

News story: Air Quality Grant programme

Projects across the country will benefit from almost £3.7 million as part of an annual funding scheme to help combat air quality locally, it was announced today.

The Air Quality Grant programme has awarded more than £52 million to a variety of projects since it started in 1997 and helps local authorities tackle air quality in their areas to reduce the impact on people's health and create cleaner and healthier environments.

This year's Air Quality Grant programme for 2016/17 will focus on supporting schemes set up to tackle nitrogen dioxide levels, and include:

- £163,100 for electric vehicle charging and infrastructure improvements and an electric vehicle car club in East Herts
- £498,600 for a Clean Air Zone study by Bristol and South Gloucestershire councils
- £400,000 to support Nottingham trial fuel cell technology and encourage ultra-low emission vehicles in the local NHS

Environment Minister Therese Coffey said:

"Tackling poor air quality is a priority for the government and we are working closely with Local Authorities so they can play a crucial role in this.

"I was delighted at the broad range of ideas submitted, from using the latest technology to promoting cleaner taxis and increasing the uptake of electric vehicles, and these projects will help to improve the quality of life for people who live and work in our towns and cities, both now and in the future."

Transport Minister John Hayes said:

"We are determined to cut emissions and improve air quality for communities across the country; as a father of two, I would want no less for any family than I'd want for my own. These grants will help councils take significant practical steps to clean up the air and to improve communal wellbeing in their area.

"This good work will sit alongside the government's draft air quality plan which will be published in the spring."

The government is firmly committed to improving the UK's air quality and cutting harmful emissions and its air quality plan will go out to consultation later this year.

More than £2 billion has already been committed since 2011 to increase the

uptake of ultra-low emissions vehicles and support greener transport schemes and set out how it will improve air quality through a new programme of Clean Air Zones. In last year's Autumn Statement, a further £290m was allocated to support electric vehicles, low emission buses and taxis, and alternative fuels.

Local Authority	Project	Amount £
Birmingham City Council	Parking reform to reduce traffic in city centre combined with awareness raising	350,000
Bristol City Council, South Gloucestershire Council	Clean Air Zone feasibility study	498,600
Cornwall County Council	Fitting council vehicles with oxy-hydrogen electrolyzers	236,650
Derby City Council	Retro-fitting of Council's HGV fleet with emissions reduction technology	250,000
Derby City Council	Cleaner taxis research and engagement programme	29,750
Doncaster Council (with Barnsley MBC, Rotherham MBC and Sheffield City Council)	Demonstration of electric vehicles with a local communication and engagement campaign to increase uptake of Ultra Low Emission Vehicles	100,000
East Herts Council	EV charging and infrastructure improvements and EV car club	163,100
Gateshead Council	Traffic management measures, fleet upgrade and improved cycling infrastructure	395,957
Leeds City Council	Research real-world emissions from road transport refrigeration equipment and possible mitigations	150,000
Leicester City Council	Work-based active travelling local campaign	67,300
London Borough of Islington	Local school focussed awareness and engagement campaign	50,000
Nottingham City Council	Trial of innovative fuel cell technology within the Council's property portfolio	200,000
Nottingham City Council	Improve the uptake of Ultra Low Emission Vehicles in NHS fleet	200,000
Sheffield City Council	Air Aware communications campaign (engaging local GPs, community groups and schools)	50,000
Southampton City Council (with Eastleigh Borough Council)	Supporting the uptake of low emission taxis	253,880
Southampton City Council	Eco-safe driver training and installation of telematics on council fleet	99,000

Local Authority	Project	Amount £
Southampton City Council (with Birmingham City Council, Derby City Council, Leeds City Council, Manchester City Council and Nottingham City Council)	Air quality awareness and engagement campaign	539,120
Westminster City Council (with London Borough of Camden)	Provide advice and toolkits for SMEs to reduce transport emissions from deliveries associated with their operations	54,077
TOTAL		3,687,434

[News story: Queens Park Rangers sign the Armed Forces Covenant](#)

The club, which has pledged to help service leavers and veterans achieve their goals and find jobs with its Community Trust work skills programme, run in conjunction with the Royal British Legion, signed the covenant during their match with fellow Covenant members Wigan on Tuesday.

The scheme, which helps personnel prepare for life after the military, has already helped half of its previously unemployed participants find work.

Defence Minister Mark Lancaster, who attended the signing, with the Chief of Defence People Lt General Richard Nugee, said:

It is great to see that QPR are signing the Armed Forces Covenant. The success of their employability programme shows how a football club can help service leavers and veterans improve skills and find jobs.

I encourage other clubs to support the covenant and ensure all those who serve or have served, and their families, are treated fairly.

QPR have also pledged to work with the Ministry of Defence's Career Transition Partnership (CTP) to provide a career pathway for personnel leaving the Armed Forces, and to support club employees who are training or deployed as Reservists.

QPR's CEO Lee Hoos said:

I'm very proud that we are the first London club to sign the Armed

Forces covenant. This will build on the strong relationship the club already has with the local Armed Forces community, including 4 PARA and the White City cadets, as well as the employability programme we recently ran with the Royal British Legion for Armed Forces veterans.

The Armed Forces Covenant is a commitment from the nation, enshrined in law, that those who serve or have served, and their families, are treated fairly.

Over 1,440 businesses and organisations across the UK have already signed, making practical pledges that have made a difference across the Armed Forces community.

[News story: MOD signs £146 million contract to upgrade RAF's long-range missile](#)

The shared deal with MDBA will see the UK's Storm Shadow and France's SCALP missiles updated so they remain fit for purpose and ready for operational use.

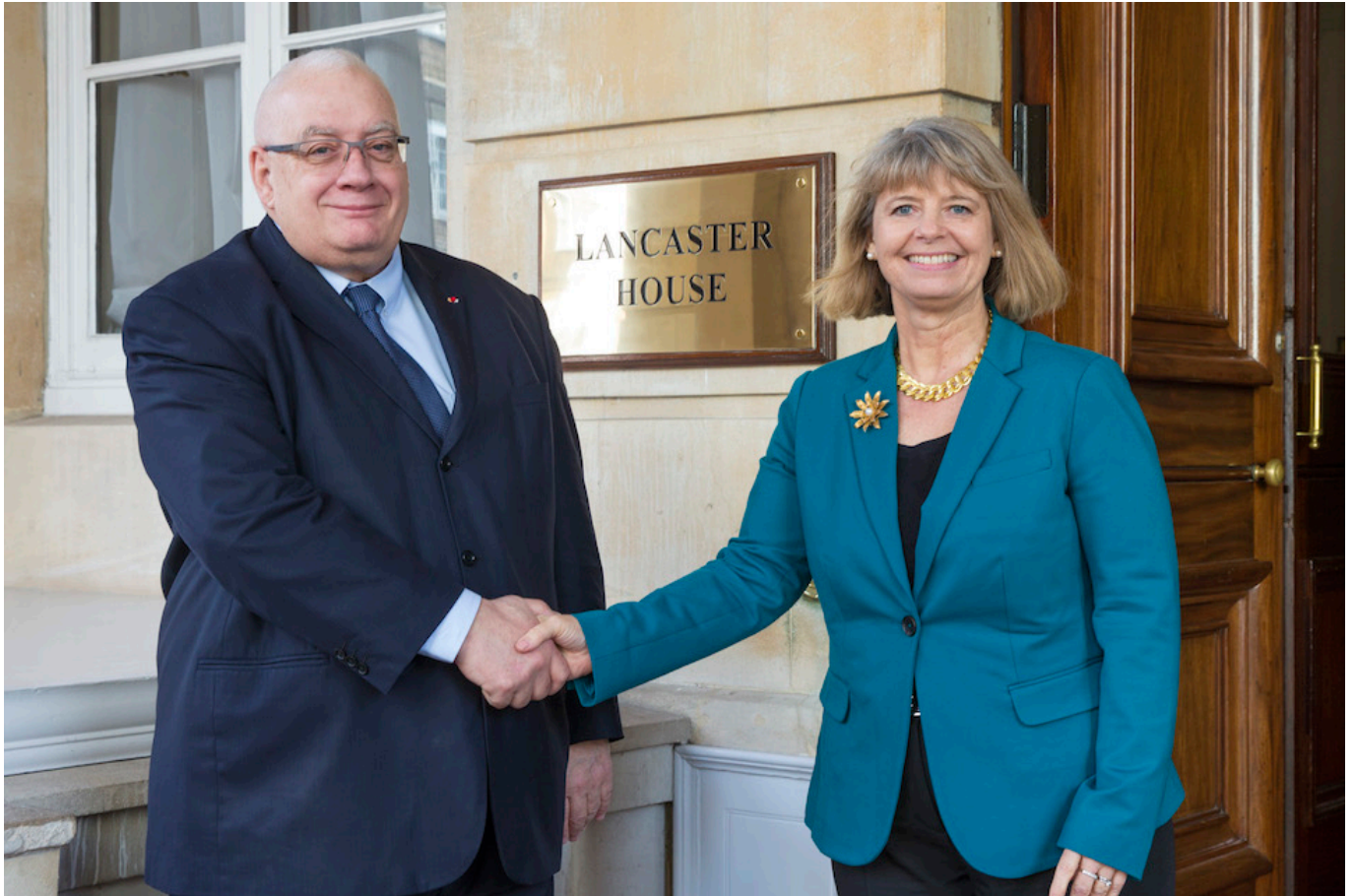
During an inward visit by Laurent Collet-Billon, the Minister confirmed the strong partnership with France in a series of meetings at Lancaster House. The collaboration is providing a £50 million saving for both sides.

The contract will keep the missile in service for the next decade and beyond and help to sustain around 60 UK jobs. Storm Shadow is a combat-proven, long-range, precision cruise missile, already in service with RAF Tornados, deployed recently against Daesh in Iraq.

Minister for Defence Procurement, Harriett Baldwin said:

Storm Shadow is a proven and vital missile for the RAF, and this £146 million upgrade will ensure it is always ready for whenever our Armed Forces might need it to defend our way of life.

This contract is an important part of the Government's £178 billion plan to ensure our armed forces have the right equipment at the right time.



Defence Minister Harriett Baldwin with her French counterpart Laurent Collet-Billon. Crown Copyright.

The midlife refurbishment programme has been developed in co-operation with the French Government who will be updating their own similar missile known as SCALP.

By taking advantage of the similarities, this collaboration not only reaffirms the strong defence relationship as outlined under the Lancaster House Agreement, but has also resulted in a £50 million saving for both the UK and France.

The regeneration will consist of a midlife refurbishment of current missile parts such as the turbo-jet engine, an upgrade of the navigational system, and a like for like replacement of items such as the cabling, seals and gaskets.

The work will sustain around 60 jobs at MBDA in Stevenage and Bolton, in a variety of roles including software and systems engineering. Over 40 jobs will also be sustained through the supply chain.

Chief Executive at the MOD's Defence Equipment and Support Organisation, Tony Douglas said:

The contract to regenerate Storm Shadow, a combat-proven, all-weather precision missile, provides a clear example of the MOD and UK industry working effectively together with our counter parts in

France; providing our UK Armed Forces with the best equipment possible while sustaining dozens of UK jobs.



Two Storm Shadow missiles on a Tornado GR4. Crown Copyright.

Storm Shadow is designed to target substantial buildings and structures, such as military facilities, control centres, bunkers, missile sites, airfields and bridges, which might otherwise require the use of several aircraft over the course of numerous missions.

France is the UK's most important European Ally, with both countries' defence budgets together account for almost half of all European defence spending. This deal is the most recent example of collaboration in a long history of cooperation on defence and security. The £146 million investment in Storm Shadow will sustain the missile until its planned out of service date in 2032.

Laurent Collet-Billon, Délégué Général pour l'Armement said:

This deep-strike missile mid-life update was jointly prepared. It represents a new step in the Franco-British cooperation roadmap and strengthens the Franco-British strategic partnership in the armament field.

[News story: Marine Management Organisation \(MMO\) issue authorisations to catch bass](#)

Updated: Date changed from 14 to 21 March 2017

In order to protect bass stocks and the sustainability of the wider marine environment from 22 February 2017 the MMO will be issuing letters to fishermen who, based on their track records, have authorisation to catch bass. The MMO will also send letters to those who do not have such authorisation.

The letters include details of a representation process through which fishermen can, on limited grounds, provide evidence to the MMO should they wish to challenge the authorisation decisions which have been made. The deadline for such representations is 21 March 2017.

The MMO action is a response to Article 9(2) of Council Regulation (EU) 2017/127 which fixed the fishing opportunities for certain fish stocks and groups of fish stocks, applicable in Union waters and, for Union fishing vessels, in certain non-Union waters in 2017.

[Read the bass fishing guidance.](#)

Phil Haslam (MMO Director of Operations) said:

“The bass authorisations help implement EC measures designed to manage effort in order to help protect and improve Bass stocks.

I would urge fishermen to read the letters they receive and familiarise themselves with the bass regulations and the representation process. Those that feel they meet the representation criteria and can provide the relevant evidence should do so at the earliest opportunity and certainly before the 21 March 2017 deadline”.

Full details of the [bass regulations and the representation process](#) have been published on the [MMO website](#).

Assistance is also available via [MMO coastal offices](#).

News story: Defence Secretary meets Apprentices working on nuclear submarines as new Training Facility announced

BAE Systems announced today that the new training facility will provide a tailored learning environment for an estimated 1,000 craft and technical apprentices currently in training.

Mr Fallon met apprentices working in a range of areas, and toured the Devonshire Dock Hall where Audacious, Anson and Agamemnon, the fourth, fifth and sixth of seven Astute class nuclear-powered submarines, are under construction.

Defence Secretary Sir Michael Fallon said:

This investment demonstrates the benefits that our growing defence budget brings for highly skilled jobs in the North West and across the country.

It will ensure we have people with the skills necessary to deliver one of the most complex programmes in the world that will help modernise our fleet of nuclear submarines.

Apprentices at BAE Systems already work on our cutting-edge Astute Submarines, the most powerful attack submarines ever operated by the Royal Navy, as well the Dreadnought Programme, the new fleet of four Dreadnought Ballistic Missile submarines that will carry our nuclear deterrent.

The new modern facility is due to open next year and will include a teaching block, classrooms, offices, craft workshops and welfare facilities. It is planned that the facility will include to-scale 'submarine mock-up sections' which will allow apprentices to gain hands-on experience in a controlled environment and help them develop skills working to the tolerances required to build submarines.

Following a £1.3 billion [investment](#) by Defence, construction has started on the Dreadnought submarines. Backed by a rising Defence budget and £178 billion equipment programme, both Astute and Dreadnought programmes secure thousands of highly skilled jobs in Barrow and right across the UK.

Tony Johns, Managing Director of BAE Systems Submarines, said:

The design and build of a nuclear-powered submarine is one of the world's most complex and technically demanding engineering

challenges. It's vital we have right people with the right skills to deliver these programmes and this investment underlines our commitment to the future. The new facility will provide a modern learning environment to supplement the training our apprentices already receive.

The MOD is committed to delivering more high quality apprenticeships and work experience for young people right across Defence, and encouraging our industry partners to do the same. As the largest provider of apprenticeships in the UK, the MOD successfully completes more than 10,000 apprenticeships a year and we are setting a target to deliver 50,000 military apprenticeships during this parliament.

Whilst in Barrow, the Secretary of State also visited Allan Webb Ltd, a specialist in Defence Technical Documentation and Supportability Engineering to review aspects of the support provided to the MOD. Allan Webb Ltd has a strong reputation in the Defence Sector for quality and innovation having over 50 years' experience in the industry.

Allan Webb Ltd works in conjunction with BMT Defence Services, to increase the MOD's capability with training and logistical support. BMT Defence Services has a strong reputation in the naval design market, having provided the winning designs for Royal Navy's MARS Fleet Tanker, the Queen Elizabeth Class (QEC) aircraft carrier, and the Astute submarine

The Defence Secretary, Sir Michael Fallon said:

Allan Webb Ltd and BMT Defence Services operate a strong and efficient partnership that provides the MOD with world-leading service helping us to keep Britain safe.

During his visit, the Defence Secretary discussed the latest innovations in how technical equipment handbooks are produced for the MOD and the benefits of this modernisation in order to meet the needs of engineers across the Armed Forces.

Our work with companies of all sizes shows Defence's determination to do its part to deliver a bold, long term Industrial Strategy that builds on our strengths and prepares the UK for the years ahead. We are working with SMEs and businesses of all kinds to innovate and build mutual security to ensure an economy that works for everyone.

Defence investment supports high-wage, high-skills jobs across the UK and backed by our rising Defence budget, £178bn Equipment Plan, and £800m Innovation Initiative, we are delivering the jobs, apprenticeships, infrastructure, and economy of the future.

- You can find out more about Continuous At Sea Deterrence [here](#).
- You can find out more about MOD Apprenticeships [here](#).