

Environment Agency submits final plans for Otter Valley project

If approved, the Lower Otter Restoration Project (LORP) will reconnect the River Otter to its historic floodplain and return the lower Otter Valley to a more natural condition. The scheme will create 55 hectares of mudflats, saltmarsh and other valuable estuarine habitats.

LORP is a partnership between the Environment Agency, local landowner Clinton Devon Estates and the East Devon Pebblebed Heaths Conservation Trust that currently manages the estuary.

The Environment Agency has submitted plans to East Devon District Council on behalf of LORP as the £15 million project enters its final phase. Success rests on the project gaining planning approval. A marine licence application has also been submitted to the Marine Management Organisation (MMO). If successful, work will start next year and be completed by spring 2023.

The Lower Otter project is largely funded by the European Interreg programme through an initiative called Promoting Adaptation to Changing Coasts (PACCo). It is partnered with a similar project in the Saône Valley in Normandy, France. Both schemes aim to demonstrate that early adaptation to climate change brings greater benefits than a delayed response or inaction. If successful, the adaptation model for these two projects will be rolled out to other locations in the UK and France.

The Lower Otter estuary lies within the Jurassic Coast, a World Heritage Site and is a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). The planning application is the culmination of 7 years of public consultation, careful planning and detailed discussions between a wide range of stakeholders.

Although much loved, the Lower Otter Valley has been heavily modified by human hand in the last 200 years with the construction of an embankment, a road, a rubbish tip, an aqueduct and an old railway line. These structures are difficult and expensive to maintain and restrict natural processes including the movement of water. This reduces habitat quality and diversity. Since the creation of an embankment in the early 19th century, the River Otter has been disconnected from much of its original floodplain.

The creation of new habitats and restoration of the site will be achieved by breaching the embankment that currently separates agricultural land and Budleigh Salterton Cricket Club from the river and estuary. This will allow a much greater extent of the original floodplain to flood at high tide and drain at low tide producing important mudflats and saltmarsh for wading birds. There will also be areas of reedbed and grazing marsh.

Once established, the new site will become a wildlife reserve of international importance within 5 years. By working in partnership and sharing common aims for the Lower Otter Valley, the Environment Agency,

Clinton Devon Estates and East Devon Pebblebed Heaths Conservation Trust hope the aspirations of all 3 organisations can be fulfilled.

Dr Sam Bridgewater, head of Wildlife and Conservation at Clinton Devon Estates, said:

The planning application is a major step for the project which arose initially from the Estate looking for ways to manage the area in a sustainable way for people and wildlife in the face of climate change and rising sea levels.

We have worked very closely with a wide range of stakeholders who have helped us reach this milestone and we are grateful for their input over the years. We had hoped to hold a public exhibition to share these plans with local people but the Covid-19 pandemic has forced us to rule this out.

Instead we will be outlining our proposals on the project website and hope to be able to answer any questions people may have online. People will be able to comment on the applications in the usual way via East Devon District Council and the Marine Management Organisation websites.

Mark Rice, Environment Manager for the Environment Agency, said:

Climate change is affecting the way we manage our coasts and estuaries and we must adapt to that change. The Lower Otter Restoration Project will provide an example of how we can do that. We hope that our vision for more sustainable management of the Otter Estuary will be supported and that by working in partnership we can deliver long term benefits for people and wildlife.

This is the [Lower Otter Restoration Project website](#).

Note to editors

- The idea for the Lower Otter Restoration Project initially rose from a desire by Clinton Devon Estates to manage the Lower Otter Valley as sustainably as possible in the face of a rapidly changing climate. It believes climate change threatens coastal communities and that early adaptation is more cost effective and will bring greater benefits to local people and wildlife than a delayed response or inaction.
- The Environment Agency's involvement in the project stems from a need to provide compensatory habitat for losses identified in the Exe Estuary Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Strategy. Under EU Habitats Regulations, the Environment Agency has a statutory responsibility to

replace intertidal habitat lost through coastal defence improvements carried out in response to rising sea levels.

- The project includes the relocation of Budleigh Salterton Cricket Club that is prone to flooding. Planning permission has been granted for the club to be moved to a new site. An old refuse tip which currently lies in the floodplain and is an environmental liability will be protected from erosion with an additional pedestrian access route created. The breach in the embankment will be bridged to allow continued access along the South West Coast Path. The project also includes the raising of South Farm Road to safeguard future access for businesses and local residents.

Government publishes updated GB-EU Border Operating Model

- Updated guidance provides further detail for businesses and passengers on how the GB-EU border will operate after the end of the transition period.
- Hauliers will need a Kent Access Permit to proceed to the border.
- Confirms EU, EEA and Swiss national ID cards will not be acceptable for travel to the UK, including for drivers, from October 2021.

The updated guidance follows extensive engagement with the border industry and the £705m package of investment for border infrastructure, jobs and technology, announced earlier this year.

This publication gives traders further information on the changes and opportunities they need to prepare for as a result of us leaving the EU Single Market and Customs Union. These steps will be needed regardless of whether we reach a trade agreement with the EU.

The updated GB-EU Border Operating Model:

- Maps out the intended locations of inland border infrastructure. The sites will provide the necessary additional capacity to carry out checks on freight.
- Announces that passports will be required for entry into the UK from October 2021 as the Government phases out the use of EU, EEA and Swiss national identity cards as a valid travel document for entry to the UK. Identity cards are among the least secure documents seen at the border and ending their use will strengthen our security as the UK takes back control of its borders at the end of the transition period.
- Confirms, after extensive engagement with industry, that a Kent Access

Permit will be mandatory for HGVs using the short strait channel crossings in Kent. The easy-to-use 'Check an HGV' service will allow hauliers to check if they have the correct customs documentation and obtain a Kent Access Permit.

In a further move to support the customs intermediaries sector, the Government is also announcing that it will exercise an exemption within EU state aid rules to increase the amount of support that businesses can access from the Customs Grant Scheme. To date, the Government has provided more than £80m in funding to support the customs intermediary sector with training, new IT and recruitment.

Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, Michael Gove, said:

Our updated Border Operating Model provides further detail on how the GB-EU border will work after the transition period ends on 31 December and the actions that traders, hauliers and passengers must take.

With fewer than 3 months to go, businesses need to prepare now for new procedures whether or not we reach a trade agreement with the EU, so that they can seize the significant opportunities that lie ahead.

Home Secretary, Priti Patel, said:

When the transition period ends, we will have control of our borders and will deliver our new firmer and fairer points based immigration system.

Our firm and fair approach will treat people from every part of the world equally.

Phasing out the use of identity cards at the border, which are some of the least secure documents, is an important step in making our border safer.

RHA chief executive, Richard Burnett, said:

It's vital that hauliers and traders do everything they can now to prepare for our new trading relationship with the EU.

Firms moving goods across borders will have to undertake customs processes whether there's a deal or no deal.

The message is clear – if the paperwork's not right, the goods won't cross.

Logistics UK Policy Director, Elizabeth de Jong, said:

This clarity on trading arrangements from 1 January 2021 is welcomed by logistics businesses and it is now vital that all businesses trading with the EU use this guidance to make sure their staff and systems are fully prepared.

Logistics UK and its members stand ready to help keep Britain trading.

The updated Border Operating Model can be found [here](#).

[500 test sites now open as new lab partnerships boost capacity](#)

- 1,606,569 tests were processed in the UK in pillars 1 and 2 during the week 24 to 30 September
- 500 test centres are now open across the UK, with the median distance travelled for in-person tests having fallen for the second consecutive week – now just 3.7 miles
- 51,475 people tested positive for COVID-19 for the first time in England, a 56% increase from the week previously
- The service successfully reached 74% of those people who tested positive and 82.2% of contacts where communications details were provided

The announcement of new partnership agreements with 4 London university labs will increase testing capacity by tens of thousands over the winter.

Health Services Laboratories, who are based at University College London, Imperial College London, Queen Mary University of London and King's College London, will join the nationwide effort to increase capacity and create the largest network of diagnostic testing facilities in British history.

In addition, the target of 500 test sites in the UK has now been reached. With more sites opening every day, the median distance travelled for in-person tests is now just 3.7 miles, down from 4.3 miles the previous week.

In the latest week, pillar 1 and 2 testing capacity has increased by 7% to 1,921,358 tests. The median time taken to receive a result from taking a test in person is now 27 to 31 hours, compared with 25 to 29 hours in the previous week.

NHS Test and Trace continued to reach the majority of positive cases and their contacts. 51,475 people tested positive for COVID-19 for the first time in England this week, an increase of 56% on the previous week. The service

successfully reached 74% of those people who tested positive and 82.2% of contacts where communications details were provided. This is in comparison with the previous week, when the service successfully reached 71.3% of people who tested positive and 83.7% of contacts where communications details were provided.

NHS Test and Trace has now reached 689,365 people, including those testing positive and their contacts.

Local contact tracers contact those people who have tested positive and NHS Test and Trace have been unable to reach within 24 hours. Across the country, 87 local authority contact-tracing teams are now live, with more due to come online over the coming weeks.

The COVID-19 app, launched last month, has been downloaded more than 16 million times, with 6 million downloading it on the first day.

Interim Executive Chair of the National Institute for Health Protection Baroness Dido Harding said:

As the number of cases rises, so demand for tests continues to grow. We are working hard to increase testing capacity to meet that demand and improve turnaround times for tests. The announcement today of new partnership agreements with 4 London university labs will see tens of thousands of extra tests being processed over the coming months and into the new year.

We have now opened 500 test sites across the UK, an extraordinary achievement. This increased accessibility to testing means the median distance a person is travelling to a test site is now just 3.7 miles.

Alongside this, NHS Test and Trace has now reached nearly 700,000 people and advised them to self-isolate. I would like to thank each and every person playing their part in tackling this virus for the efforts they are making.

The [guidance for testing](#) remains in place, with only those experiencing symptoms eligible for tests. Symptoms of coronavirus are:

- a new continuous cough
- high temperature
- a loss or change in taste or smell

A technical issue was identified overnight on Friday 2 October in the automated process that transfers pillar 2 COVID-19 positive lab results into reporting dashboards and contact tracing. After rapid investigation, 15,841 cases were identified between 25 September and 2 October that were not included in the reported daily COVID-19 cases as published on the [coronavirus \(COVID-19\) in the UK dashboard](#). More information can be found in the [PHE statement on delayed reporting of COVID-19 cases](#).

In this week's statistical bulletin, positive cases are presented by date of swab, rather than date reported. The majority of these cases fall into the current reporting period and are reported for the first time this week. A small number apply to tests taken in previous reporting periods (tests taken on or before 23 September) and figures have been revised to account for this.

All affected cases were immediately transferred to contact tracing on 3 October and a thorough public health risk assessment was undertaken to ensure outstanding cases were prioritised for contact tracing effectively. As a result, there were approximately 11,000 positive test results that would normally have entered the contact-tracing system during the course of this reporting period (24 to 30 September) that did not do so until the following week. Contact tracing in relation to those results will be covered in next week's publication. In addition, currently we report the time taken for cases and contacts to be reached from the time the case was referred to the contact-tracing system. This means that delays in transferring cases to the contact-tracing system will not be captured in these statistics.

The [weekly statistics from the 18th week of NHS Test and Trace](#) show in the most recent week of operations (24 to 30 September):

- pillar 1 and 2 testing capacity has increased by 7% to 1,921,358 tests since the previous week and is a 34% increase since mid-August
- 1,606,569 tests were processed in the UK in pillars 1 and 2 during week 24 to 30 September – that's 17,809 more tests than the previous week
- 74.0% of people who tested positive and were transferred to the contact-tracing system were reached and asked to provide information about their contacts
- 82.2% of contacts where communication details were given have been reached and told to self-isolate

Statistics from the 18th week of operation of NHS Test and Trace show that since the service launched:

- 689,365 people have been reached by the service. This includes both those testing positive and their contacts
- 85.7% of all contacts where communication details were given have been reached and told to self-isolate

[File your Companies House accounts online to avoid delays](#)

News story

We have reduced numbers in our offices following government coronavirus

(COVID-19) guidance – so it will take much longer to process paper documents sent by post.



It's a busy time at Companies House with many companies due to file annual accounts before their deadline. These periods are known as peak filing.

[Check your company's filing deadline](#). Measures were introduced in June to give companies [more time to file accounts](#) and other documents.

Our online services are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

We'll send you an email to confirm we've received your accounts – and another email when we've registered them.

It can take as little as 15 minutes from start to finish and you'll know your accounts have been delivered on time. Our online filing service also has inbuilt checks to help you avoid mistakes.

Accounts filed on paper need to be manually checked, and we currently have reduced numbers in [our offices](#) to maintain social distancing. Many of our employees are also affected by local restrictions.

It's taking much longer than usual to process paper documents, forms and letters sent to us by post.

It's the [directors' responsibility](#) to file a company's accounts. You could get a criminal record, a fine and disqualification if you do not deliver your accounts on time.

You must file accounts even if your company is dormant.

More information on:

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HMCTS warning on email scams

News story

Phishing emails aware being sent out, claiming to be from HM Courts & Tribunals Service.



We are aware of a number of email phishing scams that are in circulation stating that a penalty charge notice has been issued and if not paid, the person will be taken to court.

The email has been issued in various formats.

HM Courts & Tribunals Service does not issue Penalty Charge Notices.

Fraudsters will copy the HMCTS logo and attempt to make the notice look genuine.

Any genuine email from HMCTS will be sent from an @justice.gov.uk email address. If in doubt, hover over the email address to see the true identity. If you receive an email on a phone, you can check the address by clicking on 'display name'.

There are a number of things that can be checked to test the authenticity of a document or email.

Scammers will not know your name so it will show as 'Dear Customer'.

Odd 'spellings' or 'cApitAlS' are used in the subject box to get through spam filters.

Spelling errors and different font sizes within the email body or the document can indicate that the email is not genuine.

If you receive an email:

- do not reply
- do not follow the link to pay

- contact Action Fraud on 0300 123 2040 or [email the fraud unit](#)

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