

[‘Minded to’ letter on public library provision in Lambeth](#)

[unable to retrieve full-text content]Letter from Minister for Digital and Culture, Caroline Dinenage, stating her 'minded to' decision on public library provision in Lambeth

[Construction work ready to begin at HS2’s ‘Interchange’ station site near Birmingham Airport](#)

The site, covering an area of 150 hectares, is located within a triangle of land formed by the M42, A45 and A452. Current work includes construction of modular bridges over the M42 and A446, and remodelling of the road network in the area to facilitate access to the new station, as well as easing access to and from Birmingham Business Park.

Around 200 people, including graduates and apprentices, are working on the site, from HS2’s Early Works contractor LM, a joint venture between Laing O’Rourke and Murphy. This is set to increase to 250 people over the coming months as the construction of new bridges and access roads ramps up.

Major regeneration plans around the site, being led by the Urban Growth Company, will support 70,000 new and existing jobs, 5,000 new homes and 650,000 square metres of commercial space, generating an additional £6.2 billion GVA per year and bringing 1.3 million people to within a 45-minute commute of the station.

An Automated People Mover will link to the NEC, Birmingham International Station and Birmingham Airport, carrying up to 2,100 passengers per hour in each direction, with a link every 3 minutes along a 2.3 kilometre route.

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Matthew Botelle, HS2 Ltd’s Stations Director, said:

It’s really exciting to see how much progress has been made on our Interchange site since early works started last summer. For the

team working on one of the project's biggest construction sites, it's great to see it developing by the day, with bridges and roads already being built, paving the way for construction of the railway.

As a transformational project, HS2 will play a pivotal role in creating regeneration opportunities around the station, with plans for new jobs, homes and commercial space resulting in a huge boost to the regional economy.

Simon Russell, LM Project Director, said:

Much of our early works programme has now been completed on the site by the LM team, including habitat creation, archaeological investigations, site clearance, and utilities diversions.

We are now pressing ahead with the project's first permanent works near the A452, A45 and M42, including a bridge over the M42. Our modular bridge construction strategy showcases innovative British infrastructure engineering at its best – major components manufactured offsite and assembled onsite, where they're needed – ensuring quality, efficiency, and hugely reducing local impacts.

The focus at Interchange is on sustainability, during both construction and operation. The site is using solar panels to generate power for the site offices, and at least 90% of construction waste, demolition waste and excavated material is being reused.

The new station will be net zero carbon in operation, adopting the latest environmentally friendly design and sustainable technologies including rainwater harvesting and sustainable power generation with more than 2,000 square metres of solar panels. It has been designed to focus on open space and landscaping, with new tree planting and a landscaped pond to encourage biodiversity.

By freeing up space on existing lines, for new local train services, passengers and freight, HS2 will help ease congestion and over-crowding, and offer an environmentally friendly form of transport for long distance passengers. There will be up to 5 trains per hour passing through this brand new interchange in both directions, with an estimated total of 175,000 seats per day, making this one of the best connected transport interchanges in the country and a new gateway to the UK.

Vanessa Adams worked as an Apprentice with HS2 for 2 years and is now a Project Coordinator working on the Interchange station. She said:

Being an Apprentice working with the Interchange team at HS2 has been an exciting and eye-opening experience. I've enjoyed the

flexibility around moving into several teams across the 2 years, meeting new people and learning about the different areas within the industry. I've enjoyed seeing this part of project develop over time, and it's great to see the so much work now happening on site.

[Aviation update: 5 March 2020](#)

In the early hours of this morning, Flybe ceased trading.

We appreciate the impact this will have on Flybe passengers and employees. Our immediate priority is to ensure passengers are kept informed of alternative travel options and employees who have lost their jobs are assisted in accessing support and advice. We know this will be a worrying time for Flybe staff and our [Jobcentre Plus Rapid Response Service](#) stands ready to help anyone whose job may be at risk.

Affected passengers have been advised not to turn up to the airport. For those passengers who did arrive at UK airports today (5 March 2020), HMG in-person support has been available to provide them with information. The majority of Flybe's destinations are served by different transport options, and we have asked train and coach operators to accept Flybe tickets and other airlines to offer reduced rescue fares to ensure passengers can make their journeys as smoothly as possible. Following talks with Britain's train operators, all Flybe staff and customers will be offered a free, alternative way home this week. To redeem the journey, present your employee ID or flight confirmation details. Government staff will continue to further assist at airports. A number of airlines have stepped forward to provide rescue fares for passengers.

For the small number of passengers who are abroad, there is sufficient capacity on other commercial airlines to return to the UK. Again, the CAA is encouraging these airlines to offer rescue fares. The CAA website will also provide information on how people may be able to claim back money they have spent on tickets from travel insurance providers, travel agents or their credit card providers.

We are urgently working with industry to identify opportunities to re-establish key routes, and have spoken with airlines and airports today to emphasise this. We are pleased to see that airlines have already committed to operating a number of these routes in the near future. I am conscious of the impact on all regions of the UK, particularly Northern Ireland given the importance of air-based connectivity. The [aviation minister](#) has spoken to counterparts in the devolved administrations to ensure they are kept informed of the latest developments and are aware of the response plans put in place by my department and the Civil Aviation Authority.

Levelling up connectivity across our regions and nations is a top priority for this government, which is why we are undertaking a review of regional connectivity to ensure the UK has the domestic transport connections local communities rely on – including regional airports. The Treasury is also reviewing [air passenger duty \(APD\)](#) to ensure regional connectivity is supported while meeting the UK's climate change commitments to meet net zero by 2050.

These measures featured in conversations with Flybe back in January and, in turn, they agreed to continue operating.

Since then, we explored multiple options with Flybe's shareholders to find a solution, but the directors decided it was not viable to keep Flybe operating. Unfortunately, in a competitive market companies do fail, but it is not the role of government to prop them up.

Globally, aviation is facing challenges due to the impact of coronavirus. The government is well prepared for this. As the wider economic picture becomes clearer, the Chancellor has said that he stands ready to announce further support where needed. I have today written to [Airport Coordination Limited](#), the independent UK slot coordinator, asking them to explicitly take in to account the implications of flying empty planes on the UK's environmental commitments in reaching decisions on slot alleviation in relation to coronavirus.

[UK Government funding creates Newport-based centre of excellence to tackle climate change](#)

- New cutting-edge network of industrial centres to help UK lead the charge to net zero by 2050
- Four centres of excellence based in Newport, Nottingham, Strathclyde and Sunderland will help electrify planes, ships and cars
- Comes as UK Government holds new Cabinet Committee meeting focusing on Climate Change

The UK Secretary of State for Business and COP 26 President Alok Sharma has announced a £36.7 million investment to design, test and manufacture electric machines in some of the UK's most polluting industries.

The Business Secretary unveiled a total of £36.7 million in UK Government investment. £30 million will be used to create a network of industrial centres specialising in the research and development of electric transport.

The CSA Catapult Innovation Centre in Newport will use a share of the £30

million to become one of four 'Driving the Electric Revolution' Centres for Excellence. The centres will bring together climate change pioneers to research and develop green electric machines including planes, ships and cars.

Each centre will propel UK manufacturing to the forefront of global efforts to tackle climate change and ensure the UK can reach net zero emissions by 2050.

Secretary of State for Business and COP 26 President Alok Sharma said:

The electric revolution is an opportunity for our transport sectors to reduce the dependence on fossil fuels.

The UK is leading the way in developing cleaner technologies to help us reach our target of zero emissions by 2050 and these new centres will play an important part in that.

Secretary of State for Wales Simon Hart said:

The Centre for Excellence created in Newport will generate productivity across the south Wales region, boosting the economy whilst driving forward Welsh innovation and research.

The UK Government is committed to meeting its 2050 net zero emissions pledge. I saw first-hand how the CSA Catapult Innovation Centre will help us reach our ambitious goal and put the country at the forefront of green innovation during my visit to Newport today.

The £30 million industrialisation centres will provide a home for virtual product development, digital manufacturing and advanced assembly techniques, that could drive world-leading improvements in the testing and manufacturing of electric machines.

This includes power electronics, electric machines and drives – all of which are crucial in electric vehicles and ultimately to their widespread rollout on our streets.

More than 30 partner research and technology organisations will be a part of the industrialisation centres. The network will be headed up by lead partner Newcastle University, along with 21 other universities from around the UK, plus 13 Research and Technology Organisations – and will be essential in attracting both foreign direct investment and new, innovative entrants into this space.

Driving the Electric Revolution challenge

The Business Secretary also announced the 14 winning projects for the UK

Government's Driving the Electric Revolution challenge. One of the successful projects, TRW of Pontypool, will work with Romax Technology to help boost supply chain efficiencies in industries affected by electrification, from aerospace to automotive, to energy and rail.

A total of £6.7 million will be shared by the 14 projects, which comprise 38 major businesses from around the UK, including GKN, Jaguar Land Rover and Rolls-Royce.

The announcement comes as the Prime Minister held the first meeting of a new Cabinet committee focused on tackling climate change; discussing how the UK Government can go further and faster towards net zero.

ENDS

[528 trees planted along a Suffolk River](#)

The aim of the partnership project with Suffolk Wildlife Trust is to improve river habitat diversity and the water quality.

The work is needed to meet water quality requirements and to help the river adapt to the changing climate.

This winter officers planted 528 trees over a five-kilometre stretch along the river.

Four kilometres were downstream of Needham Market and more than one kilometre on the Somersham Watercourse at Little Blakenham.

Tree planting along the River Gipping in Bramford.

The trees will provide increased shading for the river, which will benefit the ecology.

Naomi Boyle, Environment Agency Project Manager for the project, said: "Shading will help lessen the effects of our changing climate by helping to keep the river cool in summer.

"This has big benefits for fish, invertebrate populations and water voles.

"It is also expected that shading will help control vigorous plant growth within the river channels at some locations reducing the need to carry out costly in channel vegetation clearance.

“In time the tree roots will help to stabilise the river banks leading to less sediment entering the water which will help improve water quality.

“The roots will also provide vital habitats for fish as will low hanging branches trailing into the watercourse.”

The trees planted along the River Gipping in Little Blakenham.

The trees will also provide valuable bankside habitat for breeding bird, bats, otters and invertebrates as well as enhancing the landscape quality of the Gipping valley.

Penny Hemphill, Suffolk Wildlife Trust Project Manager, said: “This has been a successful partnership project and without the goodwill of the landowners involved none of this work would be possible so many thanks to them.

“The trees will provide multiple benefits and increase the ecological and landscape value of the river valley.

“It is very important when planting trees that the right tree is planted in the right place for the right reason and this is where we can help.”

Can you help?

The Environment Agency are looking for opportunities to carry out other projects on the rivers in the River Gipping Catchment Area as well as other parts of Suffolk. We are looking to improve habitat diversity, water quality and help our rivers adapt to climate change. If you own sections of river and are interested in enhancing river habitats to improve your river environment please contact us at; naomi.boyle@environment-agency.gov.uk or penny.hemphill@suffolkwildlifetrust.org.