

## Press release: Work on water protection scheme at Lynemouth nearing completion

Construction work on the second phase of a £4 million scheme geared to protecting millions of litres of drinking water in the north east is nearing completion.

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Five new settlement lagoons are currently being built by the Coal Authority at the mine water treatment scheme at the former Lynemouth Colliery.

Once operational, the 5 new lagoons, along with the existing 2, will ensure water within the underground coal workings can be managed to prevent the contamination of groundwater.

The scheme will also prevent uncontrolled discharges into rivers and the sea.

Lagoon building works at Lynemouth mine water treatment scheme

The settlement lagoons substantially improve the water quality by reducing the elevated iron levels found in the mine water before the water is discharged into the North Sea.

At full capacity the enlarged scheme will be able to treat over 6 billion litres of mine water annually – the equivalent of 2,400 Olympic sized swimming pools – removing 300 tonnes of iron in the process and protecting about 1.6 million cubic metres of drinkable water.

The new settlement lagoon taking shape at Lynemouth mine water treatment scheme

Jim Bagnall, Project Manager for the Coal Authority, said that 2 of the five new lagoons are due to be operational by July, with the remaining 3 operational by the autumn.

He added: “Works on this second phase began in September and once completed will provide the capacity needed to control the mine water emanating from the

underground workings at not only Lynemouth but also the larger mining block linked to Ellington Colliery.

“Lynemouth Colliery was part of a larger mining block linked to Ellington Colliery, known as Ellington Combine, that worked reserves under the North Sea. The mining block extends from Morpeth in the west to West Chevington in the north.

“Historically, water levels were controlled at a number of pumping stations in the area. However, pumping stopped in 1994, with the colliery finally closing in 2005.”

Once pumping ceased, water levels in the workings began to rise, leading to concerns about the pollution of the aquifer lying above the underground workings. Once the pollution enters the aquifer it may not be possible to reverse the situation.

There is also a longer term risk if mine water is allowed to rise above sea level as there may be uncontrolled discharges into local rivers or the sea.

Although not harmful to people, the mine water contains elevated levels of iron that would have detrimental impacts on the local habitats and rivers. Potential discharge locations would be Blakemoor Drift, Newbiggin Shaft or smaller shafts and adits along the Wansbeck Valley.

A new cascade being built at Lynemouth mine water treatment scheme

“The scheme was always intended to be implemented in several phases with the first 2 lagoons being built and becoming operational in 2015,” said Jim.

“The intention was that this first phase would allow us to determine what long term treatment capacity would be needed. The pumping undertaken slowed the rise of the mine water but did not halt it, hence the current extension.”

Iron content in the mine water accumulates at the bottom of the lagoons as sludge, which needs to be removed periodically. Works are also underway at the site to construct 2 sludge drying beds, which will allow the efficient de-sludging of the lagoons.

This will not only increase the available treatment capacity available but will also significantly reduce the quantity of sludge that has to be disposed of by removing the excess water.

## **Notes to editors**

The Coal Authority deals with mine water pollution and other mining legacy issues.

The scheme at Lynemouth is just one of the 75 mine water treatment schemes operated by the Coal Authority across Britain.

Together they treat over 122 billion litres of water and prevent 4,000 tonnes of iron solids from entering and polluting rivers and other local

watercourses each year.

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## [News story: Transport Secretary leads the way in transition to a zero-emission future](#)

The Transport Secretary has set out plans for the government to move towards completely ultra-low emission car fleets over the next decade.

Last year's [Road to Zero strategy](#) set out a commitment to make all central government cars electric by 2030, electrifying at least 25% of the fleet by 2022.

The [Government Car Service](#), managed by the Department for Transport, is well on track to meet the targets, with electric vehicles making up nearly 23% of the entire fleet.

Transport Secretary Chris Grayling has written to every government department to reinforce the pledge to move towards a completely electric government fleet by 2030.

Transport Secretary Chris Grayling, said:

We want the UK to be the best place in the world to own an ultra-low emission vehicle, and as a government we have to lead by example.

I am pleased with the change we are making to the Government Car Service, but this now needs to be reflected in all fleets that are controlled by government.

Only yesterday, the Prime Minister made the bold commitment that the UK will end its net contribution to climate change by 2050. It is absolutely vital that all parts of government play their part in delivering this ambitious target.

Every department has been given detailed guidance on how they can drive this transition in their own fleet, asking them to publish a yearly progress report.

The move is the latest step in the transition towards a greener-than-ever transport network and follows last week's £25 million investment to develop ground-breaking zero emission technologies across the country.

It also builds on the government's £1.5 billion Road to Zero strategy which outlines a series of ambitious steps to get more people into ultra-low emission vehicles. This includes infrastructure support, grants, and research and development, putting the UK at the forefront of the design and manufacture of zero-emission vehicles.

The government is also driving forward plans to reduce emissions, clean up our air, and deliver cleaner, greener transport across all modes.

These include a commitment to [end the sale of new conventional diesel and petrol cars and vans by 2040](#), investment in hybrid trains, the doubling of investment in cycling and walking since 2010, along with the £2.5 billion [Transforming Cities Fund](#) which will develop innovative public transport schemes in some of England's biggest cities.

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## **Speech: Queen's birthday celebration 2019 in Kinshasa, DRC: Ambassador's speech**

Welcome to the Queen's Birthday Party here at the British Embassy in DRC.

Today we celebrate the birthday of the world's longest serving Head of State: our Queen for more than 67 years.

To avoid this being misconstrued as an argument to abolish Constitutional term limits, I hasten to add that the Queen only reigns. She does not govern.

Throughout the Queen's reign she has been served by many Prime Ministers. Does anyone know how many? 10? 12? 14? Trick question! The answer is 170 because of course the Queen has been Head of State of 32 independent states and remains Head of State in 16 countries.

In the UK alone, 13 Prime Ministers – from Winston Churchill to Theresa May – have served the Queen. As Theresa May has resigned today as Head of the Conservative Party, in the foreseeable future there will be a fourteenth. During her reign, political power has alternated between parties many times. The Queen has been a constant through many years of change: the end of Empire; joining the EU in 1973 and, in 2016, voting to leave it again.

It is true that the UK's relationship with Europe remains complicated. Many British voters don't want to leave Europe. Our football teams, in particular, all appear to have been determined to stay in as long as possible (and I must congratulate Liverpool, Chelsea, Tottenham and Arsenal for their success). Despite the success of our teams, what is clear, however, is that the British people voted for change.

The Congolese people also voted for change. Last year in my speech, I looked forward to the DRC's first peaceful transfer of power in January. I'm delighted that elections happened and that change is beginning. I'm proud that the UK was able to play a key role in the electoral process: supporting a technical analysis of controversial voting machines and financing over half of CENCO's 40,000 electoral observers.

Now that the electoral process is complete, it is up to Congo's politicians to deliver change. Change means: more peace and security; freedom from harassment by the police and the armed forces; access to education and health care and economic opportunity.

The UK will work with any partners in Congo that seek to deliver change. Conversely, those who oppose change will not be welcome in the UK.

In 2018, I spent much of my time thinking about one Joseph: former President Kabila. This year also sees me thinking about a second Joseph: my new son just six months' old. Yesterday at the Swedish National Day, my colleague Ambassador Maria said she has achieved 100% family increase during her stay in the Congo. Up to now, I have achieved 50%, but I still have time. When my new son Joseph has woken up for the 5th time and it's still only four in the morning, I'm reminded that, as with so many things in life, change – and enabling something new and worthwhile – isn't always easy and it takes time and effort.

There are no short-cuts to success. I encourage all of those who make up the new Parliament and government to remember this.

I'd also remind them that foreign partnerships don't undermine Congolese sovereignty. I believe that Liverpool would not have won the European Cup if they had relied only on players from that city. The reality is that foreign players like Salah and Mane gave them a cutting edge required to achieve their dreams. Is there any one supporter of Liverpool who thinks that Salah has reduced the sovereignty of Liverpool? On the contrary he helped them fulfil their dreams. Although we may lack their athletic ability, the whole of the British Embassy in DRC has a similar desire to support Congolese success.

British citizens are globally minded. UK law commits us to spending 0.7% of GDP on eliminating global poverty – without commercial preconditions. We therefore work to resolve conflict and to support good governance, education, health care – including the fight against Ebola – and the development of a more dynamic economy. Like Jurgen Klopp with Liverpool, we are with the Congolese people for the long term.

Speeches are often a time for goodbyes. In July, we will be saying goodbye to Bona Magongo, our Embassy translator, without whose work myself and many Ambassadors before me would have given speeches in much less sophisticated French (if you doubt me, read my tweets to see my real French!). Thank you Bona.

Then, later this month I will bid farewell to my Deputy, Nicholas Woolley and his wife, Debbie. Debbie has been a lynchpin of the Embassy team. Nick has been outstanding and I'm delighted he will soon take up his own Head of

Mission role in neighbouring Zambia. Thank you both for your fantastic work. I'm very happy to welcome Harry MacDonald as our new Deputy Head of Mission. Welcome Harry!

Change can be daunting. The world changes fast. The challenges of the past will not be the challenges of tomorrow. We must adhere to change. The Queen has spent many years adjusting to the various changes in our culture. In my country that means looking forward to a new Global Britain, ready to promote trade and openness across the world.

It is my hope that DRC will similarly look forward and deliver the change that people voted for in December last year. We will be there to support you.

Now please join me in raising your glasses to Her Majesty Elizabeth II and to the good relations between our two countries.

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## Statement to parliament: Written Ministerial Statement on Secretary of State's 'minded to' intervene decision.

My Department has today written to Lebedev Holdings Limited (LHL) and Independent Digital News and Media Limited (IDNM), the owners of the Evening Standard and the Independent, to inform them that I am 'minded to' issue an Intervention Notice. This relates to concerns I have that there may be public interest considerations – as set out in section 58 of Enterprise Act 2002 – that are relevant to the recent acquisition of a 30% stake by the International Media Company (IMC) in LHL and the linked transaction involving the acquisition of a 30% stake by Scalable LP in IDNM and that these concerns warrant further investigation.

A 'minded to' letter has therefore been issued to the parties on one public interest ground specified in section 58 of the Enterprise Act 2002:

(2A) The need for (a) accurate presentation of news; and (b) free expression of opinion.

It is important to note that I have not taken a final decision on intervention at this stage. In line with the statutory guidance on media mergers, the 'minded to' letter invites further representations in writing from the parties and gives them until 5pm on Monday 17 June to respond. I plan to make my final decision, which needs to be made on a quasi judicial

basis, on whether to issue an Intervention Notice no later than week commencing 24 June.

If I decide to issue an Intervention Notice, the next stage would be for Ofcom to assess and report to me on the public interest concerns and for the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) to assess and report to me on whether a relevant merger situation has been created and any impact this may have on competition. Following these reports, I would need to decide whether to refer the matter for a more detailed investigation by the CMA under section 45 of the Enterprise Act 2002.

In view of the time it has taken to obtain sufficient information to reach this point I have asked the parties to agree to extend the statutory time limit to allow Ofcom and the Competitions and Markets Authority to report to me on the public interest issues raised by the transaction.

I will keep Parliament updated on progress with this media merger case.