

[Press release: Construction starts on North East flood scheme](#)

Contractor Balfour Beatty is carrying out flood protection work across Monkton and Hebburn with work expected to be complete by the end of the year. It will protect around 100 homes and businesses from surface water flooding.

To minimise disruption, work that needs to take place close to local schools will be done during the school summer holidays, with construction in areas less affected by travel to and from school being completed in the autumn.

The main construction work follows a project in March this year to open up a section of the Bede Burn running underground – known as ‘daylighting’ – to the rear of Toner Avenue School. This was part of the ‘Living Waterways’ scheme to restore the burn and create a green space for the community to enjoy.

The Monkton Flood Alleviation Scheme is being delivered by South Tyneside Council and its partners at the Environment Agency and Tyne Rivers Trust.

Main engineering work

Tom Pitman, Project Manager for the Environment Agency and South Tyneside Council, said:

The work in the Spring to open up the Bede Burn and create a green space was really well received by the community and we’re pleased it will be a great facility for them to use in the future.

We’re now on to the main engineering work which will include improved drainage, swales to collect surface water run-off and an attenuation basin which is designed to collect water and slowly release it into the Bede Burn.

While there will inevitably be some disruption while we complete this work, we are working hard to keep it to a minimum. In particular the bulk of the work we need to do near to schools will be done during the school summer holidays.

‘Delighted’ construction is underway

Councillor Nancy Maxwell, Lead Member for Area Management and Community Safety, added:

I’m delighted to see the construction phase of this project get underway. The work done earlier this year behind Toner Avenue School has created a wonderful open space, which the community will

be able to enjoy once the main flood alleviation works have been completed. We would ask residents to bear with us during this short term disruption.

Once complete, around 100 properties are going to reap the benefits of this scheme, with not only reduced flood risk but enhancements to the local environment too.

The scheme involves managing surface water where problems have been identified around the Monkton Burn, Lukes Lane Estate and Leam Lane area, Mill Lane, Lilac Walk/College Road, Devon Road, Campbell Park Road/ Thirlmere Court and Mountbatten Avenue areas.

The project will have wider social and environmental benefits, encouraging local people and children to get involved in creating valuable new habitat.

The project is largely funded by the Environment Agency, as well as a contribution from the local levy – which is money raised by local authorities for flood projects.

Motorists and pedestrians are advised there will be some diversions. The latest information on the scheme – including details of timescales and the required traffic management – can be found at the [Monkton Flood Alleviation Scheme website](#)

[Press release: Report 11/2018: Near miss with a group of track workers at Egmonton level crossing](#)

PDF, 3.03MB, 41 pages

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Summary

At around 11:22 hrs on 5 October 2017, a group of track workers narrowly avoided being struck by a train close to Egmonton level crossing, between Newark North Gate and Retford on the East Coast Main Line. A high speed passenger train was approaching the level crossing on the Down Main line at the maximum permitted line speed of 125 mph (201 km/h), when the driver saw a

group of track workers in the distance. He sounded the train's warning horn, but saw no response from the group. A few seconds later the driver gave a series of short blasts on the train horn as it approached, and passed, the track workers.

The track workers became aware of the train about three seconds before it reached them. One of the group shouted a warning to three others who were between the running rails of the Down Main line. These three workers cleared the track about one second before the train passed them. During this time the driver had continued to sound the horn and made an emergency brake application before the train passed the point where the group had been working, thinking his train might strike one or more of them. The train subsequently came to a stand around 0.75 miles (1.2 km) after passing the site of work.

The immediate cause of the near miss was that the track workers did not move to a position of safety as the train approached. The group had been working under an unsafe and unofficial system of work, set up by the Person in Charge (PiC). Instead of adhering to the correct method of using the Train Operated Warning System (TOWS) by moving his team to, and remaining in, a position of safety while TOWS was warning of an approaching train, the PiC used the audible warning as a cue for the lookout to start looking out for approaching trains in order to maximise the working time of the group on the track. This unsafe system of work broke down when both the lookout and the PiC became distracted and forgot about the TOWS warning them of the approaching train.

Although the PiC was qualified, experienced and was deemed competent by his employer, neither his training nor reassessments had instilled in him an adequate regard for safety and the importance of following the rules and procedures. Additionally, none of the team involved challenged the unsafe system of work that was in place at the time. Even though some were uncomfortable with it, they feared they might lose the work as contractors if they challenged the PiC.

Recommendations

As a result of its investigation the RAIB has made three recommendations. These relate to:

- strengthening safety leadership behaviour on site and reducing the occurrences of potentially dangerous rule breaking by those responsible for setting up and maintaining safe systems of work
- mitigating the potentially adverse effect that client-contractor relationships can have on the integrity of the Worksafe procedure such that contractors' staff feel unable to challenge unsafe systems of work for fear of losing work
- clarifying to staff how the Train Operated Warning System (TOWS) should be used

The findings of this investigation have also reinforced the importance of railway staff understanding their safety briefings, and challenging any system of work that they believe to be unsafe.

Simon French, Chief Inspector of Rail Accidents said:

When the person in charge of a team is both a strong personality and an employee of the client, it can be particularly hard for contract workers to challenge unsafe behaviour. In this investigation, RAIB found that the person in charge had adopted an unsafe method of working, in an attempt to undertake additional unplanned work. Both the person in charge and team members became distracted, and the result was that three of them found themselves jumping clear of a train travelling at 125 miles per hour with just one second to spare. This came so close to being a major tragedy.

We have seen this sort of unsafe behaviour before, where the wish to get the work done quickly overrides common sense and self-preservation. When we see narrowly avoided tragedies of this type it is almost always the result of the adoption of an unsafe method of work and the absence of a challenge from others in the group. We are therefore recommending that Network Rail looks again at how it monitors and manages the safety leadership exercised by its staff, and how they interact with contractors. There have been too many near misses in recent years. It takes effective leadership and a positive safety culture to create a working environment in which everyone can be confident that safety will come first.

Notes to editors

1. The sole purpose of RAIB investigations is to prevent future accidents and incidents and improve railway safety. RAIB does not establish blame, liability or carry out prosecutions.
2. RAIB operates, as far as possible, in an open and transparent manner. While our investigations are completely independent of the railway industry, we do maintain close liaison with railway companies and if we discover matters that may affect the safety of the railway, we make sure that information about them is circulated to the right people as soon as possible, and certainly long before publication of our final report.
3. For media enquiries, please call 01932 440015.

Newsdate: 9 August 2018

[Press release: Government announces easier court entrance for legal sector](#)

A scheme allowing practising legal professionals direct entrance to courts without the need to be searched will be piloted by HM Courts & Tribunals

Service (HMCTS) in five courts, with registration beginning in August and fast-track entry from September.

The Bar Council has led the development of an app for its members to use as ID, and Law Society members will benefit from the pilot, using approved photo ID.

While tightened security procedures introduced during the last year will continue, the 'Professional Entry Scheme' intends to ease queues to get into court buildings and allow easier and swifter access for legal professionals who come to court regularly.

The scheme will recognise the trusted status of legal professionals without compromising security and is supported by the judiciary.

Justice Minister, Lucy Frazer, said:

Courts and tribunals are the daily workplace for many trusted legal professionals. This pilot will make it easier for them to simply get on with their job.

Of course, we need to do this in the right way, without compromising the security of our courts. To ensure this pilot is a success we are working closely with the legal profession.

Chair of the Bar, Andrew Walker QC, said:

The Bar Council has worked hard with HMCTS to promote a scheme that enables barristers to avoid long delays and searches.

We are delighted that this has now led to a pilot of the Professional Entry Scheme. If the pilot is a success, then the new secure, easy to use ID app that we are developing should enable practising barristers to make the most of the scheme, wherever they practise.

Law Society President, Christina Blacklaws, said:

There is no doubt that easier access will benefit our members and we welcome this sensible initiative.

We have spoken to HMCTS officials about the delays practitioners can face in clearing security and we hope the pilot will pave the way for a permanent system of easier access.

In advance of the pilot, practising legal professions will need to register with their local court, agree to conditions of entry (which continue to include a list of prohibited items) and meet secure ID authentication requirements when they attend court. This includes identifying themselves as a legal professional and showing photographic ID, which will be checked by a court security officer against a registration list.

Random searches on a proportion of the participants in the pilot will be carried out to make sure the scheme is working as intended.

Legal practitioners will be invited to register with their local court from today, with fast-track entries predicted to open in early September.

If successful, the scheme will be extended nationally and could be grown to other professional groups. It will not be implemented at courts hearing terrorist or high security cases.

[Notice: Maidenhead Rowing Club Annual Regatta 2018: river restriction notice](#)

River Thames restriction information for Saturday 11 August 2018.

[News story: Global access to reliable energy: apply for funding](#)

Innovate UK has up to £10 million to invest in innovative, market-focused energy technologies through the Energy Catalyst funding programme.

Round 6 of the Energy Catalyst will support energy innovations across all technologies, sectors and international markets to help address the global need for reliable energy.

The Energy Catalyst is run by Innovate UK and co-funded by partners including the [Department for International Development \(DFID\)](#) and the [Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council \(EPSRC\)](#).

Bringing energy to poorly served regions

Reliable sources of energy are crucial to human wellbeing but 1.1 billion people have no access to electricity. While progress has been made in both

sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia, [14% of the world's population is still without access, rising to 84% in rural areas.](#)

The new funding is for projects that meet the needs of the people, businesses and services in these regions.

Tackling the 'Energy Trilemma'

Organisations applying for funding will need to address the [World Energy Council's](#) 'Energy Trilemma' and its 3 pillars:

- cost – reducing prices to make energy accessible to everyone
- emissions – generating cleaner energy with lower emissions to protect the environment
- security of supply – putting reliable infrastructure in place to keep energy flowing without disruption or shortage

Funding for different stages of development

The competition offers 3 strands for projects in different stages of development; early stage, mid-stage and late stage.

Funding for early-stage projects is designed for feasibility studies exploring the technical potential of an idea. The mid-stage strand is aimed at research and development, while the late stage strand will deal with projects that are ready to proceed with prototyping and pilot testing.

To apply for mid-stage or late-stage funding some of the research, testing or demonstration must be carried out in sub-Saharan Africa or South Asia by either a UK or international partner.

Who can apply?

To be eligible for funding for any of the 3 strands you must:

- be a business, academic organisation, charity, public sector organisation or research and technology organisation (RTO)
- apply as part of a collaboration with a UK organisation if you're based in sub-Saharan Africa or South Asia
- plan to use the results to help deliver clean energy access in these regions
- involve at least one micro, small or medium-sized enterprise

Competition information

- the competition opens on 20 August 2018 and the deadline for applications is midday on 14 November 2018
- successful applicants will be contacted on 25 January 2019
- early stage projects can have total costs of £50,000 to £300,000 and last from 6 to 12 months
- for mid-stage projects costs can be £50,000 to £1.5 million lasting 12

to 24 months

- for late stage projects costs can be £50,000 to £3 million lasting 12 to 30 months
- projects must start by 1 April 2019 and end by 30 Sept 2021