

New fish pass in Norwich

Press release

Fish and eels now have access to an extra 5,000 metres of the River Wensum thanks to a new fish pass.



The new fish pass in Norwich. Picture credit: Fishtek

The fish pass, which has been installed at Hellesdon Mill in Norwich, will help all fish species migrate upstream of the mill.

Manufactured structures like mills, weirs and sluices can prevent fish from moving freely around the river so if it is not possible to remove an obstruction, a fish pass is a favourable option.

Jez Wood, a fisheries specialist at the Environment Agency in East Anglia, said:

The Environment Agency owns sluices at Hellesdon Mill which needed upgrading for health and safety.

We always look for opportunities to make environmental benefits as part of any on-site work and therefore investigated the opportunity to tackle the largest environmental issue at the site: fish passage.

The fish pass means all fish species, including sea trout and the critically endangered eel, are now able to travel upstream, which is great for the river and for the fish population.

The fish pass in operation.

The European eel is a critically endangered species. There are many reasons for this but there is evidence to show that barriers preventing migration has

an impact on the species.

Numbers have fallen 95% over the last 30 years but by adding fish passes the Environment Agency helps this protected species to continue its fascinating life cycle.

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[The High Commission responds to the Mauritius Oil Spill](#)

World news story

The British High Commission provides £10,000 to the Mauritian Wildlife Foundation in response to the oil spill.



High Commissioner Keith Allan meets MWF Director Debby de Chazal

The British High Commission has been greatly saddened and concerned by the recent events around the grounding of the MV Wakashio bulk carrier and the subsequent oil spill in the lagoon. Our thoughts are very much with the people of Mauritius at this difficult time, especially those directly affected by the oil spill. We pay tribute to the thousands of volunteers who have donated countless hours to contain the spill. This effort has shown to the world that Mauritius can do great things in the face of adversity.

The United Kingdom has been in constant contact with the authorities since the oil spill. A leading British oil spill expert has been on the ground with the UN team advising the local authorities since the early days of this crisis. A team of scientists are currently in Mauritius to work with the authorities.

We are also concerned by the severe impact this accident will have on the

rich ecosystem and biodiversity, including on the islet of Ile aux Aigrettes. The Mauritian Wildlife Foundation (MWF) has been doing some fantastic conservation work on this natural reserve for more than 30 years. We have been proud to support the work of the MWF over many years.

To address the numerous challenges that lie ahead in order to save the unique environment of Ile aux Aigrettes, the British High Commission is pleased to announce that it will provide £10,000 to the MWF. These funds will help to protect 4,000 endemic plants that have been transferred from Ile aux Aigrettes to another location until conditions allow their return.

On announcing this donation, British High Commissioner Keith Allan said:

“The UK stands with Mauritius in the wake of this devastating oil spill and environmental disaster. We are working closely with the local authorities but also want to assist the NGOs who are playing such an important role in protecting this unique environment. I have visited Ile aux Aigrettes many times and my daughter has volunteered on the island.

“I know what a very special place this is. I am delighted that we are able to offer this support to the MWF. We will continue to work with the Mauritian authorities to provide further assistance.”

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[Multi-million boost from UK government for Welsh railways to level up infrastructure and improve journeys for passengers](#)

- funding released to kickstart design work on upgrading Cardiff Central station
- other improvements include developing plans to upgrade digital signalling, plans to speed up journeys and increasing step-free access to stations
- follows the multi-million pound devolution of powers over the Core Valley lines to Welsh government and completion of fully electric line between Cardiff and London

Major progress has been made on ambitious upgrades to Wales' railways following £343 million of investment to help deliver better journeys for passengers, UK government Transport Secretary Grant Shapps has set out today (21 August 2020).

The raft of schemes to be funded include kickstarting the design of the Cardiff Central station upgrade, advancing plans for cutting-edge digital signalling on the Cambrian line and speeding up journeys between Cardiff and Swansea.

Work on a new, modern design for Cardiff Central station will be funded through the release of £5.8 million. It will focus on improving access and ensuring platforms are suited for longer trains, boosting space and capacity for passengers.

The Transport Secretary has also announced £3 million to advance plans for upgraded signalling on the 241-kilometre Cambrian line from Shrewsbury Sutton Bridge Junction to Aberystwyth and Pwllheli. The planned state-of-the-art digital signalling system will modernise the network, improving the reliability of services, and support the introduction of a new fleet being rolled out across the network in December 2022.

In addition, almost £2 million has been made available for the next phase of development work on proposals to speed up journeys between Cardiff and Swansea, Chester and Llandudno Junction, and the Severn Tunnel and Cardiff, through better-aligned tracks and exploring putting additional services on the lines.

The announcement of these new projects follows major reforms to the network over the past months such as completion of a fully electric route between Cardiff and London and the devolution of powers over the Core Valley line to the Welsh government.

Transport Secretary Grant Shapps said:

The host of improvements we are delivering across Wales, from huge infrastructure upgrades to creating new and modern stations, are vital to deliver better, quicker and more convenient journeys for passengers within, into and out of Wales.

We want to transform travel for passengers and, as we build back better from COVID-19, we will ensure our investment helps to level up all parts of the UK.

By upgrading, improving, and – crucially – modernising our railways, we will make good on our promise to deliver the reliable journeys passengers deserve.

UK government Minister in Wales David TC Davies said:

Communities across Wales will benefit from this multi-million package of rail investment, aimed at delivering rail services that are fit for the future.

From proposals to speed up services, improving access for those who

need it most and boosting connectivity, these improvements form part of our broader plans to level up the nations and regions of the UK as we rebuild our economy following the coronavirus.

It was confirmed in June that the Great Western Main Line is now fully electric, revolutionising train travel between Cardiff and London through quicker, more environmentally-friendly journeys. The final remaining section through the Severn Tunnel was completed following a £76 million investment from the UK government.

James Price, Transport for Wales CEO added:

At Transport for Wales we are continuing with our investment programme and in the last financial year we spent £796 million transforming our rail services. This included £516 million acquiring the Core Valleys Lines, £187 million on the Wales and Borders rail service and an additional £28 million on projects and service operation.

At the start of the year we opened our Metro Infrastructure Hub in Treforest and construction has begun on our £100 million Metro Control Centre in Taff's Well as we continue to deliver the South Wales Metro that will bring social, economic, recreational and cultural benefits to the people of Wales.

We welcome any further funding as we move forward with our transformational plans.

In March, the UK government's commitment to empower decision making in rail at a regional level was underlined with the transfer of powers over the Core Valley lines from Network Rail to Transport for Wales. This devolution is backed by £196 million in funding for management, electrification, upgrades and other improvements on the network.

Additionally, almost £4 million has been invested towards building a new station at Bow Street between Borth and Aberystwyth to help improve connectivity and ease congestion on roads in the area. The station is expected to open early next year.

A number of stations in Wales have also benefitted from millions of UK government funding to improve accessibility for all passengers such as through new step-free routes. Grangetown, Pontypool & New Inn, Llantwit Major and Neath were awarded a total of £1.5 million in February 2020 to install new lifts under the [Access for All programme](#), which funds smaller scale accessibility improvements. All projects are expected to complete by 2024 at the latest.

Accessibility improvements at Cadoxton station, which include a new footbridge and lifts, are set to be unveiled on August 28 2020.

More than 100,000 young people supported as violence reduction units get new funding boost

The Home Office has today published an independent evaluation of the work of Violence Reduction Units (VRUs).

It found that in their first year they invested in 175 programmes designed to help young people at risk of being drawn into violent crime.

They include prevention work in schools, communities, prisons, hospitals, Pupil Referral Units and police custody suites.

The evaluation comes as the government has today announced that VRUs will be distributing a further £2.9 million to hundreds of frontline charities working on violence prevention projects.

Home Secretary Priti Patel said:

I am determined to ensure we use every possible tool to stop violent crime happening in the first place.

A key part of that mission is protecting children and young people and preventing them from falling into the clutches of criminals.

It is encouraging to see the progress these units are making, but we will continue our relentless drive to deliver the safer streets the law-abiding majority deserve.

Smaller charities work tirelessly in our communities and this funding will ensure they can continue providing life-changing support.

In the summer of 2019, the Home Office announced that 18 Police and Crime Commissioners in the areas worst affected by violent crime would share £35 million to establish VRUs, with a further £35 million provided for 2020/21.

VRUs bring together different organisations – including the police, local government, health, community leaders and other key partners in local areas – to tackle violent crime by understanding its root causes and driving a co-ordinated response.

Their work forms part of the government's drive to tackle crime and make communities safer, alongside the recruitment of 20,000 additional police officers over the next three years.

The evaluation published today found that of the 100,000 people who were supported as a result of initiatives funded by VRUs in 2019/20, more than 51,000 were identified as potentially high-risk, or suspected to be involved in criminal and violent activity. The remaining young people may live or attend school in an area with high levels of deprivation or crime and were targeted by interventions to increase awareness of the risks.

The funding announced today is being directed to smaller charities providing critical frontline services for children and young people, to ensure they can meet increased demand as a result of the coronavirus pandemic, as well as continuing their day-to-day activities.

This will allow them to continue to support vulnerable young people at risk of violence, adapting support services if necessary, for example by using remote working and technology.

More than 300 charities will share in the financial assistance, which is part of the £750 million package of support for charities announced by the Chancellor in April.

The smaller charities carry out a variety of work at community level to support children and young people and families, including outreach work and drop-in sessions, sports, cultural activity and wellbeing sessions.

On Thursday the Home Secretary visited one of the organisations receiving funding, Achievement Through Football (ATF) based in Essex, who work to support young people as well as providing mentoring for their parents or carers.

The charity runs sports sessions including football, boxing and basketball, and a garden project as a way to engage with young people and help them build life skills. The Home Secretary met with parents, young ambassadors and mentors as well as representatives from the Essex Violence & Vulnerability Unit.

ATF chairman and volunteer Dr David Sollis said:

It was a real honour to meet the Home Secretary today and we thank her for taking time to meet the children, the volunteers and the staff who have made this summer camp amazing.

The children loved gardening with her and showing off their sporting skills, everyone felt listened to and we hope the Home Secretary enjoyed her time with us.

The additional funding is broken down as follows:

| VRU | Funding amount |
|---------------|-----------------------|
| London | £587,680 |
| West Midlands | £285,168 |

| VRU | Funding amount |
|--------------------|-----------------------|
| Greater Manchester | £285,168 |
| Merseyside | £285,168 |
| West Yorkshire | £285,168 |
| South Yorkshire | £135,612 |
| Northumbria | £135,612 |
| Thames Valley | £98,101 |
| Lancashire | £98,101 |
| Essex | £98,101 |
| Avon and Somerset | £98,101 |
| Kent | £98,101 |
| Nottinghamshire | £74,720 |
| Leicestershire | £74,720 |
| Bedfordshire | £74,720 |
| Sussex | £74,720 |
| Hampshire | £74,720 |
| South Wales | £74,720 |

[Transport Secretary launches new Acceleration Unit to speed up transport infrastructure projects and build back better from COVID-19](#)

- ‘Acceleration Unit’ launched to speed up delivery of transport projects as the government announces new wave of funding to level up parts of UK
- Campaign for Better Transport Chief Executive and consumer champion Darren Shirley to lead the new team of non-government specialists to drive forward progress on key projects
- launch coincides with around £360 million of investment to build back better from COVID-19

Vital rail and road upgrades that will create jobs, increase connectivity, and boost the economy will be delivered more quickly, thanks to the launch of a new Acceleration Unit announced by the Transport Secretary Grant Shapps today (21 August 2020).

The new team of specialists will join the Department for Transport (DfT) in order to tackle delays to infrastructure projects and drive forward progress for passengers.

The unit is set to be in place next month and will be directly accountable to

the Transport Secretary. It will be led by Darren Shirley, currently Chief Executive of the Campaign for Better Transport and formerly of Which? Magazine.

Alongside the Acceleration Unit, the Transport Secretary today [announced a raft of ambitious upgrades to Wales' railways](#), with £343 million of investment to deliver better, faster, more reliable journeys for passengers.

This includes kickstarting design work on plans to upgrade Cardiff Central station and funding to develop plans for upgraded cutting-edge digital signalling on the 241-kilometre Cambrian line from Shrewsbury Sutton Bridge Junction to Aberystwyth and Pwllheli, and proposals to speed up journeys between Cardiff and Swansea, Chester and Llandudno Junction, and the Severn Tunnel and Cardiff.

Transport Secretary Grant Shapps said:

As Britain begins to get moving once again after 4 months of lockdown, no-one should underestimate the scale of the challenge ahead.

We want to accelerate Britain's recovery by investing in vital infrastructure that will help get businesses back on their feet, create jobs to replace those that have been lost and level up our country.

The creation of our new Acceleration Unit and investment in our roads and railways will ensure we build back better, greener and faster in the future.

Chancellor of the Exchequer, Rishi Sunak, said:

This £360 million investment in our roads and railways will help drive our economic recovery from coronavirus – creating jobs and levelling-up by ensuring businesses across all corners of the UK have the opportunities they need to grow.

Darren Shirley, Head of the Acceleration Unit, said:

I am delighted to take on this important new role, bringing a fresh perspective and external advice to accelerate the delivery of key infrastructure projects and programmes.

The breadth and depth of expertise in my new team will stand us in a good stead as we look to deliver the schemes that will help the country to rebuild faster through decarbonising the transport system and levelling up Britain as we emerge from the Coronavirus crisis.

The Acceleration Unit will also engage experts with significant experience in delivering infrastructure projects including Highways England's Director of Complex Infrastructure projects, Chris Taylor, who oversaw the construction of the £1.5 billion A14 scheme which was not only delivered on budget but 8 months ahead of schedule, and Mark Reynolds Chief Executive of Mace, which oversaw the construction of the Nightingale hospital in East London in 9 days.

The creation of the team follows the establishment of a new Northern Transport Acceleration Council, dedicated to swiftly levelling up infrastructure across the North's towns and cities, forming a direct link between Westminster and local leaders.

Today's news comes after the Transport Secretary visited the A14 in Cambridgeshire on Wednesday (19 August 2020), a £1.5 billion upgrade between Cambridge and Huntingdon.

Completed on budget and opened 8 months ahead of the project's planned completion date, the last of the 24/7 roadworks were removed in May thanks to efficient and innovative construction techniques such as trialling autonomous dumper trucks, 3D modelling and using prefabrication yards to build structures off-site and wheeling them into place when ready.

The Transport Secretary also unveiled a host of further road and rail investments today, including:

- £1.1 million investment for Network Rail to develop short-term plans to relieve overcrowding at London Liverpool Street station
- funding to complete the £6.4 million scheme to build a new second footbridge serving all 4 platforms at St Albans City station, easing congestion and addressing safety issues at an increasingly busy station with work due to start early 2021 and be complete by January 2022
- £4 million to develop the design phase for gauge enhancement and track improvements for freight trains on Great Western, Midland Main Lines and at Darlington to allow longer intermodal freight trains to operate from Teesport to Yorkshire, with the Darlington scheme delivered by October 2020
- £9.74 million for signalling and infrastructure enhancements delivered on the Wessex route at Twickenham, Bracknell and Virginia Water as part of the Feltham and Wokingham Signalling Renewal Programme, which will help improve the reliability and flexibility of services starting from Easter 2021
- Highways England will also today launch their Strategic Business Plan and Delivery Plan, both for 2020-2025, which will set out how the company will take forward the ambitious plans set out in the government's [RIS2 strategy](#) to improve England's road network. The Delivery Plan will confirm the delivery schedule for road upgrades and schemes the government will be funding over the next 5 years.