

# Digging for Roman riches on trans-Pennine route

Since the start of November, they have been making their way through over 1,250 trial trenches as part of extensive surveys which are being carried out to analyse the archaeology along this northern trans-Pennine stretch.

The excavation is part of National Highways' proposal for the biggest investment on the north's road network for a generation, with £1bn plans to improve the A66 between M6 junction 40 and A1 at Scotch Corner by dualling the remaining sections of the route and improving key junctions.

A team of over 40 archaeologists have started 'trial trenching'

The A66 follows an old Roman road, which lends added significance to gaining an understanding of the archaeology along the proposed route.

And the work has already begun to pay dividends, with the discovery of a potential Neolithic axe, Roman road remains and ditches, pottery, a flagstone area and post-medieval findings.

National Highways project director Lee Hillyard said:

A good, early understanding of the unique relationship between our project and the surrounding historical environment will help us avoid any unexpected surprises and unnecessary delays once construction begins.

Roads Minister Baroness Vere said:

Upgrading the A66 is a project at the heart of our plans to build back better and will transform travel across the northern Pennines.

It's great to see that Government investment is not only improving our roads and bringing economic benefits, but also helping us to understand more about our fascinating history.

Trial trenching is a method of archaeological evaluation used to characterise and determine the archaeological potential of a site. The results of the trial trenching are used to inform any future stage of work, mitigation and further areas of excavation.

The trenches are 30m in length and 2m wide. The machine excavation goes to a depth of 300mm to 600mm with hand excavation reaching 1.2m below existing ground level.

The evidence will be combined to produce a report, which will provide site-by-site information and ultimately inform the next stages of archaeological work. These later stages may involve bespoke, large-scale excavation ahead of the construction work, or archaeological monitoring during it.

Members of the public will also see teams carrying out environmental surveys along the route. The surveys will help National Highways to understand how its proposals could affect the environment on land in and around the project.

### **General enquiries**

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

### **Media enquiries**

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

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## **[UK government invests in Fijian Leaders](#)**

World news story

The Pacific Regional Strategic Leadership Programme, a week-long virtual UK-funded training course at the Pearl Resort in Pacific Harbour, concluded on 26 November 2021.



Fijian participants in the Pacific Regional Strategic Leadership Programme

The course aims to enhance strategic leadership across the public sector. Fijian participants came from over 10 parts of government, including Fiji Police Force, Republic of Fiji Military Forces and the Ministry of Defence

Security and Policing.

Trainers from the Defence Academy of the UK led the training, assisted by facilitators from the British Army Support Office, Fiji Ministry of Defence, Republic of Fiji Military Forces and the British High Commission.

Participants spent the week developing key leaderships skills, including:

- different styles and types of leadership
- the importance of self-awareness
- significance of cultural differences
- ethical issues
- decision making

Those completing the programme were awarded a qualification by Cranfield University.

Reflecting on the week, British Deputy High Commissioner to Fiji, Mr Paul Welsh, said:

Leadership doesn't come with a step by step manual. Much of it is based on experience and learning through trial and error. I hope that the programme has helped participants to consider what leadership style works best for them and that they will use their newly acquired knowledge in support of Fiji's interests.

Fiji's Permanent Secretary for Defence, National Security and Policing, Mr Manasa Lesuma, said the strategic leadership programme aimed to develop more capable leaders with a broadened perspective and a greater understanding of strategic thinking and decision-making, as well as personal insight around their leadership style.

This course followed up on strategic leadership training that the UK government delivered in Fiji in 2020.

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## **Measures against Omicron variant come into effect: 30 November 2021**

- New measures to respond to emergence of Omicron variant come into force at 4am
- Face coverings compulsory in shops and on public transport
- All international arrivals to take a Day 2 PCR test and self-isolate

until they receive a negative test

- All contacts of suspected Omicron cases must self-isolate, regardless of their age or vaccination status

Targeted measures to prevent the spread of the new COVID-19 Omicron variant take effect from 4am today [Tuesday 30 November].

They will be introduced as a precaution while more information is gathered and assessed on the variant's transmissibility and any possible effect on our vaccines.

Vaccines continue to remain our best line of defence, and all adults who have not yet received their first or second dose of the vaccine, or those who are eligible for their booster are encouraged to come forward to help protect themselves and others.

Yesterday the JCVI advised the booster programme was extended to all 18-39 year-olds and the gap between the second dose and booster was reduced to three months. All those aged 12 to 15 years have now been advised to receive a second dose of the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine, no sooner than 12 weeks after the first dose. Severely immunosuppressed individuals who have received three primary doses, should now also be offered a booster dose.

From 4am this morning:

- Face coverings are compulsory in shops and settings such as banks, post offices and hairdressers, as well as on public transport unless individuals are exempt from doing so. All hospitality settings are exempt.
- All international arrivals must take a PCR test by the end of the second day after arrival and self-isolate until they receive a negative result. The PCR tests are available online from private providers.
- All contacts of suspected Omicron cases must self-isolate, regardless of their age or vaccination status. They will be contacted by NHS Test and Trace.

Prime Minister Boris Johnson said:

The measures taking effect today are proportionate and responsible, and will buy us time in the face of this new variant. Based on everything we know, our vaccines and boosters remain our best line of defence, so it is more important than ever that people come forward when eligible to get boosted. Not only will today's steps help us slow down the variant's spread, but they will help us protect each other and the gains we have all worked so hard for.

The measures are temporary and precautionary, and will be reviewed in three weeks. The regulations will be kept under review to ensure they only remain necessary and proportionate.

The step for all international arrivals to take a PCR test by the end of the second day and self-isolate until they receive a negative result comes on top of restrictions focused on the areas of most risk. South Africa, Botswana, Lesotho, Eswatini, Zimbabwe, Namibia, Malawi, Mozambique, Zambia, and Angola have all been added to the UK's travel red list.

Surge PCR testing and enhanced contact tracing are underway where cases have been identified. The UK Health Security Agency is carrying out targeted testing at locations where the positive cases were likely to have been infectious. Confirmed cases and contacts are being followed up and requested to isolate and get tested as necessary.

The Omicron variant contains a large number of spike protein mutations as well as mutations in other parts of the viral genome, with early indications suggesting this variant may be more transmissible.

The measures will give us time to slow down the spread of the variant as work continues internationally to fully understand how these mutations may change the behaviour of the virus with regards to vaccines, treatments and transmissibility.

The vaccination programme and test, trace and isolate system continue to be the most effective way of reducing transmission, along with practicing good hygiene, keeping spaces well ventilated, and wearing masks.

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## [Tougher penalties for child cruelty through 'Tony's Law'](#)

- Government to deliver 'Tony's Law'
- Maximum punishments to increase for a range of child cruelty offences
- One of a series of new measures to be added to the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill to further protect the public

Under the changes, anyone who causes or allows the death of a child or vulnerable adult in their care will face up to life imprisonment – rather than the current 14-year maximum. The offences of causing or allowing serious physical harm to a child, and cruelty to a person under 16, will also incur tougher maximum penalties – increasing from 10 to 14 years respectively.

It follows the tireless campaigning of the family of Tony Hudgell to see longer sentences for these crimes. As a baby, Tony was left severely disabled after suffering abuse at the hands of his birth parents, who both received 10 years in prison. Ministers are determined to ensure punishments fit the severity of these horrific crimes and today confirmed amendments to deliver 'Tony's Law' would be tabled to the Police, Crime, Sentencing and

Courts Bill.

Deputy Prime Minister, Lord Chancellor and Secretary of State for Justice, Dominic Raab said:

The law must provide maximum protection to the most vulnerable and no-one is more vulnerable than a young child.

So, we are increasing the maximum penalty for child cruelty causing or allowing serious physical harm from 10 years to 14 years, and the maximum penalty for causing or allowing the death of a child from 14 years to life imprisonment.

I pay tribute to the courage of young Tony Hudgell and his adoptive parents Paula and Mark.

Paula Hudgell Tony's mum said:

We are delighted that Tony's Law is being backed by the government. It's been our hope since those who abused our son were jailed in 2018 that more could be done to protect other children, the most vulnerable members of our society.

I can't thank the public enough for the support they have shown through this nearly four year campaign, but especially thanks to Tom Tugendhat who has worked tirelessly with me, also my friend Julia Roberts a court reporter and my friends and family it was definitely a team effort.

This is for Tony and all the babies and children that suffered or lost their lives at the hands of their abusers.

Tony's Law will increase the maximum penalties for child cruelty offences including:

- for causing or allowing the death of a child or vulnerable adult from 14 years' imprisonment to life imprisonment
- for causing or allowing serious physical harm to a child or vulnerable adult from 10 to 14 years' imprisonment
- for cruelty to a person under 16 from 10 to 14 years' imprisonment

Meanwhile, following an announcement last week, Ministers have today confirmed that plans to extend mandatory life sentences to anyone who kills

an emergency worker whilst committing a crime would also be made via an amendment to the PCSC Bill. The move builds on recent government action to protect police, prison officers, firefighters and paramedics and ensure those who seek to harm them feel the full force of the law. This includes plans to double the maximum penalty for assaulting them to two years' imprisonment.

#### Notes to editors

- The Government will table an amendment the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts to introduce tougher sentences for a range of for child cruelty offences to ensure punishments reflect the severity of these crimes.
- An amendment to deliver [Harper's law](#) will also be tabled to the Bill. It will extend mandatory life sentences to anyone who kills an emergency worker whilst committing crime, unless there are truly exceptional circumstances.
- Further amendments to the Bill will be set out in due course.

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## [UK government provides financial safety net for Horizon Europe applicants](#)

Successful applicants for Horizon Europe grant awards will be guaranteed funding regardless of the outcome of the UK's efforts to associate to Horizon Europe, under a new scheme announced by the government today (29 November 2021).

While the government's priority remains association to Horizon Europe, as both the UK and the EU agreed under the Trade and Cooperation Agreement (TCA) last year, ongoing delays by the EU have led to uncertainty for researchers, businesses and innovators based in the UK.

To provide reassurance, the government has guaranteed funding for the first wave of eligible, successful applicants to Horizon Europe, but who have been unable to sign grant agreements with the EU.

The funding will be delivered through UK Research and Innovation, which will publish further details about eligibility, scope and how to apply in the coming weeks.

Science, Research and Innovation Minister George Freeman:

The Horizon programme has been a vital source of fellowships and collaborations for UK researchers over the years, which is why the UK and the EU agreed terms for the UK's participation in the

programme under the TCA. The persistent delays from the EU in formalising our association is creating uncertainty in the sector and risks preventing valuable international collaboration on shared global challenges, like climate change.

We are committed to supporting the UK's world-class research sector in international collaborations, and this safety net will give researchers and their partners the certainty they need to continue to pursue their project plans and maintain world-class science.

UKRI International Champion Professor Christopher Smith:

We welcome the government's decision to provide funding to those who have successfully applied to Horizon Europe and will be finalising the processes needed to distribute the funds in the coming weeks.

We are also working with the government to prepare for all possible outcomes to ensure the UK's thriving research and innovation sector has the support it needs to continue collaborating and delivering world-class R&D.

In the meantime we encourage researchers and innovators across the UK to continue to apply to open Horizon Europe calls.

In December 2020, the UK and EU signed a Joint Declaration on Participation in Union Programmes and Access to Programme Services, setting out the parties' shared commitment for the UK to associate to the agreed EU programmes (Horizon Europe, Euratom R&T and Copernicus) at the earliest opportunity.

The guarantee announced today is a short-term measure intended to cover the first wave of calls until the EU formalises the UK's association, as was agreed under the Trade and Cooperation Agreement. The government remains committed to securing this outcome so that research collaboration can continue, and we stand ready to formalise our association.

As announced at Spending Review 2021, in the event that the UK is unable to associate to Horizon Europe, the funding allocated will instead go to UK government R&D programmes, including those to support international partnerships.

The government looked at the practicalities of handling such a situation in 2020 and developed a detailed set of alternatives plans, which included continued support for international research, innovation collaboration and domestic research support. This work is being refreshed and we remain ready to implement these plans should they become necessary.