

[Press release: £15 million Northern Cultural Regeneration Fund to boost region's tech, creative and cultural industries](#)

Towns and cities across Northern England will be able to bid for a share of a new £15 million fund to help build a lasting regional legacy from the Great Exhibition of the North, Culture Secretary Karen Bradley announced today.

Projects could include opening a new tech start-up centre or renovating live music venues and should increase opportunities for people to experience, benefit and contribute to culture and creativity.

The Northern Cultural Regeneration Fund will make grants of up to £4 million available to support major culture and tech capital projects. The fund will build on the impact of [next year's exhibition](#) and help pave the way for future investment in the [Northern Powerhouse](#).

The [Great Exhibition of the North](#) will be held in Newcastle and Gateshead next summer. Set to be the biggest event in 2018, the £5 million government-funded exhibition will showcase the best of Northern art, design and innovation.

The immersive free exhibition will engage communities and businesses from across the region, and promote the bustling and thriving area to the world.

[Find out more about the the Exhibition](#)

Culture Secretary Karen Bradley said:

This £15 million fund is a fantastic chance for towns and cities to develop inspirational projects that could have a transformative local effect – particularly in communities that have seen less cultural or creative investment in the past.

We want as many people as possible to benefit from the Great Exhibition of the North, and this fund will boost the Northern Powerhouse and help build a lasting legacy across the whole region.

Northern Powerhouse Minister Jake Berry said:

The North is a cultural powerhouse, as well as an economic one, and this £15 million fund will give a boost to the region's vibrant

culture and tech sectors.

We've already invested over £3.4 billion for projects to boost local economies in the Northern Powerhouse and this latest funding will help make sure the Great Exhibition of the North creates a legacy for years to come.

The first round of bids will be coordinated by Local Enterprise Partnerships in Cheshire and Warrington, Cumbria, Greater Manchester, Humber, Lancashire, Leeds City Region, Liverpool City Region, North East, Sheffield City Region, Tees Valley, York and North Yorkshire and East Riding.

The successful projects will be announced in March 2018. A further round of funding may follow if all the available funds have not been committed.

Successful bids will encourage sustainable cultural and creative regeneration in the North of England and benefit areas that have historically had low levels of cultural and creative investment.

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Speech: “All Member States must recognise and respect that there can be no ifs, no buts: sanctions agreed in this Council are legally binding”

Thank you Mr President and thank you to Assistant-Secretary-General Zerihoun for your briefing which has made clear this morning that sanctions are a vital part of the Security Council’s arsenal. As article 41 of the United Nations Charter makes clear, they give real effect to our decisions – turning words in this Chamber into tangible actions against those who threaten international peace and security.

They are not our first resort, nor are they a measure that we can ever take lightly, but we know that sanctions work. They helped bring peace and security to countries like Liberia and Sierra Leone. They helped bring Iran to the negotiating table, which led in turn to the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action. And sanctions continue to play a vital role in the fight against Daesh and Al-Qaeda in Iraq, Syria, and beyond.

All of these examples, Mr President, illustrate not just the efficacy of sanctions, but the importance of using them together with the other tools at our disposal. The Iran Deal was not forged from sanctions alone. Our victory over Daesh won’t be secured through the hard work of the 1267 Committee alone. Sanctions must sit alongside all our other tools; direct political dialogue, mediation, peacekeeping, special political missions.

And just as with all other tools of this Council, it is important that sanctions remain fit for purpose.

So I want to thank you, Mr President, for bringing this issue before the Council again so that we can consider if there are further ways to improve our collective work on sanctions.

All future work on sanctions should build on the great deal of valuable work that has already been carried out by States and stakeholders on this issue. In particular, I want to highlight both the work of the UN Informal Working Group from 2006 and also the High-Level Review of UN Sanctions led by Sweden and other co sponsors. They have produced good recommendations but, as we all know, building the political commitment required for effective follow-up has been challenging.

This issue of political will applies above all when it comes to serious implementation of sanctions. For these measures to be truly effective, it is absolutely essential that all States implement them fully. It isn’t good enough just for the majority of countries to do so; a chain is only as strong

as its weakest link.

All Member States must recognise and respect that there can be no ifs, no buts: sanctions agreed in this Council are legally binding Chapter VII obligations.

I recognise that even when there is strong political will, implementation can be challenging, not just for States but also for businesses. There is already much good work in this area – outreach from Sanctions Committees, the development of networks and capacity-building, the sharing of information and best practices between states – but a great deal more could still be done, especially on the most important of sanctions dossiers such as North Korea where the number of States reporting on implementation still falls far short of what it needs to be.

That's why, Mr President, we welcome further consideration of your delegation's recent suggestion for a Secretary-General's report on cross-cutting issues related to sanctions. If this report builds on the existing work I have referred to, draws lessons from current sanctions regimes, and offers concrete, practical suggestions on how to improve implementation and effectiveness, then we think this could be a valuable addition to our sanctions work; one that will help set a clear agenda for further improvements, building on the High-Level Review and other efforts.

And Mr President, there is quite simply no clearer reminder of the need for strengthening our sanctions capability than the current situation that we confront in relation to North Korea.

Here we face a State that continues to act in flagrant violation of multiple Security Council resolutions, a State that continues to threaten not just its region but the whole world in its reckless pursuit of nuclear weapons and illegal missiles. Their latest ICBM launch just last week suggests a capability that puts most Security Council members, including the UK, within range. I have said before in this Chamber but it bears repeating today: we as a Security Council must act and we must be prepared to use sanctions to raise the cost for DPRK in pursuing these illegal actions.

Thank you.

Press release: UK maritime forces complete French naval deployment

Two Royal Navy Merlin Mk3 helicopters were also embarked as UK and French maritime personnel trained together across the Asia Pacific region.

Minister for the Armed Forces, Mark Lancaster, said:

From fighting Daesh in the Middle East to jointly operating in Estonia as part of NATO's Enhanced Forward Presence, our enduring defence partnership with France is stronger than ever as we work together to tackle global threats.

This deployment has demonstrated the ability of our world class Royal Navy and Royal Marines to operate alongside our French allies and international partners as Britain delivers on its commitment to global maritime security.

The annual French deployment Jeanne d'Arc included port calls at Singapore, Sri Lanka, Vietnam, Japan, Guam, Australia and Egypt as well as various multinational amphibious exercises.

Throughout the deployment, UK personnel worked closely with international partners to strengthen defence cooperation in the region. British troops participated in the first ever four-part maritime exercise involving France, Japan, the UK and US, where as part of a week-long practice assault, the two Merlins moved 330 troops from the four nations to and from the island of Tinian.

UK troops also met with the Vietnam People's Navy in Ho Chi Minh City to compare national maritime operating procedures and exchange experiences, and during a port call to Egypt, British forces took part in a cross-decking exercise alongside French and Egyptian Armed Forces.

Through the 2010 Lancaster House Treaties, the UK and France are continuing to strengthen an ever closer bilateral defence and security relationship. As well as fighting side by side as allies in NATO and the Global Coalition, the two nations are working together as partners in defence equipment and capability programmes such as the [UK-France Future Cruise/Anti-Ship Weapon programme](#).

[Press release: Mosquito treatment in Ashford, Kent](#)

Action was taken to eradicate eggs and larvae of an invasive species of mosquito, *Aedes albopictus* (Asian tiger), which has become more common in Europe during recent years. Though the mosquito poses no immediate risk to public health, the decision was to treat the area and prevent it becoming established in the UK.

PHE and Ashford Borough Council have ensured residents and businesses in the area have been fully informed of all treatment taking place and both agencies are working closely with Kent County Council.

The eggs and larvae were discovered through PHE's ongoing mosquito surveillance programme which monitors 30 UK ports and airports. Since invasive mosquitoes became more widespread in France, surveillance has been conducted by PHE at motorway service stations in south east England on the main routes from the south coast ferry ports and Eurotunnel.

Dr Jenny Harries, Deputy Medical Director at Public Health England, said:

PHE operates a surveillance system to monitor mosquito species and check for any that are new to the UK.

Through these activities we identified a small number of eggs and larvae from the *Aedes albopictus* (Asian tiger) mosquito in traps at Ashford International truck stop. Enhanced monitoring of the area was carried out and no further evidence of this mosquito has been found.

As a precaution we advised the local authority on measures to eradicate the mosquito and remove any suitable habitats in the area. We will continue to monitor the situation closely through our surveillance system. There is no immediate risk to public health in the UK.

We are also grateful to the truck stop for their cooperation and support as a responsible business.

This is the second time this species has been found in the UK, and is likely to have resulted from the importation of one adult female across the Channel via vehicular traffic. A similar discovery was made by PHE in Folkestone last September. Adult mosquitoes can only fly a very short distance and so control measures are implemented up to a 300 metre radius.

The presence of a mosquito does not mean that it is carrying any diseases as they first need to bite an infected person and then move on to infect a second individual. There are currently no cases of diseases known to be carried by this mosquito circulating in neighbouring countries and therefore no risk to health locally.

Andrew Scott-Clark, Director for Public Health in Kent added:

This has been a great example of close working between local government and Public Health England to safeguard people in Kent.

The surveillance system has been highly effective in detecting this invasive species and enabled a swift response from Ashford Borough Council to treat the site and ensure this species does not become established.

Having been consulted throughout, I can assure people in Kent that this poses no current risk to the public's health.

PHE and Ashford Borough Council will continue to monitor the site for any further signs of invasive mosquitoes and ensure there are no suitable habitats.

PHE has run a surveillance system with partners (Port Health Officers and Edge Hill University) since 2010. This now includes surveillance at more than 30 UK sea and airports and at the largest used tyre importers. Since invasive mosquitoes have become more widespread in France, surveillance has been conducted by PHE at motorway service stations in the south east of England on the main routes from the south coast ferry ports and Eurotunnel (since 2014). The surveillance system combines a number of traps that detect mosquito eggs, host-seeking and blood-fed mosquitoes and larval sampling.

PHE have also run a mosquito recording scheme since 2005, receiving mosquitoes from the public and environmental health for identification. PHE encourage the public to continue to submit mosquito samples for identification through a [collection scheme](#). Please note, all samples returned by the public are of native mosquito of which there are known to be more than 30.

Aedes albopictus (A. albopictus)

Limited ability to fly

The species has low ability to fly and therefore the focus for control measures needs to be across a 300 metre radius area around the truck stop. There are fewer than 10 residential properties in the area and we have made contact with all of the households and are working to remove aquatic habitats found at these properties.

These findings indicate individual mosquitoes that have travelled into the UK via traffic, and laid eggs.

There is no indication of the source of the mosquito eggs captured at the site but given the location, importation of an adult mosquito by a vehicle arriving from Europe entering through one of the ports is the most likely route. As a precaution, we have recommended that local authorities take steps to remove potential mosquito breeding grounds in the area.

There is no indication this mosquito is carrying any virus that is a risk to human health.

Low risk to the public

As a result of PHE's surveillance network we were able to identify the mosquitoes and take prompt action to eradicate them at an early stage. We will monitor the situation closely to ensure no further mosquito eggs or larvae.

Characteristics of an A. albopictus mosquito

This is a small mosquito with characteristic black and white striped legs, a white line on the thorax, and black and white markings elsewhere on the body.

It is easily confused with a native species that is much larger, and also has similar markings. More information can be found on this at the PHE website.

No evidence of disease risk

The presence of a mosquito does not mean that it is carrying any diseases. For an *A. albopictus* mosquito to carry a virus, it needs to first bite an infected person. Incidences of this in Europe are not common and there have only been a few instances of dengue and chikungunya in Southern Europe and only where the mosquitoes are established.

There is currently no evidence to suggest *A. albopictus* is established in the UK.

There is no evidence to suggest that Zika can be carried by *A. albopictus*. It has been implicated in the transmission of other viruses like dengue and chikungunya.

First find in 2016

Mosquito eggs found in one trap near Folkestone were confirmed as *A. albopictus* on 30 September 2016. This was the first detection of this non-native mosquito species in the UK. Enhanced surveillance was implemented. There was no further evidence of them at the Folkestone site despite extensive surveillance.

Surveillance helps prevent invasive species establishing

A. albopictus has shown an ability to adapt to its environment and can lay diapausing eggs that survive winters in temperate areas, which means they can 'hibernate' and hatch the following spring.

Following the first detection, all other traps at the location were re-surveyed and found to be negative.

Enhanced surveillance is being conducted at the site and in the vicinity, including the deployment of additional traps and larval sampling. So far, no further evidence of *A. albopictus* has been found, and there is no evidence so far that it has become established.

Image courtesy of James Gathany via [CDC Photo library](#).

[Press release: Official opening of £3million North East flood scheme](#)

The multi-million pound Lustrum Beck Flood Alleviation Scheme has been officially opened.

The Environment Agency and Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council have worked together on the £3million award-winning scheme, which included replacing Londonderry Bridge and building new flood walls along the beck.

The scheme reduces the risk of flooding to over 150 homes in the town.

An official opening event on 26 July marked the completion of the first phase of the project, while residents were invited to a community drop-in event and walking tour of the defences to find out how they are better protected from flooding.

The lifting screen at Primrose Hill

New flood defences

Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council replaced Londonderry Bridge, on Durham Road, as part of the project. This was completed in December 2016.

The Environment Agency has built new flood walls along the beck at Bedford Street and Duddon Walk, which tie in with a raised embankment at Newtown. Work to tie in the new defences with the new bridge was completed earlier this year.

The Environment Agency also installed a new lifting screen at the culvert at Primrose Hill and had previously built a new flood wall along Bishopton Road.

Environment Agency Area Director Oliver Harmar said:

This is a fantastic project with some unique features which has increased flood protection to over 150 properties.

We've worked closely with Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council throughout which has enabled us to provide Stockton with an excellent scheme with a high level of protection.

And we're not finished yet. The next phase involves looking at storing flood water further upstream at Coatham Woods, as well as creating new habitat.

This makes Lustrum Beck a great project which will see us combine traditional engineering solutions with natural flood management.

The new Londonderry Bridge

Natural flood management

The Environment Agency is looking at options to store flood water further upstream of Stockton at Coatham Woods, and is working with Newcastle University and the Forestry Commission to explore designs.

And it's also exploring opportunities to create up to 30 hectares of water

dependent habitat, including improved habitat at Sixfields.

Construction of these features is expected to start later this year and will take approximately three years.

Councillor Mike Smith, the Council's Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport, added:

The replacement of Londonderry Bridge was an essential part of the broader scheme to help reduce the flood risk to homes.

"The old bridge was a major contributor to serious flooding because its arches obstructed the beck's flow. Replacing it with a new, single span bridge has reduced the risk of the kind of devastating flooding we've seen in recent years.

We'd like to thank local people for their patience and understanding throughout this project, and it's good to give them this opportunity to find out how the new flood protection measures all work.

The Lustrum Beck flood scheme has won a number of awards, including the Sustainability award at Constructing Excellence North East 2017, it scooped the top award for Partnership Project of the Year at the Flood and Coast Project Excellence Awards, and was highly commended at the Robert Stephenson Awards run by the Institution of Civil Engineers.

It's important residents understand their flood risk and know what to do during a flood. [Find out more about how to prepare for flooding](#)