

Five local authorities announced to trailblaze England's nature recovery pilots

Cornwall, Buckinghamshire, Greater Manchester, Northumberland and Cumbria local authorities have been selected by the government today [Friday 14 August] to help kick-start nature recovery on a countrywide scale.

The selected authorities will receive a share of £1 million of funding to set up 'Local Nature Recovery Strategies' (LNRS) pilot studies to help map the most valuable sites and habitats for wildlife in their area and identify where nature can be restored. This could see the creation of wildflower habitat for pollinators, green spaces for people, or new woodlands and wetlands which are important for both healthy communities and in the fight against climate change.

The pilots will enable local authorities to set out their local priorities for restoring and linking up habitats so species can thrive, and agree the best places to help nature recover, plant trees, restore peatland, mitigate flood and fire risk, and create green spaces for local people to enjoy.

The forthcoming Environment Bill will go even further – requiring all areas in England to establish LNRSs. This will help bring a broad range of groups together – from farmers to businesses to local communities – to deliver priorities for nature recovery at a local and national level. The pilots will also help kick-start the creation of over a million acres of habitats for wildlife.

Environment Minister Rebecca Pow said:

Coronavirus is shining a light on the importance of our natural world, and the positive impact nature can have on our health and well-being.

These first pilots will be a key part of our green recovery and help kick-start the creation of over a million acres of joined up habitats that people can enjoy across the country.

Natural England Chair Tony Juniper said:

If we wish to have rich and abundant wildlife, more carbon captured in trees, soil and hedges, better protection from extreme weather and enough places for people to gain the wellbeing benefits of good quality green spaces, then we must invest in Nature's recovery, and at scale.

National ambitions for Nature's recovery will need to support local action and today is a significant milestone in doing just this. We look forward to working with our partners in these five areas to create bigger, better and more connected natural places to halt and then reverse the decline in our environment.

Defra is investing around £1million in the five pilots which will be run in collaboration with Natural England. Each LNRS pilot will:

- develop a set of maps which show most valuable existing sites and habitats for wildlife
- use these maps to identify opportunities for recovering nature – for wildlife, for people, and as a contribution to tackling climate change and improving the environment
- bring a broad range of groups of people together to identify and agree priorities for restoring nature.

The LNRSs will underpin the new Nature Recovery Network (NRN) – a flagship element of [the Government's 25 Year Environment Plan](#). The NRN will benefit people and wildlife by increasing, improving and joining-up wildlife-rich places across England. It will create or restore 500,000 hectares of wildlife habitat outside protected sites, more effectively linking existing protected sites and landscapes, as well as urban green infrastructure (such as trees, hedgerows, parks, fields, forests) and urban blue infrastructure (such as rainwater tanks, bioswales, rivers, canals, ponds, wetlands, and floodplains).

This landscape-scale approach to restoring nature was recently demonstrated by Natural England's recent designation of the [Purbeck Heaths National Nature Reserve \(NNR\)](#) in Dorset.

[Chemical disposal at Sellafield – Latest update](#)

Chemical disposal at Sellafield – Friday 14 August 2020 – 20:00pm

We can confirm that the Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) team have now safely and successfully disposed of the organic peroxide chemical package at the Sellafield site.

We would like to thank the EOD and our internal emergency duty teams for their work and our workforce and stakeholders for their understanding and support.

Chemical disposal at Sellafield – Friday 14 August 2020 – 15:45pm

As previously communicated, we are currently working with the Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) team on the Sellafield site to dispose of a small quantity of organic peroxide chemical stored in our Magnox Reprocessing Plant.

The organic peroxide, a chemical used routinely in industry, has been in safe storage, as part of our programme to identify and dispose of historic chemicals on site. During a routine investigation we noted that the chemical had changed state.

The plan, as advised by EOD, is to burn the chemicals in a prepared incineration pit on a part of the site away from any buildings or infrastructure.

The incineration process may be visible and audible on and off the site. We expect this process to be completed by late afternoon today.

We will issue further communications once the disposal process is complete

Other operations on the site are progressing as normal.

As ever, our priority remains the protection of our workforce, community and the environment.

Media queries should be directed to 07812624305

Chemical disposal at Sellafield – Friday 14 August 2020 – 10:00am

During a routine inspection of chemical substances stored on the Sellafield site, a small amount of chemicals (organic peroxide) were identified as requiring specialist disposal.

This chemical is used for a variety of purposes across many industries.

In line with established procedures, support has been requested from Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD).

The EOD team is now in attendance at the Sellafield site and will dispose of the chemical safely.

Chemical monitoring is undertaken across the site to understand changing chemical states and to inform when and how industrial chemicals should be stored or disposed of.

This chemical substance was stored in the site's Magnox Reprocessing Plant. The storage area is safely segregated from the nuclear operations of the plant and the risk has been identified as a conventional safety issue rather

than a nuclear safety risk.

As a precautionary measure, a controlled evacuation of the Magnox Reprocessing Plant was carried out yesterday in order to investigate the chemical and devise the appropriate course of action. The plant was non-operational at the time.

The plant will remain non-operational while the chemical is disposed of.

As ever, our priority remains the protection of our workforce, community and the environment.

Media queries should be directed to 07812624305.

[UK aid to protect high street supply chains](#)

The UK Government will launch a new programme today (14 August) to help high street businesses, including Marks & Spencer, Sainsbury's, Tesco, Morrisons, Co-op and Waitrose, to strengthen their global supply chains by supporting workers in developing countries during the coronavirus pandemic.

The new funding announced by International Development Secretary Anne-Marie Trevelyan includes investment from UK businesses to keep vulnerable workers in their supply chains in safe and secure employment.

The UK imports 20% of its food and drink from developing countries. The coronavirus pandemic has put many of these supply chains at risk as factories and farms worldwide have been forced to close temporarily. The new Vulnerable Supply Chains Facility will help to ensure the steady supply of products like vegetables, coffee and clothes to the UK high street.

The UK aid fund will partner up UK businesses including Morrisons, Tesco, Marks & Spencer and Primark with expert organisations such as CARE UK, the Fairtrade Foundation and the Ethical Trading Initiative to improve working conditions and support greater access to healthcare and health information for workers in some of the world's poorest countries. This will help make workplaces safer, meaning employees can return to work and supply chains can keep moving and become more resilient.

The facility, made up of £4.85 million UK aid and £2 million from businesses, will focus primarily on supply chains and workers in Myanmar, Bangladesh, Kenya, Uganda, Ethiopia, Tanzania, Rwanda and Ghana. These countries provide huge proportions of the world's food, flowers and clothes. Ghana alone produces a quarter of the world's cocoa and Bangladesh is the world's second largest garment exporter.

Marks & Spencer and CARE will work together to improve health services for 80,000 factory workers in Bangladesh who keep M&S stores stocked with clothes. The programme will strengthen community health care systems and deliver targeted health messaging in factories to help employees keep themselves and their families safe. This is expected to have knock-on benefits for a further 300,000 people in Bangladesh's poorest communities.

Disruptions to flights during the pandemic have affected UK imports of flowers from Kenya. The new scheme will help suppliers to ship flowers to the UK instead, protecting the livelihoods of farmers in Kenya and helping keep British florists stocked.

International Development Secretary Anne-Marie Trevelyan said:

We want to ensure people in Britain can continue to buy affordable, high quality goods from around the world.

This new fund will strengthen vital supply chains for UK consumers, while supporting some of the most vulnerable workers in developing countries. It will make a real difference to people in the UK and abroad.

The new facility will fund programmes to improve coronavirus preparedness in workplaces, help farmers diversify the crops they produce to meet demand, and provide support so farms and factories can put processes in place to keep production going and make sure help is getting to the most vulnerable workers.

As part of the scheme, the Ethical Trading Initiative will improve workplace health and safety for vegetable, coffee and flower suppliers to UK brands such as Sainsbury's, Co-op, Waitrose and Tesco. It is estimated that 10,000 workers in African countries, mainly women, will benefit from safer working environments.

One company affected by the pandemic is Kakuzi, a Kenyan company which sells avocados to several UK supermarkets. With the help of the Ethical Trading Initiative, it has already implemented handwashing stations at packing plant entrances as well as introducing regular temperature checks for its staff – helping to keep workers healthy and maintain this supply chain. The Vulnerable Supply Chains Facility will support other businesses to implement similar measures.

Overall, more than 200,000 workers in agriculture and nearly 120,000 garment workers are expected to benefit from the facility. The improvements to these people's working lives will indirectly benefit a further 650,000 people, including workers' families and children, taking the total number of people in developing countries helped by the scheme to nearly 1 million (970,000).

Peter McAllister, Executive Director at Ethical Trading Initiative:

ETI welcomes the active role DFID is playing in supporting vulnerable workers in global supply chains. The East African agricultural workers who supply so much of our food and flowers have been hit hard by COVID-19, and DFID's support for this intervention will help protect thousands of jobs, and protect workers from infection as the regional economy begins to recover.

Judith Batchelar, Director of Sainsbury's Brand, said:

We are proud to support DFID's Vulnerable Supply Chains Facility along with the Ethical Trading Initiative, dedicated to improving occupational safety and health standards for many of our suppliers in East Africa. As a responsible retailer, this work further demonstrates our commitment to trading ethically and making a positive difference to the communities we source from.

Fiona Sadler, Head of Ethical Trading for M&S said:

At M&S we have a robust approach to ethical fashion – we know we're only as strong as the communities where we operate and we're committed to helping improve the lives of workers in our supply chain through collaborative initiatives.

We're proud to be partnering again with DFID and CARE to strengthen healthcare systems and services in our factories in Bangladesh and the wider community.

Laura Hawkesford, Head of Private Sector for CARE UK said:

Businesses have an important role to play to ensure people within their operations and value chains are safe, treated with dignity and can prosper. Coronavirus poses a critical threat to Bangladesh garment workers, with hundreds of thousands of people in dense areas at risk.

We are excited to continue to work with Marks and Spencer in partnership with DFID to ensure workers and communities have access to relevant information, facilities and services to reduce the spread of coronavirus.

Other partners working with the fund include: Arco, Dimensions, Primark, Impactt, Monsoon and VF Corporation, GoodWeave International, Awaj Foundation, FNET, MM Flowers, Women Working Worldwide, Coventry University, Flamingo, Minor, Weir & Willis, Union Roasted and Mondelez International.

ENDS

[UK to observe two-minute silence to commemorate the 75th anniversary of VJ Day](#)

News story

A two minute silence will be held on Saturday 15 August at 11am (UK time), to remember and thank all those from the many nations who fought for the freedoms that we enjoy today.



Union Flags will fly at full-mast on UK Government buildings and the UK will observe a two-minute silence on Saturday 15 August to mark the 75th anniversary of the day Japan surrendered that brought the Second World War to an end after six years of fighting.

Visit ve-vjday75.gov.uk to find out more about our plans to commemorate VJ Day and how you can get involved safely from home.

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[UK government secures new COVID-19 vaccines and backs global clinical](#)

trial

- Government secures early access to 90 million doses of 2 promising vaccine candidates
- UK to support and provide infrastructure to Novavax in running a Phase 3 clinical trial in the UK, and plans to manufacture their vaccine in the UK with FUJIFILM Diosynth Biotechnologies
- UK will also co-fund a global clinical trial with the Janssen Pharmaceutical Companies of Johnson and Johnson to establish how effective their vaccine could be in providing long-term immunity against COVID-19
- UK has now secured access to 6 different vaccine candidates as part of the government's strategy to build a portfolio of promising new vaccines should any be found to be safe and effective

New in-principle agreements have secured 60 million doses of the Novavax vaccine and 30 million doses of the Janssen vaccine.

Ministers have also agreed in principle to co-fund a ground-breaking global clinical study of the Janssen vaccine. The next phase of clinical trials is expected to begin later this year to look at whether providing 2 doses of their vaccine candidate to participants provides long-term protection against coronavirus.

The UK welcomes Janssen's vaccine being made available on a not-for-profit basis during the emergency pandemic to both the UK and the rest of the world to ensure the global supply and equitable access of a vaccine.

Supported by the government, Novavax will conduct a Phase 3 clinical trial of the vaccine working with National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) to access their clinical network and expertise.

Novavax also plans to manufacture some of the vaccine using FUJIFILM Diosynth Biotechnologies's facilities in Billingham, Stockton-on-Tees. This will ensure that, once available, the vaccine can be supplied to the British public as soon as possible.

If the vaccines are safe and successful in clinical trials, both could be delivered to the UK in mid-2021. They would be given first to priority groups such as frontline health and social care workers, ethnic minorities, adults with serious diseases, and the elderly.

Business Secretary Alok Sharma said:

The government's strategy to build a portfolio of promising vaccine candidates will ensure we have the best chance possible of finding one that works.

Today's agreements will not only benefit people in the UK but will

ensure fair and equitable access of a vaccine around the world, potentially protecting hundreds of millions of lives.

While we are doing everything we can to ensure the British people get access to a successful vaccine as soon as possible, nobody is safe until we are all safe so global cooperation is absolutely critical if we are to defeat this virus once and for all.

With today's announcement, the UK has now secured access to 6 different candidates, across 4 different vaccine types, reflecting the government's strategy to ensure the UK has a supply of vaccines should any of these prove safe and effective. These include the University of Oxford's vaccine being developed with AstraZeneca, as well as agreements with the BioNTech/Pfizer alliance, Valneva and GSK/Sanofi Pasteur.

In addition, a deal with AstraZeneca will provide the UK with access to treatments containing COVID-19 neutralising antibodies to protect those who cannot receive vaccines, such as cancer and immunocompromised patients.

The UK is actively working with the vaccine alliance GAVI, The Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations (CEPI), the World Health Organisation and a group of other countries to help buy vaccines as well as to ensure equitable distribution of vaccines to low-income countries.

Kate Bingham, Chair of the Government's Vaccines Taskforce, said:

The sooner we start the two-dose study of the Janssen vaccine the sooner we will know whether the vaccine can provide durable, long term protection against COVID-19 infection. The vaccine is based on technology used in its recently approved preventative Ebola vaccine designed to induce long-term immunity in individuals over one years' old.

We are delighted to partner with Janssen that has demonstrated their long-term commitment to global health and vaccines by providing their COVID-19 vaccine across the world at no profit.

It is also encouraging that Novavax's recent clinical data shows their vaccine triggers an immune response greater than that in patients who have recovered from the disease.

Paul Stoffels, M.D. Vice Chairman of the Executive Committee and Chief Scientific Officer, Johnson & Johnson said:

We are delighted to work with the UK government on the global Phase 3 clinical programme for our COVID-19 vaccine candidate, and to ensure it is made available to citizens around the world, if proven to be effective with a good safety profile. Ending the current COVID-19 pandemic will take a global effort, and this agreement is

an important example of how we can begin to address this significant challenge through collaborative research.

Stanley C. Erck, President and Chief Executive Officer of Novavax said

We are honoured to partner with the UK government to supply our vaccine, including antigen manufactured within the UK. Our Phase 3 clinical trial in the UK will be a critical component to assess the efficacy of our COVID-19 vaccine, which in a Phase 1 trial has already demonstrated that it is generally well-tolerated and elicits robust antibody responses greater than those seen in patients who have recovered from COVID-19 disease. We are also delighted to expand our collaboration with FUJIFILM Diosynth Biotechnologies in the UK.

Both projects are the result of further investment from the government, ensuring that the UK can have sufficient COVID-19 vaccine should one be found to be safe and effective.

The government also last month launched the NHS COVID-19 vaccine research registry to enable people across the UK to sign up for information about participating in COVID-19 vaccine clinical trials. Aiming to get 500,000 people signed up by the end of October, this would provide scientists and regulators the assurances they need that vaccines secured are safe and effective for use.

Notes to editors

Janssen's Ad26.COV2.S vaccine comprises a proprietary recombinant, replication defective adenovirus 26 (Ad26) vector containing a transgene of the spike protein of SARS-2CoV designed to induce an immune response including neutralising antibodies against the spike protein to eliminate the virus. Preclinical data published in Nature shows protection against infection including potent and long-lasting antibody and cellular immune responses. The global clinical study being delivered by the government and Janssen will run in parallel with phase 3 clinical trials taking place in the US, which is investigating the effectiveness of a single dose of the vaccine.

Janssen Pharmaceutica NV are one of the Janssen Pharmaceutical Companies of Johnson and Johnson.

Novavax's vaccine comprises a recombinant nanoparticle technology containing an engineered COVID-19 spike protein and the saponin-based adjuvant Matrix-M designed to enhance the immune response and stimulate high levels of neutralising antibodies.

When coronavirus invades the body, the immune system fights back in multiple ways including by producing antibodies to neutralise the virus. These antibodies bind to the spike protein on the surface of the coronavirus and

prevent them from entering the cells. For immuno-suppressed people who cannot mount an immune response, injections of neutralising antibodies could be used to provide several months of protection.

The 4 different vaccine classes that the government has secured to date for the UK are:

- adenoviral vaccines (Oxford/AstraZeneca, Janssen)
- mRNA vaccines (BioNTech/Pfizer, Imperial)
- inactivated whole virus vaccines (Valneva)
- protein adjuvant vaccines (GSK/Sanofi, Novavax)

In addition the UK has secured rights to AstraZeneca's antibody treatment to neutralise the virus which can be used both as a short term prophylactic for those people who cannot receive vaccines (e.g. cancer and immunosuppressed patients) and front line workers exposed to the virus, as well as a treatment for infected patients in hospitals.

Earlier this month, the UK government and Valneva made a multi-million-pound joint investment in a vaccine manufacturing facility in Livingston, West Lothian, which will be at the heart of efforts to produce a new COVID-19 vaccine. This is in addition to the new Vaccines Manufacturing and Innovation Centre (VMIC) which is currently under construction in Oxfordshire, and the new vaccine manufacturing plant in Braintree, Essex recently acquired by the Cell and Gene Therapy Catapult.

Volunteering for COVID-19 vaccine clinical trials

A new NHS service has been launched to enable people across the UK to sign up for information on COVID-19 vaccine trials.

The NHS COVID-19 vaccine research registry, developed in partnership with NHS Digital, will help large numbers of people to be recruited into trials rapidly over the coming months – potentially meaning an effective vaccine for coronavirus can be found as soon as possible.

The service was commissioned as part of the UK government's [Vaccine Taskforce](#) in conjunction with the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) and the Northern Ireland, Scottish and Welsh governments

Anyone living in the UK can [sign up online](#) to take part in the trials through the NHS, giving permission for researchers to contact you if they think you're a good fit. Once you sign up, you can withdraw at any time and request that your details be removed from the COVID-19 vaccine research registry. The process takes about 5 minutes to complete.