

News story: First tree planted in River Aire natural flood management pilot

The first of thousands of trees to be planted across the upper River Aire catchment took place today as part of a pilot natural flood management project.

Cllr Judith Blake CBE, leader of Leeds City Council, planted the first tree on site at Eshton Beck, Gargrave, witnessed by volunteers, landowners, local authorities and partners. This pilot site will have 450 trees planted, to see how natural techniques can slow the flow of water and reduce the risk of flooding downstream.

Ray Bridge Farm, Eshton Beck, Gargrave is the location of the first pilot site where trees such as Dogwood, Guelder Rose, Downy Birch, Alder, and willow will be planted along with hedgerows of hawthorn, blackthorn and hazel. Yorkshire Wildlife Trust staff and volunteers will be leading the planting of trees at the site.

The natural flood management pilot forms part of the Leeds Flood Alleviation Scheme, led by Leeds City Council in partnership with the Environment Agency, which has a catchment wide approach to flood risk as it enters its second stage.

This £500,000 pilot programme, which has been funded by Leeds City Council, forms part of plans to plant hundreds of thousands of trees that will support second phase of the Leeds Flood Alleviation Scheme.

Working with natural processes to reduce flood risk, known as natural flood management, is an important part of managing and reducing flood risk in a sustainable way alongside more traditional engineering solutions. The interventions will also create habitat for wildlife and help regenerate rural and urban areas through tourism.

The pilot sites will allow the team to be able to do monitoring and research of the techniques used to gather evidence and increase their understanding and the benefits they give to reducing flood risk. The pilot programme will also be used by the Environment Agency and Leeds City Council to develop a co-design approach to working with landowners, tenants, local authorities and other key partners such as the Aire Rivers Trust and the White Rose Forest. This will help to then develop future plans for the catchment.

Leader of Leeds City Council Councillor Judith Blake said:

These new trees are a hugely significant part of our plans to protect Leeds from future flooding like the devastation we saw on Boxing Day 2015.

It's great to be working with partner authorities along the River Aire to get the first of the trees planted.

They are part of what will be a range of natural flood management measures in a catchment wide approach to prevent future catastrophic floods affecting communities along the river.

Adrian Gill, Area Flood Risk Manager at the Environment Agency said:

I'm really pleased to launch this pilot programme in partnership with Leeds City Council. Using natural techniques to minimise flood risk while creating new habitats and increasing woodland cover across the Aire catchment will help realise the ambitions set out in the Defra's 25 year environment plan.

While we can never truly eliminate the threat of flooding, working together across local authority boundaries to develop and deliver this programme will help us to create better, more effective solutions to a catchment-wide challenge.

Following the successful opening of the £50million first phase of the scheme serving the city centre, Holbeck and Woodlesford in October last year, phase two identifies measures further upstream including the Kirkstall corridor which was badly hit by the 2015 Christmas floods. It also looks at areas beyond the city boundary to further reduce the possibility of the river flooding in Leeds, as well as additional measures to offer protection for the South Bank area of the city centre which is a key future economic driver for Leeds.

The phase two plans have a strong focus on natural flood management, with proposals to create new woodland areas which would more than double canopy coverage in the River Aire catchment. It also proposes water storage areas to be created and developed, operated by control gates system meaning water can be held and then released back into the river when safe to do so. A third element would be the removal of existing obstructions along the river to help reduce water levels, along with lowering the riverbed in places to improve its capacity and flow.

An outline business case for phase 2 has been completed, which was submitted at the end of January 2018. Outline design for engineered options is being progressed, which will be followed by a tender process with an aim to awarding the construction contract award in autumn 2018.

Commission welcomes ambitious agreement on first ever EU legislation to monitor and report CO2 emissions from heavy-duty vehicles

Representatives from the European Parliament and the Council reached yesterday evening a provisional agreement on the Regulation for monitoring and reporting CO₂ emissions and fuel consumption data from new heavy-duty vehicles (HDVs), i.e. lorries, buses and coaches. This is the first ever EU legislation focusing on the CO₂ emissions from these vehicles. The new rules are part of the EU's [Strategy on low-emission mobility](#) and [Communication on delivering on low-emission mobility](#) laying out actions for a fundamental modernisation of European mobility and transport. Accelerating the shift to clean and sustainable mobility is essential to improve the quality of life and health of citizens and contribute to the EU's climate objectives under the Paris Agreement. The clean mobility transition offers major opportunities for the European economy and reinforces the EU's global leadership in clean vehicles. Monitoring and reporting CO₂ emissions and fuel consumption of new heavy-duty vehicles will also increase transparency enabling transport operators to make well-informed purchasing decisions and save fuel costs. It will also drive innovation amongst European manufacturers.

Welcoming the political agreement, Commissioner for Climate Action and Energy **Miguel Arias Cañete** said: "*This agreement is proof of Europe's firm intention to curb the growing CO₂ emissions from heavy-duty vehicles. I thank the European Parliament and the Council for their work to reach this ambitious outcome. With this new robust, reliable and transparent monitoring and reporting system, we are on track for the next step: CO₂ emissions standards for heavy-duty vehicles to be proposed in May 2018.*"

Main elements

- Member States to monitor and report registration data concerning all new HDVs registered in a calendar year, including trailers.
- Vehicle manufacturers to monitor and report information related to CO₂ emissions and fuel consumption, determined according to the [certification procedure](#) for each new vehicle simulated with the Vehicle Energy Consumption Calculation Tool (VECT0) during a calendar year.
- The Commission to make reported data publicly available in a register, managed by the European Environment Agency. Sensitive data on grounds of personal data protection and fair competition will not be published, i.e. the Vehicle Identification Numbers and name of component manufacturers. Some other data will be published in a range format, i.e. the aerodynamic drag value of each vehicle.
- The Commission to set up a system of administrative fines in case of vehicle manufacturers not reporting the data or reporting falsified

data.

- The Commission to set up a system for monitoring and reporting the results of future on-road tests for the verification of the CO₂ emissions and fuel consumption of heavy-duty vehicles.

Next steps

The provisional agreement must now be formally approved by the European Parliament and Council of Ministers bringing together the national governments of the EU Member States. Following approval, the Regulation will be published in the EU's Official Journal and enter into force 20 days later.

Read more:

[Reducing CO₂ emissions from heavy-duty vehicles](#)

[Determination of CO₂ emissions and fuel consumption of trucks from 1 January 2019](#)

[Europe on the Move](#)

[Communication "Road from Paris"](#)

C02 emissions of lorries, buses and coaches: provisional agreement with Parliament on new rules for monitoring and reporting

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On 26 March, the Bulgarian presidency reached an provisional agreement with the European Parliament on a regulation on **monitoring and reporting of C02 emissions as well as fuel consumption of new heavy-duty vehicles**. This regulation forms part of the EU's overall efforts to reduce C02 emissions, and is a further step towards a competitive low carbon economy.

The provisional text will be presented to EU ambassadors for approval. Once approved, the text will be submitted to the European Parliament for a vote and then to the Council for final adoption. It will enter into force 20 days after its publication in the Official Journal.

The new system of monitoring and reporting will provide the basis for setting and enforcing standards on CO2 emissions and fuel consumption, and constitutes a precursor to a further legislative proposal which the Commission aims to present later this year.

For cars and vans, rules are already in place. The regulation on which we now have a provisional agreement is aimed at new lorries, buses and coaches.

Emissions of heavy-duty vehicles registered in the EU will for the first time be measured and monitored in a standardised way. The regulation will allow for the creation of a central EU register where authorities and manufacturers will provide data on CO2 emissions and fuel consumption performance. In order to be transparent and to allow for easier comparison between different vehicle models this data will be made accessible to the public. The only exception being cases which are justified by the need to protect private data and to ensure fair competition.

At its meeting of 28 June 2007, the Environment Council called for a reinforced strategy to reduce CO2 emissions of road vehicles including heavy-duty vehicles. In response, the European Commission presented a proposal on 1 June 2017 to create a mandatory EU wide system for monitoring and reporting CO2 emissions and fuel consumption of new heavy-duty vehicles.

On 15 December 2017, EU ambassadors agreed on a mandate for negotiations with the European Parliament. The Bulgarian Presidency started negotiations with the European Parliament on 27 February and reached **an agreement already at the second trilogue on 26 March.**

According to the European Environment Agency, greenhouse gas emissions from road transport in 2015 were 19% above 1990 levels. In 2015 road transport was responsible for almost 73 % of total greenhouse gas emissions from transport, including aviation and international shipping. Of these emissions, 44.5 % were contributed by passenger cars, while **18.8 % came from heavy-duty vehicles.** However, in order to reach the 2030 climate policy framework objectives, the EU aims to reduce **greenhouse gas emissions** from transport to around 20% below their 2008 level by 2030.

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Blether Tay-Gither – Storytelling in

Dundee



From [Blether Tay-Gither](#) :

Our March Blether will be tonight – Tuesday 27th March – at 7pm at our new venue – The Butterfly Café, 28 Commercial Street.

The theme this month is The Letter “F” – bring a story about anything beginning with “F” maybe fairies or farmers, fish or flowers, fruit or furry creatures. Anything you want. What will you choose?

Hope to see some of you there – all welcome!

No to an NHS tax

I do not think there is a simple extra tax we can invent that will meet the future financial needs of the NHS. The UK government has usually avoided hypothecation of revenues for the perfectly good reason that there is no likelihood that a particular tax will always yield exactly the right amount that any particular service might need for its costs. We will need to spend more in future on the NHS, and that will come out of general taxation. The increased spending may exceed the increased yield of a nominated tax. The settlement will be unstable, with the NHS complaining if the hypothecated revenue falls short of what it thinks it needs.

Nor do I think there is a way to have a ten year financial settlement for the NHS. A ten year settlement will span three Parliaments which will have different governments whether of the same party or different parties, with MPs elected on different programmes and spending priorities. It is difficult to know how much health care will be needed in ten years time and what the technology and service delivery will be like. It may look very different from today given the pace of technical change. We could make what we think is a generous settlement today, only for the NHS to discover it has a good need of more money than settled on it at some future date. I doubt the fact of a ten year settlement would act as a constraint on the request for more cash, which might well be justified. There is a lot to be said for making a firm offer of cash for the immediate year ahead, with indicative budgets for the following few years. It is difficult to know today how much we will need to

spend in 2028 and on what.

It is likely many people will want to spend more on their healthcare as they earn better real incomes. This will happen automatically as the tax take increases with rising incomes, and more money will be voted for the NHS. Some of this will also be possible from the increasing take up of private healthcare which many opt for. There is a lot of self treatment with the help of the local pharmacy, where over the counter medicines are bought on a large scale. Some of it takes the form of people taking out subscriptions to Health clubs, and paying for a diet and exercise regime they think will keep them healthier. Some people take out private insurance or have employers that provide it. Some pay for private treatment when they need it to get round long waiting times for non urgent NHS treatment or to benefit from the greater flexibility over timing of treatments and standards of supporting care, including private rooms in hospitals.

There will nonetheless remain a major requirement for the state to vote more money for more and better quality healthcare free at the point of use in NHS surgeries and hospitals. Much of the care and cost will be for the elderly as they live longer and develop more conditions related to old age that need treatment. It will require better integration with social care to cater for this growing group of patients.