

Unrecorded mine shaft found under road in East Lothian, Scotland



The site of the unrecorded mine shaft in East Lothian, Scotland

Enabling works will commence during the week beginning 4 November 2019 so a shaft under the B1361 road and adjacent footpath can be stabilised.

The existing traffic management system will continue throughout the works which will avoid the need for a full road closure, with the project scheduled to take 6 weeks to complete.

Coal Authority engineers have designed a permanent solution to remediate the mine shaft after various challenging factors were encountered at the site.

The site of the unrecorded mine shaft in East Lothian, Scotland

Michael Owens, from the Coal Authority's Public Safety and Subsidence Team, said:

This is an unrecorded coal mine shaft, meaning we hold no records of the depth, location or any specific information regarding the previous treatment method.

The mine shaft is located under a road which has live services beneath, including a medium pressure gas main that will need to be isolated and supported during works.

This coupled with the close proximity to a Category B listed wall and protected trees, meant we've had to coordinate our efforts alongside various stakeholders to design a suitable solution.

The permanent safety solution is to excavate and cast a reinforced concrete cap over the position of the suspected unrecorded, rectangular coal mine shaft.

The reinforced concrete cap will be constructed to withstand all traffic, with East Lothian Council responsible for overseeing the reinstatement of the road.

It is inevitable that when an unrecorded mine shaft is discovered, the local community will be inconvenienced. The Coal Authority sincerely apologises for this disruption and would like to thank the local community for their continued patience while the works are being carried out.

East Lothian Council's Service Manager for Roads, Alan Stubbs, said: "This has been a challenging situation however our priority is to ensure the safety of all road users. We continue to work with the Coal Authority to ensure all required consents are granted to achieve a timely completion."

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1. 15 October 2019 Added the start date, the week beginning 4 November, for when the works will commence
2. 28 August 2019 First published.

[Improving data access for service sector: apply for funding](#)

The service sector accounts for 80% of the UK economy. Financial and professional services alone are worth £190 billion to the economy and employ 2.2 million.

New technologies, such as artificial intelligence and data analytics, have the potential to transform these industries.

Services such as legal, accounting and insurance need to develop a new generation of services to improve what they do for their customers and to remain globally competitive.

UK Research and Innovation has up to £3.5 million to support projects developing new accountancy, insurance and legal services based on artificial intelligence and data technologies.

The funding is from the UK government's £20 million Industrial Strategy Challenge Fund Next Generation Services Challenge, which aims to explore how new technologies could transform these services.

Projects should aim to improve access to data

The competition aims to speed up responsible development and adoption of artificial intelligence and data technologies in accountancy, insurance and legal services through better access to data.

Applications are sought from multi-disciplinary teams including the social sciences and science and engineering and from teams that include regulators, users, service providers, and technology providers.

Projects must:

- have participated in the innovation lab taking place between 14 and 16 October 2019
- identify and develop a data access method to allow an artificial intelligence application for one or more of the 3 sectors
- address incentives, opportunities and ongoing business models for sustainable data access
- consider broader, non-technical issues around data access, including ethics, bias and privacy

Competition information

- the competition opens on 14 October 2019, and the deadline for applications is midday 20 November 2019
- businesses of any size may apply
- we expect projects to attract a maximum grant of £1.15 million and contribute at least equal funding

British Ambassador inaugurates new project to help vulnerable children in Honduras

British Ambassador to Honduras, Tom Carter, inaugurated today the project “Alas” in Talanga, Honduras (32 miles away from the capital Tegucigalpa). The programme started last year to help reach vulnerable and street-connected children, and recently has been loaned a house in the town in order to start a mentoring centre.

The project aims to benefit 24 children who have been identified at the highest risk in the town. The goal is to empower the children to leave the streets behind for good and become independent, support them even when they have found employment to ensure that they don't find themselves at risk again.

Currently, the centre has one full time member of staff and the implementers are looking to employ a part time tutor and a manager. You can find more about the project and how to help by visiting their [Facebook page](#).

Ambassador Carter said:

I've seen the remarkable work Street Kids Direct is doing in several countries, and I'm glad they are changing the lives of vulnerable kids in Honduras. All of us here want to thrive into this charity's vision which is to see a world where children and young people do not need to depend upon the streets in order to survive.

Changes to shared ownership to help more people get on the property ladder

Shared homeowners will be able to increase their share at lower increments under new scheme.

Changes to shared ownership to help more people get on the property ladder

- Plans for a new national model for shared ownership will help thousands of lower earners step onto the housing ladder
- People will be able to buy their home in 1% chunks – rather than being forced to stump up 10% at a time
- Changes made to Help to Buy to make it easier for people to take out a mortgage

A package of measures to help people on lower incomes get onto the housing ladder has been unveiled by Housing Secretary Robert Jenrick today (28 August 2019).

The government will review a new national model for shared ownership to make

it easier for people to buy more of their own home, including allowing them to buy in 1% increments.

This step will help to fulfil the Prime Minister's priority to level up the whole country, closing the opportunity gap and helping millions of young people into home ownership.

At present, they have to buy an increased share in 10% chunks, which can be as much as £45,000 per time. This process of increasing the stake until the property is bought outright is known as "staircasing".

People use shared ownership to buy a proportion of their home – which can be as little as 25% – and then pay a subsidised rent on the rest.

Housing Secretary Rt Hon Robert Jenrick MP said:

Building the houses this country needs is a central priority of this government. We know that most people still want to own their own home, but for many the dream seems a remote one.

My mission is to increase the number of homes that are being delivered and to get more young people and families onto the housing ladder, particularly those on lower incomes.

That's why I am announcing radical changes to shared ownership so we can make it simpler and easier for tens of thousands trying to buy own their own home.

Help to Buy, the cut to Stamp Duty and our home-building programmes are already making a real difference, but I am clear we need to go much further if we are to make the housing market work.

I will be looking at ensuring young people from Cornwall to Cumbria aren't priced out of their home areas and how we can build public support for more house building and better planning.

This government will help a new generation to own their home.

The Housing Secretary also announced he will look to reform the planning system to increase housing delivery and make home ownership more affordable for people looking to buy their first property, particularly in areas which are least affordable.

This could include increasing the number of homes sold at discounted prices to people trying to get onto the property ladder, boosting homeownership and helping build local support for new development.

Homeowners buying a property under Help to Buy will be given new freedoms which will make it easier to take out a 35-year mortgage, in measures announced today.

The government has also today closed a loophole with immediate effect that prevented people from taking out a mortgage with a term of more than 25 years.

The change means homeowners can reduce their monthly mortgage repayments by spreading their borrowing over a longer period.

How will it work?

- A family in a £450,000 shared ownership 4-bedroom property could buy an initial 25% stake with a mortgage for £112,500, while paying subsidised rent on the remainder.
- They would then have to stump up £45,000 at a time to increase their stake, and decrease their rent – which is beyond the reach of many.
- Under our plans, shared owners would be able to stump up 1% at a time – or £4,500.