

Press release: Strengthened protections for Isles of Scilly seabirds

- New plans to extend Isles of Scilly Special Protection Area
- Thousands of seabirds including Manx shearwaters, European shags and great black-backed gulls are offered greater protection
- Public invited to have a say on proposals

Home to a greater diversity of breeding seabirds than anywhere else in England, the existing [Isles of Scilly Special Protection Area \(SPA\)](#) supports over 8,000 pairs of 13 different seabird species – including the European storm petrel and lesser black-backed gull – and is one of only two places in England where Manx shearwaters breed.

Natural England has [outlined plans](#) to extend the SPA by almost 13,000 hectares, helping maintain healthy and productive breeding colonies for generations to come. The extended boundary now recognises the importance of additional species for the first time, including the European shag and great black-backed gull, and includes not only seabird nesting sites but also nearby sea areas used for feeding, resting, preening and other social interactions.

The Isles of Scilly form an archipelago of over 200 low-lying granite islands and rocks situated in the South-West approaches, 45km South-West of Land's End in Cornwall.

Environment Minister Thérèse Coffey said:

Our coastline is home to some of the most magnificent wildlife in the world and we are proud to be a world leader in protecting our marine environment.

It is suggested that these new protections will provide thousands of birds on the Isles of Scilly with a safe haven for foraging and feeding, safeguarding precious marine habitats for future generations. I welcome the consultation and encourage local residents to give their views.

Interim Chief Executive of Natural England Marian Spain said:

Extending the Isles of Scilly Special Protection Area would bring huge benefits for some of our most important seabird colonies.

We look forward to hearing what people think and, hopefully working with everybody who lives, works in and visits the Scillies to make

these plans become a reality and make this coastline a key addition to the UK's marine protection network.

Special Protection Areas are sites designated to protect populations of rare and vulnerable seabirds from human activity while minimising disturbance to birds' open water feeding areas. There are already 47 such sites designated in English waters.

They are just one type of the many Marine Protected Areas (MPA) in place around the UK to conserve rare, threatened and nationally important habitats and species for future generations.

As part of the government's commitment to becoming a world-leader in marine protection, it has now protected 36 per cent of English waters through the Marine Protected Areas (MPA) network, recently held a consultation on designating [41 new Marine Conservation Zones](#), and has called for a [third of the world's oceans to be protected as MPAs by 2030](#).

The consultation will run from 26 February 2019 until 21 May 2019 and seeks views of all interest parties on the proposed boundary change. The public can view the consultation details on gov.uk and can respond online, by email or by post.

[Press release: More than 100 rural schools to get gigabit speed broadband](#)

More than 100 rural primary schools across England are set to get gigabit-capable broadband connections within the next few months as part of the Government's commitment to improve internet infrastructure in rural areas.

Under the £3 million pilot programme, 3 schools have already been connected, and 52 have signed contracts with work expected to be completed in the coming weeks. There are also ongoing discussions with another 72 schools who are interested in participating. The trial was originally planned to reach 100 schools, but the project has been delivered under-budget, allowing even more schools to benefit.

Minister for Digital, Margot James said:

This project is a great example of the Government's new "outside in" approach to rolling out full fibre broadband, which is taking gigabit broadband to the hardest to reach rural areas first. As well as making a dramatic difference for students in the classroom, by using the schools as broadband hubs we are also making ultrafast

broadband available to thousands of rural homes and businesses across the country more quickly.

Those schools already connected under the programme have seen their broadband speeds jump from 0.5 Megabits per Second (Mbps) to 100Mbps, and have the capability to be upgraded to 1,000Mbps (1Gbps) in the future should they wish to do so.

These new speeds are enabling whole classes to simultaneously surf the internet on tablets as part of structured lessons, and gives schools easier access to online training and educational learning. Access to cloud services not only means savings as staff go paperless, but it has also enabled the decommissioning of the school's local servers to reduce hardware, maintenance and IT support costs.

Mary See, Headteacher at Cheselbourne Village School, Dorset said:

Having new super-fast broadband reach our school has revolutionised the way we work. The much faster and reliable access to the web has allowed staff to work more efficiently; while the children, although still geographically remote, are no longer technologically isolated and will have the same opportunities as their urban peers in preparing for a more technological future.

Education Secretary Damian Hinds said:

In our inter-connected world, a fast, reliable internet connection has never been more important. The schools will be connected to the world of technology, enabling teachers to realise the benefits that fast and reliable broadband has to offer, from reducing teacher workload to improving access to high-quality resources.

I don't want schools in villages and rural areas to be left in the slow lane when it comes to broadband, and the funding announced today will benefit the schools that are most in need.

Kim Mears, managing director for Strategic Infrastructure Development at Openreach said:

We're really pleased to be able to support the Government's drive to connect up schools with full fibre broadband through our Full Fibre Infrastructure Build programme, which enables schools not in our commercial roll out plans to still connect to our full fibre network – without incurring any build costs. Without fast reliable connectivity there is the risk that children will miss out on what is now an essential learning tool, so being able to connect up schools in this way is great news.

The trial is part of the Government's £190 million [Local Full Fibre Networks](#) (LFFN) programme, and will see the schools benefit from fully-funded and future-proof full fibre connections directly into their classrooms. In addition the new connection being provided to schools has had the added benefit of increasing connectivity for the surrounding homes and businesses. Once the fibre has been laid (with the school acting as a "hub") connecting other premises in the area becomes much more commercially viable to broadband providers.

The trial will be instrumental in shaping the new £200 million Rural Gigabit Connectivity Programme, targeting the hardest to reach areas in the UK. Building on the same principle, the programme will deliver gigabit capable connections to key public and business buildings, including schools, as well as encouraging broadband providers to create additional connections to local homes.

Notes to Editors

1. In the recent [Future Telecoms Infrastructure Review](#) (FTIR), the Government made it a priority to connect hard-to-reach rural areas, with the overall aim to connect 15 million premises to full fibre broadband by 2025, and the whole of the UK by 2033.
2. In addition to the existing Local Full Fibre Networks Programme a further £200m of funding was announced in the 2018 Autumn Budget to pilot the "[Outside In](#)" approach described in the FTIR – connecting harder to reach areas of the UK. That funding is available from April 2019 and the Programme will be called the Rural Gigabit Connectivity programme (RGC)

List of schools connected already or due to be connected shortly

Dorset

Cheselbourne Primary

Derbyshire

Peak Forest Primary

Devon

Cheriton Fitzpaine Primary School, Highampton Community Primary School, Princetown Community Primary School, Holbeton School, Farway Church of England Primary, Filleigh Community Primary School, St Joseph's Catholic Primary School

Gloucestershire

Hartpury Church of England Primary, Slimbridge Primary School, Northleach Church of England Primary School, Churchdown Parton Manor Infant School, Churchdown Parton Manor Junior School

Kent

St John's Primary, Blean Primary School, St John's CE Primary School

Lincolnshire

Horblings Browns, Wrangle Primary School, The Hackthorn Church of England Primary School, Fleet Wood Lane Primary, Fairfield Infant and Nursery School, Quadring Cowley, Dunston St Peters School, Langtoft Primary School, Louth Kidgate Primary Academy, The Hackthorn Church of England Primary School, Whaplode Primary, Sturton by Stow Primary School, Nocton Primary School, Digby CofE Primary School, St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, Bucknall Primary School, Legsby Primary School

Somerset

Banwell Primary School, East Anstey Primary School

Wiltshire

Wardour Catholic Primary School, Lacock Church of England Primary School

Cambridgeshire

Wittering Primary School

Derbyshire

Wigley, All Saints CofE Junior School, Osmaston CofE (VC) Primary School, Stoney Middleton CofE (C) Primary School, Stretton Handley Church of England Primary School, Brailsford CofE Primary School, Peak Dale Primary School, Thornsett Primary School, Pilsley CofE Primary School, Parwich Primary School, Kilburn Junior School, Duke of Norfolk CofE Primary School, Saint Mary's Catholic Primary, Hady Primary School, Westhouses Primary School, Eureka Primary School, Stanton Primary School

East Sussex

St. Peter's CE Primary School, St. Michael's CE Primary School (Playden), Stonegate CE Primary School

Herefordshire

Bromesberrow St Mary's Church of England (Aided) Primary School

Northamptonshire

Old Stratford

West Sussex

Wivelsfield Primary School

[News story: Update on medicines and medical products supply as we exit the EU](#)

Leaving the EU with a deal remains the government's top priority and would give businesses the stability and certainty to prepare for our new relationship after EU Exit. However, the government must plan for every possible outcome, including no deal.

The Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) is working closely with trade bodies, product suppliers, the health and care system in England, the devolved administrations and crown dependencies (the Isle of Man, Jersey and Guernsey) to make detailed plans to ensure the continued supply of medical products to the UK in the event of a no-deal EU Exit.

Together with industry and the health and care system, DHSC has analysed:

- the supply chains of 12,300 medicines
- almost half a million product lines of medical devices and clinical consumables
- vaccines used in national and local programmes
- essential non-clinical goods on which the health and care system relies, such as linen, scrubs and food

Around three-quarters of the medicines and over half of the clinical consumables we use come from or via the EU. The main risk to supply is reduced traffic flow between the ports of Calais and Dover or Folkestone.

DHSC also has responsibility to ensure medicines supply on behalf of the devolved administrations and crown dependencies, and they have accepted the department's offer to manage the supply on their behalf. All supply arrangements therefore take into account the requirements for the whole of the UK. There has been excellent engagement from all parties, and preparation plans are well advanced as a result.

Following this analysis, DHSC has put in place a multi-layered approach to minimise any supply disruption, including:

- securing, via the Department for Transport, additional roll-on, roll-off freight capacity away from Dover and Folkestone for goods to continue to come into the UK from 29 March
- buffer stocks and stockpiling, where this is practical, or asking industry or NHS Supply Chain to build up buffer stocks in the UK before 29 March
- buying extra warehouse space to hold additional stock
- booking space on aeroplanes for products that require an immediate

- shipment due to short shelf-life or specific storage conditions
- making changes to, or clarifications of, regulatory requirements so companies can continue to sell their products in the UK even if we have no deal
 - strengthening the processes and resources used to deal with shortages in the event that they do occur despite everyone's efforts

A combination of securing freight, buffer stocks, stockpiling and warehousing, and regulatory flexibility will be required help to ensure the continuation of medical supplies.

By securing additional freight capacity to ensure a continued flow of products, stockpiling and providing warehouse storage capacity as a further contingency, and removing regulatory barriers, medicines and medical products should continue to be available for the NHS, other healthcare providers and the public in the event of a no-deal EU exit.

Local stockpiling is unnecessary and could cause shortages in other areas, which could put patient care at risk. It is important that patients order their repeat prescriptions as normal and keep taking their medicines as normal.

While we never give guarantees, we are confident that, if everyone – including suppliers, freight companies, our international partners, and the health and care system – does what they need to do, the supply of medicines and medical products should be uninterrupted in the event of exiting the EU without a deal.

More information can be found in the [written ministerial statement to the House of Commons on Monday 25 February](#).

Press release: Foreign Secretary calls with Indian and Pakistan Foreign Ministers



During his calls with the Indian Minister of External Affairs, Sushma Swaraj, and the Pakistan Minister of Foreign Affairs, Shah Mehmood Qureshi, Foreign Secretary Jeremy Hunt strongly condemned the terrorist attack in Pulwama on 14 February.

He offered his condolences to all those affected. The Foreign Secretary highlighted the UK's concern about the enduring threat to regional stability from terrorism. He encouraged Pakistan and India to improve cooperation and find diplomatic solutions that will create greater stability and trust in the region.

An FCO spokesman said:

The Foreign Secretary reiterated the UK's commitment to working with both India and Pakistan, as well as international partners at the UN, to ensure that those responsible for the attack are held to account.

The UK has been, and continues to be, in close contact at senior levels in both countries and will be promoting international efforts to tackle the threats of terrorism and improve regional stability.

Further information

Published 25 February 2019

[Press release: Trade remedies measures to protect UK businesses and cut prices](#)

British businesses will continue to be protected from unfair trading practices and dozens of unnecessary taxes on everyday products will be axed after we leave the European Union.

The government has today published the trade remedies measures that will be continued as the UK takes control of its independent trade policy for the first time in more than 40 years.

Importantly, these measures will continue to apply at the end of the implementation period or from 29 March if we leave the EU without an

agreement.

In total, 43 trade remedies measures that currently apply to imports from outside the EU will be transitioned into UK law after we leave.

This will see the UK continuing to apply higher tariffs to imports that have been deemed to be traded unfairly and risk disadvantaging British businesses.

The measures will protect important industries and safeguard jobs from the risk of low-cost imports at below fair market rates, including in the steel and ceramics industries.

British businesses will continue to be protected from cheap imports that are deemed to have been traded unfairly such as:

- tyres and aluminium wheels from China;
- ceramic tiles, tableware and kitchenware from China
- A range of steel and iron products from countries including Belarus, Brazil, China, Iran, Russia and the USA.

A further 66 EU measures will not apply to the UK after we leave the EU. These measures were originally designed to protect EU producers from unfair competition, but they do not significantly benefit British industries and only increase costs for consumers.

Consumers can expect to benefit from cheaper imports on the following tariffs:

- 10% tariff on sweetcorn from Thailand;
- A 42p per kilogram tariff on tinned mandarins from China;
- 34% on imports of solar glass, which is used to produce solar panels, from China

The decision follows an open and transparent review on whether specific measures should be applied to the UK. This included a public consultation to gather views from UK businesses and members of the public.

EU trade remedies measures are only being continued in cases where UK business supported the measure and where British businesses produce more than a 1% market share of those particular products sold in the UK.

This is in line with our obligations as a member of the World Trade Organization and is in the national economic interest of the whole of the UK. It will ensure that major British industries that have a large market can continue to thrive.

International Trade Secretary and President of the Board of Trade, the Rt Hon Dr Liam Fox MP said:

We have previously set out in our Trade White paper the government's commitment to maintain all relevant EU trade remedy measures, helping to protect UK businesses from unfair trading

practices while cutting unnecessary import taxes.

Today's announcement will allow British industries to compete on a level playing field with their international competitors after we leave the EU. This is an important part of our new independent trade policy and it underlines our commitment to free trade and to ensuring the integrity of the global rules-based trading system.

The decision on whether to maintain measures was based on whether those measures mattered to the UK. We are scrapping measures that don't significantly benefit British businesses and this will see savings for people throughout the country.

All transitioned measures will be maintained at their existing level until the UK Trade Remedies Authority completes a full review. This review process will ensure any future measures fully reflect the UK market.

The [final findings of the call for evidence](#), which sets out which existing EU measures will be maintained when the UK begins to operate an independent trade remedies framework, have been published today. (Monday 25 February)