inform our approach and we look forward to engaging widely and constructively in the coming weeks.

We are keen to hear from charities that complete the annual return, as well as users of our online register and those that have an interest in the information we collect and publish about charities. You can respond to this consultation by completing an online survey and supplementary information can be provided by email. The final deadline for responses is 5pm on Friday 24 November 2017.

There will also be other opportunities and methods for giving us your feedback, including round table discussions with interested parties and user-testing of the proposed questions, we will publish details of these through the consultation period.

Notes to editors

1. The Charity Commission is the independent regulator of charities in England and Wales. To find out more about our work, see our [annual report](#).
 2. Search for charities on our [online register](#).
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News story: UK aid support to victims of devastating floods in South Asia

The International Development Secretary has today announced that the Department for International Development (DFID) will allocate further support to the flood response in Nepal, including by providing clean water, sanitation and hygiene services, as well as support immediate food security needs and health support.

Monsoon flooding and landslides have affected an estimated 8mn and 1.7mn people in Bangladesh and Nepal respectively.

DFID is allocating £400,000 to the Nepal Red Cross Society in partnership with the British Red Cross and International Federation of the Red Cross for monsoon flood response. 75% of this support is earmarked for water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH), livelihood recovery, and health. This support will:

- Provide safe water supply to over 13,000 people
- Ensure over 3,000 of those most severely affected receive immediate food and financial support
- Reach over 2,000 women and girl's with health supplies

The International Development Secretary, Priti Patel, said:

The devastating flooding in South Asia is truly heart-breaking. Entire communities have lost their homes, their livelihoods and their loved ones.

The UK has stepped up to support the region, our pre-positioned relief supplies ensured thousands of people received immediate support and we continue to provide assistance to vulnerable people who have lost everything.

Today's announcement will provide clean water and prevent the spread of deadly and crippling diseases, as we continue to work to meet the immediate needs of people on the ground.

This announcement is the latest support the UK has provided to Bangladesh and Nepal. This includes:

- In Bangladesh, the UK's START fund has already allocated £660,000 for NGOs working to provide food, financial assistance, water and sanitation quickly to 62,000 people in the worst affected areas. The UK is also funding work to assess needs and humanitarian staffing to lead effective coordination of responses.
- In Nepal, the Humanitarian Staging Area at the capital's airport in Kathmandu was built with funding from UK aid and provides one of the

main relief coordination centres for the government. UK preparedness support, through Oxfam, is providing immediate relief supplies to 30,000 people for emergency shelter and WASH. DFID is also supporting overall coordination.

- The UK will continue to monitor the situation in both countries, and work with their governments to support immediate needs and to help people and communities affected to recover once flooding has receded.
- Flooding has also affected India, where the UK continues to monitor the situation, and our thoughts are with those that have been affected. The Indian Government is leading the response in providing humanitarian assistance to those that require it.

Notes for Editors:

- The Governments of Bangladesh and Nepal are leading the response to monsoon flooding that has affected an estimated 8mn and 1.7m people in the two countries.
- Floods occur annually during Bangladesh's monsoon season and the Government of Bangladesh has well established response mechanisms in place.
- The Start Fund is a global multi-donor humanitarian response fund managed by consortia of NGOs that provides rapid funding within 72 hours of an emergency unfolding. The fund has specific resources earmarked to respond to emergencies in Bangladesh.
- The UK supports the Humanitarian Affairs Adviser in the UN Resident Coordinator's (RC) office, which leads coordination of the flood response.
- DFID Bangladesh is also providing £3m to help communities to recover from the impact of floods earlier in the year
- The Government of Nepal formally requested international assistance on Friday, 18 August and the UK Government is providing assistance and helping to co-ordinate the flooding response using support from our existing country budget.
- The UK is supporting the in-country coordination mechanisms in Nepal, including through support to the UN Resident Coordinators Office and the logistics cluster.

ENDS

[News story: Crime news: CRM12 duty rota deadline is 6 October 2017](#)

Remember to send CRM12 applications by the deadline if you want to join the next duty solicitor rota.

The deadline to submit CRM12 applications for slots on the next duty solicitor rota is 23.59 on Friday 6 October 2017.

No late applications

This deadline is for rotas running from 1 January 2018 to 31 March 2018. We cannot accept late applications. We will revert to six-monthly rotas from 1 April 2018.

Completing CRM12s

Organisations wishing to make amendments to their existing rota membership must submit a fully completed CRM12.

This should detail all the duty solicitors which providers wish to add or remove from rotas starting 1 January 2018.

Details of duty solicitors currently on the rotas can be found in the members' lists which are published on GOV.UK – see below.

Providers who have not previously submitted a CRM12 will need to provide a copy of the Criminal Litigation Accreditation Scheme (CLAS) certificate. This should be sent with their CRM12.

Attendance requirements

Organisations will also need to confirm to us that they will meet the contractual attendance requirements for their solicitors. They should only nominate duty solicitors who:

- carry out 14 hours' contract work a week from offices for which rota slots are held
- are not named for rota slots with another organisation

CRM12 form and email

[News story: Investigatory Powers Commissioner establishes oversight regime](#)

Lord Justice Fulford has today started a new role in overseeing the police, law enforcement and intelligence agencies' use of investigatory powers.

This marks a major milestone in establishing the powerful oversight regime set out in the Investigatory Powers Act, which was given Royal Assent last

year.

The role replaces the oversight roles previously undertaken by the Chief Surveillance, Interception of Communications, and Intelligence Services Commissioners, by establishing inspection and oversight functions in a single independent body.

The Home Secretary Amber Rudd said:

The Investigatory Powers Act offers a world-leading oversight regime to ensure the powers the security and intelligence agencies and law enforcement use to investigate crimes and protect the public are used responsibly and proportionately.

In commencing his oversight responsibility, Lord Justice Fulford is playing a vital role in providing the enhanced safeguards we set out in the act.

I would also like to thank the outgoing commissioners Lord Judge, Sir Stanley Burnton and Sir John Goldring for their hard work and dedication to their respective roles.

From today, the Investigatory Powers Commissioner's Office (IPCO) takes over the inspection and oversight functions carried out by the previous commissioners' offices, and takes on responsibility for the pre-approval of certain police activities authorised under the Police Act 1997.

The commissioner's further powers including the judicial 'double-lock', which will require warrants issued by the Secretary of State to also be approved by a Judicial Commissioner will be introduced in due course.

Lord Judge, formerly the Chief Surveillance Commissioner, and Sir Stanley Burnton, formerly the Interception of Communications Commissioner, are standing down.

Sir John Goldring, formerly the Intelligence Services Commissioner, will take on a new role as Deputy Investigatory Powers Commissioner.

More information is available on the [Investigatory Powers Commissioner's website](#).