

Coal Authority caps 200m deep coal mine shaft to keep residents safe in Wigan

The Coal Authority has completed work to construct a reinforced concrete cap and landscape the land where 2 terrace houses were demolished after they were damaged by an old coal mine shaft.

The project began with a report to our 24/7 hazard line about cracks in a Wigan property near the 200 metre deep, 2.4 metre diameter Wallace Colliery shaft, which once gave access to 5 coal seams that were worked from the 1830s.

The properties when the Coal Authority was first called.

After evacuating residents and securing the area, our investigations revealed that material used in the 1920s to fill the shaft – which lay beneath a passage between two homes in the middle of the terrace on Wallace Lane in Whelley – had slumped, causing both houses to move.

To eliminate any risk we purchased the properties and, because of limited access and to minimise disruption, demolished them by hand.

The damaged properties being demolished by hand.

The 6 metre by 6 metre cap was cast centrally over 16 steel piles, drilled 8 metres into rock, with a built-in inspection chamber to allow the shaft to be monitored in the future.

To support the two exposed gable ends of the neighbouring homes, our engineering team designed underpinnings, which were dug out and filled in 3 sections to create one continuous foundation without destabilising the properties, before the gable ends were rebuilt to modern thermal standards.

The finished work.

Coal Authority project manager Keith Ollivant – who liaised with contractors, the council and neighbours – oversaw the work with support from our safety, engineering, legal and property teams. He said:

These houses date from the 1930s and the builder knew the shaft was there, which is why the terrace was designed as a dog-leg with the alleyway spanning it.

They probably thought the foundations of the properties would support each other which, to be fair, they did for 80 years.

However, over time the fill within the shaft slumped, at which point the houses above weren't supported, so they tilted, causing damage.

In this video, Keith explains what happened after he was called out to 18 Wallace Lane:

[Coal Authority called in after mine shaft slumps under terrace houses in Wigan](#)

To report a coal mine hazard, call 01623 646 333, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

[Coronavirus: what to report and how](#)

During the current uncertainty surrounding the spread of coronavirus, charities are urged to check the [most up to date advice from Public Health England](#).

We've received many enquiries into our call centre about the reporting process on RSI. Unfortunately, our initial response was not as helpful as we would have liked. Therefore, we would like to clarify that charities should continue to report serious incidents using the current guidelines and their own judgement and we will advise if and when this situation changes.

[Reappointment of members to the Prison Service Pay Review Body](#)

Andrew Dickerson and Paul West have been reappointed as members to the Prison Service Pay Review Body (PSPRB) for 3 years from 1 August 2019 to 31 July 2022.

Andrew is an academic Labour Market Economist. He has been Professor of Economics at the University of Sheffield since 2006, and was the Head of Department from 2011 to 2015. He is also an honorary fellow at the Institute

for Employment Studies, and was previously a visiting fellow for UK Commission for Employment and Skills.

Paul is currently the Managing Director of Policing First Limited. He has 32 years of policing experience, including 13 years as a chief officer and 8 years as the Chief Constable of West Mercia Police. In 2011 he was joint Director of the Indian Police Service Mid-Career Training Programme Phase IV, based at the National Police Academy in Hyderabad, India. He has been the Bishop of Worcester's Criminal Justice Affairs advisor since 2012. He was previously a member and Vice-Chair of the Board of Governors of the University of Worcester where he also chaired the Board's Personnel Committee and was a member of its Remuneration Committee.

PSPRB provides the government with independent advice on the remuneration of operational prison staff in the England and Wales, and Northern Ireland Prison Services.

Public appointments to PSPRB are made by the Prime Minister on the recommendation of the Justice Secretary in consultation with Northern Ireland.

Reappointments to PSPRB are regulated by the Commissioner for Public Appointments. These re-appointments have been made in line with the Cabinet Office's Governance Code on Public Appointments, which governs the appointments process.

Andrew Dickerson and Paul West have not declared any political activity.

[Robert Jenrick plans for the future to get Britain building](#)

- Developers encouraged to build upwards and above stations
- New map of brownfield sites to make the most of unused land
- Proposals being considered to turn disused buildings into homes more quickly

Housing Secretary Robert Jenrick MP has today (12 March 2020) [set out proposals](#) to bring Britain's planning system into the 21st century as part of plans to get the country building.

Councils will be encouraged to take a more innovative approach to home building – by ensuring redevelopment of high streets is housing-led, building upwards and above and around stations.

Next month the government will launch a register of brownfield sites which will map out unused land as part of plans to encourage councils to make the

most of this land first – backed by £400 million to bring this mostly unused land back to use.

Developers will be able to demolish vacant commercial, industrial and residential buildings and replace them with well-designed homes without getting delayed in a lengthy planning process, under new plans being consulted on by the government, meaning that more homes will be able to be delivered more quickly.

The government will also review how places assess how many homes are needed in their area and incentivise those that deliver on those numbers.

All local authorities will also be required to have up-to-date Local Plans in place by December 2023, or see government intervention, so enough homes are built for their communities.

The changes come ahead of plans for an ambitious planning white paper – set to radically reform the planning system by speeding up the decision-making process so homes can be built quicker where they are needed the most.

Good design and place-making will be at the heart of the new system, championing tree-lined streets, a “fast track for beauty” and a commitment to lower carbon emissions in all new homes – for a green revolution in housebuilding.

Housing Secretary Rt Hon Robert Jenrick MP said:

I want everyone, no matter where they live, to have access to affordable, safe, quality housing and live in communities with a real sense of place – as part of our mission to level up, unite and unleash the potential of this country.

We must think boldly and creatively about the planning system to make it fit for the future, and this is just the first step, so we can deliver the homes communities need and help more young people onto the ladder.

This follows a package of measures announced in yesterday’s Budget to help more people onto the housing ladder by building more affordable homes and speeding up the planning process to deliver the 300,000 homes a year the country needs.

There will be more help for those that want to build their own home and for parish councils and neighbourhood forums wanting to build a small number of homes that will allow their community to grow.

A further £1 billion will be made available to help unlock almost 70,000 new homes and create a new £10 billion Single Housing Infrastructure Fund to give confidence to communities, local authorities and developers that the infrastructure they want will be delivered before the building starts.

This follows the announcement of £12 billion of investment to build more affordable homes – the biggest cash investment in affordable housing for a decade. With the ability to also bring in around £38 billion of further private and public investment.

This new Affordable Homes Programme will deliver more affordable housing, helping more people to own their own home through the government's home ownership programmes such as Right to Shared Ownership.

It will also help to build more social rent homes – supporting those most at risk of homelessness.

To secure a fairer deal for those who are renting the government will abolish “no fault” evictions through the Renters Reform Bill and bring forward the social housing white paper to ensure residents in social homes are treated with dignity and respect.

In order to help ensure the homes that people are living in are safe, £1 billion of grant funding to tackle unsafe cladding systems on high-rise residential buildings over 18 million in both the private and social sectors has also been announced.

The grant funding is in addition to the £600 million already available, as the government introduces a new Building Safety Bill to bring about the biggest changes to building safety in a generation.

An extra £145 million, on top of the £236 million allocated at the end of February, will be used to offer ‘move on’ accommodation for up to 6,000 rough sleepers and those at immediate risk of rough sleeping.

In addition, a further £262 million will be used to expand drug and alcohol treatment services for vulnerable people sleeping rough – ensuring every area in the country receives additional funding for these vital services.

[Action plan announced to boost smart motorway safety](#)

- eighteen point package of measures to improve safety and public confidence set out by Transport Secretary
- plans will see ‘dynamic hard shoulder’ motorways abolished to end confusion
- ‘stopped vehicle detection’ to be rolled out at pace and places to stop in an emergency spaced closer together

An action plan to ensure smart motorways are as safe as possible has been set out today (12 March 2020) by Transport Secretary Grant Shapps. Work will

focus on getting help to broken down drivers much quicker and making the schemes less confusing.

This follows [analysis commissioned by the Transport Secretary](#) which found that overall, evidence shows that in most ways smart motorways are as safe as, or safer than, conventional ones. Data shows that the risks that are lower on smart motorways compared with conventional motorways include tailgating, rapid changes of vehicle speeds, vehicles drifting off the carriageway and vehicles being driven too fast.

However, some risks are higher than on conventional motorways, for example the risk of a collision between a moving and stationary vehicle.

In order to address these risks the Transport Secretary has unveiled a [package of 18 measures](#), which includes abolishing confusing 'dynamic hard shoulder' motorways and substantially speeding up the deployment of 'stopped vehicle detection' – a radar-based system which spots stationary vehicles – so that it is installed across the entire smart motorway network within 36 months.

This will enable broken down drivers to typically be detected within 20 seconds, with lanes closed more quickly.

Grant Shapps, Secretary of State for Transport, said:

I've been greatly concerned by a number of deaths on smart motorways, and moved by the accounts of families who've lost loved ones in these tragic incidents.

I commissioned an urgent stocktake of smart motorways to provide a clearer picture of their safety and make recommendations on next steps. I envisaged it to be swift, but during the course of our investigations a complex picture emerged – which warranted further work.

That work has now concluded and overall, evidence shows that in most ways smart motorways are as safe as or safer than conventional ones.

But I am clear that there is more we can do to raise the bar on smart motorway safety. The extended package of measures I have set out will help rebuild public confidence in our motorway network and ensure that safety is firmly at the heart of the programme.

The changes will also ensure that the distance between places to stop in an emergency is reduced to three-quarters of a mile where feasible, so that on future schemes motorists should typically reach one every 45 seconds at 60mph. The maximum spacing will be one mile.

The action plan also sets out the government's commitment to installing 10 additional emergency areas on the existing M25 smart motorway and considering

a national programme to install more places to stop where they are more than a mile apart. Highways England will also investigate what more can be done on sections of the M6 and M1 where there have been clusters of incidents.

There will also be more communication with drivers to ensure motorists feel as safe as possible on smart motorways. An additional £5 million is being committed on national, targeted communications campaigns to further increase drivers' awareness and understanding of smart motorways and how to use them confidently.

The campaign will launch later this year and include advice on what to do if drivers break down on a smart motorway.