

Press release: Improvements breathe new life into north east park

A partnership project has breathed new life into a local north east park.

The Wear Rivers Trust and Environment Agency have worked together to make improvements to Memorial Park near Stanley.

In the 1950s, Stanley Burn, which flows through South Moor Memorial Park, was diverted into a culvert to make way for a communal paddling pool, which was used for around 15 years and then buried and forgotten.

This new project has now removed the paddling pool and returned the river to its natural channel, creating new high quality habitat for fish and invertebrates while also slowing the flow of the watercourse and increasing flood storage.

Nearby residents of Stanley are also enjoying improved year-round access with a new 300m footpath and two new footbridges. And work is planned in early 2018 to further improve the instream habitat for fish and to naturalise the bankside habitat.

Steve Hudson of Wear Rivers Trust said:

It's great to be involved in a project which offers so many benefits to the local community. By working alongside multiple partners through the Greening the Twizell Partnership, we have managed to improve instream habitat, reduce flood risk and provide new all ability access routes for everyone to enjoy this previously difficult to reach woodland park area.

The project has cost more than £90,000 and is made up of funding from the Environment Agency, Stanley Town Council, Durham County Council and Stanley Area Action Partnership. It's one part of a four-part project in the area which has also included wetland and pond creation and natural flood management measures.

Karen Fisher, Biodiversity Technical Officer with the Environment Agency in the North East, added:

The project has been delivered with Wear Rivers Trust and is an excellent example of partnership working that has delivered multiple benefits.

This includes habitat creation, lengthening the watercourse, new bridges and a seating area, creating a green area for the local community to use.

[News story: Developing and testing 5G services: apply for business funding](#)

Businesses can apply for up to £25 million to explore, develop and test applications and services for the next generation of digital infrastructure.

The [Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport](#) (DCMS) has up to £25 million to invest in projects that support the development of the UK's 5G infrastructure.

5G is the next generation of wireless broadband technology and could offer users connection speeds of up to 100MB or more. It is likely to open up new services and applications in areas such as the Internet of Things and broadcasting.

DCMS funding is part of the government's overall £740 million [National Productivity Investment Fund](#) for digital infrastructure.

The competition was announced yesterday by Minister of State for Digital, Matt Hancock.

Creating 5G testbeds and trials

Projects must contribute to the creation of innovative testbeds and trials in the UK and do at least one of the following:

- explore the potential for 5G to deliver benefits for business
- develop new 5G applications and services
- develop and explore new business models around key 5G technologies
- reduce commercial risks associated with investment in 5G

Competition information

- the competition opens on 23 October 2017, and the deadline for registration is midday on 6 December 2017
- projects must be led by a UK-registered organisation working with partners
- consortiums must be industry-led or have a strong industry component
- we expect projects to last 12 months and for project grants to vary in size between £2 million and £5 million
- details of additional funding for further phases of testbeds and trials will be available as the programme progresses
- businesses could attract up to 60% of their project costs
- a briefing event takes place on 30 October 2017

Press release: UK House Price Index (HPI) for August 2017

The [UK Property Transaction statistics](#) showed that the number of seasonally adjusted transactions on UK properties with a value of £40,000 or greater has increased by 6.6% between August 2016 and August 2017. However, between July 2017 and August 2017, the number of seasonally adjusted property transactions decreased by 0.5%.

Looking closer at regional levels of the UK, the largest annual growth was in the North West at 6.5%. This was followed by the South West, East of England and the East Midlands, all of which had a growth rate of 6.4% in the year to August 2017. The lowest annual growth was in London, where prices increased by 2.6% over the year. This is the 9th consecutive month where the growth in London house prices has remained below the UK average. See the [economic statement](#).

Sales during June 2017, the most up-to-date HM Land Registry figures available, show that:

1. The UK House Price Index (HPI) is published on the second or third Tuesday of each month with Northern Ireland figures updated quarterly. The September 2017 UK HPI will be published at 9.30am on 14 November 2017. See [calendar of release dates](#).
2. The UK HPI revision period has been extended to 13 months, following a review of the revision policy (see [calculating the UK HPI](#) section 4.4). This ensures the data used is more comprehensive.
3. Sales volume data is available by property status (new build/existing property) and funding status (cash/mortgage) in our downloadable data tables. Transactions involving the creation of new register information, such as new builds, are more complex and require more time to process. This affects the sales volumes for new builds in more recent months; see [Revisions to the UK HPI data](#) for more information.
4. Revision tables have been introduced for England and Wales within the downloadable data. Tables will be available in csv format. See [about the UK HPI](#) for more information.
5. Data for the UK HPI is provided by HM Land Registry, Registers of Scotland, Land & Property Services/Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency and the Valuation Office Agency.

6. The UK HPI is calculated by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) and Land & Property Services/Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency. It applies a hedonic regression model that uses the various sources of data on property price, in particular HM Land Registry's Price Paid Dataset, and attributes to produce estimates of the change in house prices each month. Find out more about the methodology used from the [ONS](#) and [Northern Ireland Statistics & Research Agency](#).
7. The first estimate for new build average price (April 2016 report) was based on a small sample which can cause volatility. A three-month moving average has been applied to the latest estimate to remove some of this volatility.
8. Work has been taking place since 2014 to develop a single, official HPI that reflects the final transaction price for sales of residential property in the UK. Using the geometric mean, it covers purchases at market value for owner-occupation and buy-to-let, excluding those purchases not at market value (such as re-mortgages), where the 'price' represents a valuation.
9. Information on residential property transactions for England and Wales, collected as part of the official registration process, is provided by HM Land Registry for properties that are sold for full market value.
10. The HM Land Registry dataset contains the sale price of the property, the date when the sale was completed, full address details, the type of property (detached, semi-detached, terraced or flat), if it is a newly built property or an established residential building and a variable to indicate if the property has been purchased as a financed transaction (using a mortgage) or as a non-financed transaction (cash purchase).
11. Repossession data is based on the number of transactions lodged with HM Land Registry by lenders exercising their power of sale.
12. For England this is shown as volumes of repossessions recorded by Government Office Region. For Wales there is a headline figure for the number of repossessions recorded in Wales.
13. The data can be downloaded as a .csv file. Repossession data prior to April 2016 is not available. Find out more information about [repossessions](#).
14. Background tables of the raw and cleansed aggregated data, in Excel and CSV formats, are also published monthly although Northern Ireland is on a quarterly basis. They are available for free use and re-use under the Open Government Licence.
15. As a government department established in 1862, executive agency and trading

fund responsible to the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, HM Land Registry keeps and maintains the Land Register for England and Wales. The Land Register has been open to public inspection since 1990.

16. With the largest transactional database of its kind detailing more than 24 million titles, HM Land Registry underpins the economy by safeguarding ownership of many billions of pounds worth of property.
17. For further information about HM Land Registry visit www.gov.uk/land-registry.
18. Follow us on Twitter [@HMLandRegistry](https://twitter.com/HMLandRegistry) and find us on our [blog](#), [LinkedIn](#) and [Facebook](#)

[News story: UK House Price Index: new data reveals number of cash buyers](#)

Have you ever wondered how many properties were purchased using cash alone? From today, the UK House Price Index (UK HPI) will tell you the answer. You can now access the number of:

- cash sales transactions
- mortgage sales transactions
- registered new build and resold properties

We have found that while cash sales account for between 30% and 40% of all transactions at Great Britain level, there are some variations at regional level. London has the lowest proportion of cash sales (around 25%), while the South West has the highest (around 40%).

All the new sales volume data are available at national, regional, county, local authority and London borough levels, enabling easy comparison with existing data. You can explore the data further through our downloadable data tables or via our [Linked Data API](#).

The introduction of volume information improves the transparency of the number of new build properties registered across the UK. It also provides greater clarity on purchasing trends, helping users to understand the extent of household credit. To understand more about how this data is derived, refer to [Calculating the UK HPI \(section 4\)](#).

We will continue to make enhancements to the data based on user feedback. This includes making all data available in the [Search the UK House Price](#)

[Index](#) app later this year.

You can help us shape one of the nation's most important indicators. Through our [LinkedIn UK HPI group](#) we are working with users, stakeholders and our partners to enhance the information and data supplied to ensure the index continues to offer maximum public value.

If you would like to share your feedback on the UK HPI, you can register your interest to [join the UK HPI group](#) or [contact us](#) for more information.

[News story: Government updates mergers regime to protect national security](#)

Today's proposals include enabling the Government to intervene in mergers that raise national security concerns, even when they involve smaller businesses. These changes are targeted at key areas, specifically companies that design or manufacture military and dual use products, and parts of the advanced technology sector.

In these areas, currently the Government can only intervene in mergers involving companies with a UK turnover of more than £70 million or where the share of UK supply increases to 25% or over. Today's proposals will close these loopholes to enable greater scrutiny of foreign investment in a changing market.

In these areas, the Government will lower the threshold whereby ministers can scrutinise investment to businesses with a UK turnover of over £1 million, and remove the requirement for a merger to increase a business's share of supply of, or over, 25%.

Government is also consulting on longer-term proposals that will allow for better scrutiny of transactions that may raise national security concerns – this could include increasing risks of espionage, sabotage, or the ability to exert inappropriate leverage. The Government welcomes views on the changes it could make, including:

- introducing a 'call-in' power modelled on that in the Enterprise Act 2002 to allow Government to scrutinise a broader range of transactions for national security concerns within a voluntary notification regime; and/or
- introducing a mandatory notification regime for foreign investment in certain parts of the economy which are critical for national security, such as the civil nuclear or the defence sector. Mandatory notification could also be required for foreign investment in key new projects or specific businesses or assets.

Business and Energy Secretary Greg Clark said:

Britain has and always has had a proud record of being open to the world as the foremost advocate of free trade. It is right that every so often the Government reviews its mergers regime to close loopholes where they arise and this is what these proposals do in the area of national security.

No part of the economy is off-limits to foreign investment and the UK will continue to be a vociferous advocate for free trade and a magnet for global talent.

The Green Paper delivers on the commitment made in the Queen's Speech to bring forward proposals to consolidate and strengthen Government's powers to protect national security.

Today's consultation will be split into two parts.

The consultation on amending the Enterprise Act through secondary legislation will last four weeks. The proposals are to lower the turnover threshold from £70 million to £1 million and remove the current requirement for the merger to increase the share of supply to or over 25%. These changes will apply to the following sectors:

- the dual use and military sector – this relates to businesses who manufacture or design items that are subject to export controls; and
- companies that are involved in the design of computer chips and quantum technology.

The Government will report back in due course on the proposed secondary legislative changes.

The consultation on longer-term reforms including the expanded version of the 'call in' power and mandatory notification regime will last twelve weeks.

A final package of reforms could include some or all of these options.

The consultation will be published later today.