

News story: Vital local bypass gets green light

- Department for Transport invests £27.4 million in new Little Hadham Bypass
- route expected to cut local journey times by a third, cutting congestion and improving air quality
- the key infrastructure upgrade also improves access to Stansted Airport

Motorists in Hertfordshire could see nearly an hour a week cut from their journeys along a key route, thanks to a £40 million investment.

Roads Minister Jesse Norman today (23 May 2019) confirmed the Department for Transport will provide £27.4 million, almost three quarters of the total funding, for a Little Hadham Bypass along the A120 between Bishop's Stortford and the A10.

As well as improving traffic flows in the area, the improvements will reduce congestion and improve air quality in the centre of Little Hadham, improving the overall wellbeing of residents in the village.

The improvements to Hertfordshire's road infrastructure will also bring specific benefits to Stansted Airport, improving the transport links to the airport, boosting the local economy.

Jesse Norman, Roads Minister, said:

Investment in local roads cuts travel time, boosts business, and can improve air quality by cutting congestion.

This new bypass will significantly benefit both road users and residents in and around Little Hadham as well as across Hertfordshire.

Mark Kemp, Director of Environment and Infrastructure at Hertfordshire County Council, said:

It's fantastic news for Hertfordshire that the Department for Transport is to provide this funding for construction of the A120 Little Hadham Bypass.

The A120 is a vital transport link in the county, so this is a hugely positive step as it's important that investment is made to improve it.

The bypass, and flood alleviation scheme, will help to support the growth we're expecting in Hertfordshire over the next decade or so

while improving quality of life in the Little Hadham area.

Adam Wood, Head of Infrastructure and Regeneration, Hertfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership said:

The A120 is a vital east-west link in Hertfordshire's already congested road network. This bypass will improve the quality of life for residents in the village and significantly reduce journey times along the route.

It is vital when we are faced with such unprecedented growth that we put in the right infrastructure now to support our places, people and businesses.

The plans will see a 4km single carriageway bypass to the north of Little Hadham, and will decrease journey times along the A120, saving regular users and commuters nearly an hour a week.

The scheme will also reduce the risk of flooding in Little Hadham and nearby communities to the south, through work with the Environment Agency to deliver flood reduction measures.

Works will start in June 2019 and the scheme is scheduled to open in Autumn 2020.

Press release: UK continues to demonstrate commitment to supporting the advance of West Africa's Agro-Industry

The United Kingdom continues to demonstrate its commitment to 'doing better business' on the African continent with the inaugural edition of the UK- West Africa Agritech Summit organised by the UK Department for International Trade in Lagos, Nigeria on Tuesday, 21st of May.

With a mission to encourage Britain and West Africa's rapidly growing trade and investment outlook by nurturing a strong network of prospective partners in finance, technology, innovation and knowledge, the summit and others to follow, is intended to be a platform for thoughtful discussion and deliberation over some of the most critical issues impacting the sector on a national, regional and international level.

The summit's agenda covered a range of diverse topics including promoting socio-economic development through agricultural transformation, livestock transformation and financing agribusiness in West Africa.

Speaking at the event the British Deputy High Commissioner, Laure Beaufils said:

Agriculture is Africa's engine of growth and job production. The sector accounts for an average of 20% of GDP of countries in Sub-Saharan Africa. The UK is playing our part through investment in rural farmers, Agritech, increasing wealth creation and strengthening value propositions of local entrepreneurs. We recognise that the sector requires funding and our UK Export Finance agency (UKEF) is committed to supporting these initiatives with vital capital support in the sector through its credit grantee scheme.

The event was attended by investors, business leaders, SME owners and senior executives from across West Africa including Namory Camara, MD Private Investment Promotion Agency, Guinea; Kwame Sisto Asaase, West African Rep., Agric Council Africa; Emmanuel Ijewere, VP Nigeria Agribusiness Group (NABG) and Chairman Bestfood farms.

The summit was also attended by representatives from the office of the Vice President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, office of the Minister on Agriculture, Amolexis, CDC UK, AB5 Consulting, as well as other.

The summit is intended to be hosted every year in a different West African country.

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[Press release: Government moves closer to introducing Sentencing Code](#)

Judges currently have to contend with more than 1,300 pages of convoluted and overlapping law – making it difficult to apply the law consistently and causing unnecessary delays to the justice process.

The Sentencing Code will bring greater clarity to sentencing laws, reducing the number of errors made whilst making sentencing hearings more efficient.

The Sentencing (Pre-consolidation Amendments) Bill brought forward today will make necessary technical amendments and remove historic, now redundant layers of legislation, to pave the way for the Sentencing Code.

This will include enacting a 'clean sweep' to sentencing procedural law, which will allow for all offenders convicted after the Sentencing Code comes into force to be sentenced according to the most up to date law, irrespective of when they committed the offence.

The clean sweep will be subject to exceptions to make sure that no offender is subject to a greater penalty than was available at the time the offence was committed.

Justice Minister Robert Buckland said:

It is vital that judges have complete clarity when making sentencing decisions, so we want to do all we can to reduce the complexity of the law, some of which is centuries old.

This Bill will pave the way for the Sentencing Code, simplifying the statute book and helping the public to better understand the sentencing process.

Neither the pre-consolidation amendments nor the Code introduce any new substantive law or alter the maximum or minimum penalties available for an offence.

In 2014, the government agreed that the Law Commission should undertake a project to consolidate sentencing procedural law, and the Code has been subject to four formal public consultations.

Notes to editors

- In 2014, the government agreed that the Law Commission should undertake a project to consolidate sentencing procedural law.
 - The Sentencing Code will present the law in one place, in a more logical order, and in simpler terms. These improvements will assist legal professionals in applying the law, thereby reducing the risk of error, appeals and delay in the process.
 - Before the Code can be introduced, this PCA Bill must be introduced to remove historic layers of legislation and correct minor errors and ambiguity in the law to enable the consolidation in the Code to happen.
 - [Both pieces of draft legislation](#) were published by the Law Commission in November 2018.
 - The Sentencing (Pre-consolidation Amendments) (PCA) Bill was introduced in the House of Lords on Wednesday and published today (23 May 2019).
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Speech: Foreign Secretary speech at the NATO cyber pledge conference

Welcome to the National Cyber Security Centre.

Two centuries ago, the seminal military theorist Carl von Clausewitz described what he called the “fog of greater or lesser uncertainty” that surrounds decision-making in times of conflict.

He wrote: “A sensitive and discriminating judgement is called for; a skilled intelligence to scent out the truth.”

Clausewitz was writing in the era of swords and muskets, and yet his warning also applies to the cyber age, when sabotage, theft and disruption can be carried out in seconds by an invisible adversary.

At first, the impact of any such attack – along with who did it and how – will be shrouded in a fog of uncertainty.

It takes the most sensitive and discriminating assessment to piece together the evidence and discover the guilty party.

This Centre seeks to perform that task and allow the British Government to take appropriate counter-measures.

In the first two years of its existence, it dealt with over 1,000 cases of malicious cyber activity in the UK – or about 10 incidents every week – mostly perpetrated by hostile states.

In 2017, hackers in North Korea infected thousands of computers with the Wannacry ransomware, inflicting damage across the world.

In France, several Renault factories were brought to a halt.

Here in Britain, 48 NHS hospitals were infected, something that made a particular impression on me because I was Health Secretary at the time.

Russian cyber activity

This Centre shares its world-leading expertise with Britain’s NATO allies and other friendly countries to strengthen our collective response to common threats.

Today, we judge that Russia’s intelligence services are targeting the critical national infrastructure of many countries in order to look for vulnerabilities.

This global campaign also seeks to compromise central government networks.

I can disclose that in the last 18 months, the National Cyber Security Centre

has shared information and assessments with 16 NATO Allies – and even more nations outside the Alliance – of Russian cyber activity in their countries.

We have regularly provided technical knowledge to help our partners to counter the threat.

Deterrence in cyber age

Together, NATO countries have become better at defending themselves against dangers in cyber space.

But we should not be content with just making ourselves tougher targets – crucial though that is. Our primary goal must be to deter this kind of behaviour from happening in the first place.

NATO is the most successful military alliance in history precisely because of our collective power of deterrence, and that prevented nuclear war and helped to keep the peace for 70 years.

Our profound insight is that strength is the surest guarantee of peace – and when we stand together, no aggressor can hope to win a war so it never makes sense to start one.

The challenge today is therefore to apply the eternal verities at the heart of NATO's success to the Alliance's newest operational domain.

And that means deterrence – strengthening our joint ability to deter those who would harm our citizens in cyberspace.

We have already made important progress.

In 2014 the Allies agreed that a cyber attack could result in the invoking of Article V of the Washington Treaty, meaning that the incident would then be treated as an attack on every member of NATO.

The North Atlantic Council would take any such decision on a case-by-case basis.

Britain was the first ally to offer our offensive cyber capabilities to NATO. Another eight countries have since done the same.

Then in 2016, NATO leaders endorsed the Cyber Defence Pledge, recognising the “new realities of cyber threats”.

But we can and must do more to improve our response.

In particular, we should be more emphatic about what we consider to be unacceptable behaviour and the consequences for any breach of international law.

Interference in free elections

At particular risk are the democratic processes in all of our countries.

In the cyber age, authoritarian states possess ways of undermining free societies that dictators of earlier times would have envied.

Time and again, we have seen attempts by states to interfere in democratic elections, often through the use of proxies.

In 2014, Russian hackers calling themselves “CyberBerkut” sought to disrupt the presidential election in Ukraine, including by tampering with the voting system and delaying the final result.

In 2016, the Russian state interfered in the presidential election in the United States with the aim of damaging one party’s candidate.

Free elections are at the heart of our way of life.

The leaders and ministers of NATO countries have been raised up by the decisions of millions of voters, expressed through the ballot box. We can all be cast down in the same way.

But recent events demonstrate that our adversaries regard democratic elections as a key vulnerability of an open society.

If cyber interference were to become commonplace, the danger is that authoritarian states would damage public confidence in the very fabric of democracy.

We cannot afford to wait until one of our adversaries succeeds in changing the result of an election.

We must be crystal clear that any cyber operations designed to manipulate another country’s electoral system and alter the result would breach international law – and justify a proportionate response.

Together, we possess options for responding to any attacks that fall below the threshold for Article V.

We should be prepared to use them.

Deciding to do nothing would be an important decision in itself – and the consequences could be escalatory.

The more we communicate our resolve to act, the more we lower the risk of miscalculation.

The more we work together to develop an array of appropriate response options – and signal our willingness to employ them – the greater our power of deterrence.

As always, we need to balance clarity about our determination to act with constructive ambiguity about exactly what we would do in specific circumstances.

The EU gained one further option last week when we adopted a new sanctions

regime, allowing the imposition of travel bans and asset freezes on those who carry out “cyber attacks with a significant effect”.

In conclusion let us remember that throughout history, every new technology has created risks and hazards.

The problems have often seemed daunting; the responses costly or uncertain. Yet so far, despite such challenges, we have always been equal to dealing with every advance.

So it must prove this time as we strengthen and adapt NATO’s power of deterrence – our priceless asset – to meet the challenge of the cyber age.

Press release: Norwich river given new lease of life

The partnership scheme between the Environment Agency and the Norwich Fringe Project was designed to improve the river’s habitat, which has suffered in the past due to physical modifications.

The work on the river at Bowthorpe included raising the river bed to create stone glides, which encourages the water to flow faster, thereby helping to encourage a more diverse ecology, including plants, invertebrates and fish.

The bank has been lowered in parts to enable the river to spill out when the water levels rise to create wetland habitat.

The £20,000 scheme was funded by the Water Environment Improvement Fund, which supports projects aimed at improving the status of the water.

Helen George, Natural Flood Management Project Manager at the Environment Agency in East Anglia, said:

We couldn’t have done this if we hadn’t all worked together like we did and I am so grateful for that. We have made an improvement to the river which benefits the fish, invertebrates and various other animals that use the river. We have a duty to get these rivers up to a good status by 2027, which is why we are using grants available to us to help achieve this.

The funding was given to the project to help improve the physical habitat of the river, which is classified as heavily modified. In the past, many of the region’s rivers and streams were deepened, widened and straightened to power mills, enable navigation, drain land for agriculture and reduce flood risk. These historic works have left many rivers with simplified habitats that

limit the range of fish, invertebrates and plants they can support.

Norwich Fringe Project, which is financially supported by Norwich City Council, Broadland and South Norfolk District Council, helped the Environment Agency to complete this scheme.