

News story: Grayling: progress on Transpennine route upgrade and Crossrail 2 to advance in lockstep

Transport Secretary Chris Grayling has announced today (2 March 2018) that he expects a £3 billion programme of upgrades to the Transpennine route to begin from spring 2019, as an Independent Affordability Review is established to ensure the affordability of Crossrail 2.

Speaking in Leeds, Mr Grayling said that whilst work is underway on the key route between Manchester, Leeds and York, he expects Network Rail to begin investing the £3 billion into an ambitious rolling programme of works as soon as possible.

Transpennine upgrade film

Mr Grayling also reaffirmed the government's commitment to ensuring transport improvements across the country advances in lockstep, announcing that an Independent Affordability Review, commissioned jointly by the Department for Transport and Transport for London, has been established to ensure that Crossrail 2 demonstrates affordability and value for money to the taxpayer.

The Transport Secretary also said he will work with local authorities along the Transpennine route to discuss how to maximise the benefits of the £3 billion investment, such as creating new stations to increase access to the railway and finding opportunities for housing development.

Transport Secretary Chris Grayling with Andrew Percy, MP for Brigg and Goole, and Siemens staff at the site of the planned train factory in Goole.

At the Transport for the Northern Powerhouse conference, Mr Grayling said:

I want to realise passenger benefits from the £3 billion we have ring-fenced for the Pennine route as fast as possible.

Network Rail has already begun detailed designs, and provided us with options for the Transpennine Route Upgrade to meet the objectives we've set out – for journey times, capacity and reliability.

That – in turn – has given us an opportunity to undertake the work in phases starting as soon as spring next year.

This is not just about meeting rising demand for train travel. It's about transforming journeys too.

The Transport Secretary also said he will work with local authorities along

the Transpennine route to discuss how to maximise the benefits of the £3 billion investment, such as creating new stations to increase access to the railway and finding opportunities for housing development.

The Independent Affordability Review into Crossrail 2, commissioned jointly by the Department for Transport and Transport for London, is an important step in developing the project.

It will focus on the affordability of the project, ensuring the project learns from the best practice exhibited by projects like Crossrail, and that those who stand to benefit from new infrastructure contribute to funding it. Mike Gerrard, former managing director of Thames Tideway Tunnel, has agreed to lead the review, ensuring the public gets an affordable scheme that is fair to the UK taxpayer.

Chair of the Independent Affordability Review, Mike Gerrard said:

Crossrail 2 has the potential to relieve congestion and unlock housing, jobs and development to support future growth in London, but it is imperative that it can be delivered in an affordable way that is fair to both the London public and the wider UK taxpayer.

Major projects work best when independent reviews, drawing on a wealth of experience, help move them from plans to spades in the ground. I am delighted to chair this crucial review and I look forward to working with the Department for Transport and Transport for London to ensure that Crossrail 2 is the best project it can be.

Mike Brown, London's Transport Commissioner, said:

We welcome the government's backing for infrastructure projects of national importance such as Crossrail 2 and are pleased to be working with the Department for Transport on the Independent Affordability Review led by Mike Gerrard. This is an important step forward for a project that is vital for London, as reflected in the Mayor's Transport Strategy, and for the whole of the south-east region.

The Review is expected to conclude in summer 2018.

[Press release: New charity](#)

investigation: Lantern of Knowledge Educational Trust

The Charity Commission has today confirmed that it has opened a statutory inquiry into the Lantern of Knowledge Educational Trust (1111331). The inquiry was opened on 17 February 2018.

The Commission's inquiry is examining the charity's general administration, governance and management by the trustees, including the management and supervision of staff at the school with access to children or young people. It will also examine the charity's policies and procedures, including those relating to safeguarding.

In a report into the school published by Ofsted in January 2018, the inspectorate concludes that "governors have not held school leaders to account for the decline in standards", and "have too readily accepted information from school leaders without insisting that it is rigorously analysed".

The opening of the inquiry follows engagement with the trustees and a compliance visit to the school's premises in November 2017.

The Commission has exercised its powers, under sections 47 and 52 of the Charities Act 2011, to compel the provision of information and records.

It is the Commission's intention, in accordance with its policy, to publish a report after it has concluded the inquiries, detailing what issues the inquiries looked at, what actions were undertaken and what the outcomes were. [Reports of previous inquiries](#) by the Commission are available on GOV.UK.

If there has been misconduct or mismanagement in a charity or the charity's beneficiaries, staff, property or assets are at risk, the Commission will take robust action to both protect these and deal with the failings either of its own motion and/or in collaboration with other agencies.

The charity's details can be viewed on the Commission's [online charity search tool](#).

Ends

Notes to editors

1. Charity Commission is the independent regulator of charities in England and Wales. To find out more about our work, see our [annual report](#).
2. Search for charities on our [online register](#).
3. The Commission's role is as charity regulator to oversee charity trustees' compliance with charity law duties and responsibilities.
4. Section 46 of the Charities Act 2011 gives the Commission the power to institute inquiries. The opening of an inquiry gives the Commission access to a range of investigative, protective and remedial legal

powers.

5. The Commission does not investigate matters relating to education standards in schools; this is a matter for the DfE, Ofsted and/or other authorities.

News story: Industry roundtable on aviation security

Alongside the Department of Homeland Security's Secretary Nielsen, the Home Secretary and Aviation Minister heard from key aviation representatives including from Heathrow and Manchester airports, and Virgin Atlantic Airways and British Airways.

The meeting is part of an ongoing collaboration between the UK government and the civil aviation industry.

Home Secretary Amber Rudd said:

The global aviation system continues to be a target for terrorists who seek to destroy our way of life. This is an issue that is not isolated to either one country or one airline.

The UK is a global leader on aviation security and today was a chance to continue our strong collaboration with international partners, such as the US, as well as industry.

We agreed how important it is to continue sharing information and capabilities when it came to combating the terrorist threat and I heard about the good work already being implemented by airlines and airports to protect the travelling public.

I look forward to continuing this close engagement as we all work together on the safety and the security of our air travel.

Press release: Charity Commission confirms statutory inquiry following

convictions for “horrendous” terrorist abuse

The Charity Commission has today confirmed that a statutory inquiry into the Essex Islamic Academy (also known as Ripple Road Mosque) (1131755) is underway, having started in October 2017. The announcement, which confirms the Commission has been in regulatory engagement with the charity since 2017, follows the conclusion of the criminal trial today of Umar Ahmed Haque, a former religious teacher at the charity.

The Commission did not previously make the opening of the inquiry or its prior regulatory engagement with the charity public to avoid prejudicing the police investigation and subsequent criminal trial.

At the start of the trial, Mr Haque pleaded guilty to disseminating terrorist material to children at the Essex Islamic Academy. Following a 6 week trial at the London Central Criminal Court, Mr Haque has today been convicted of further offences, including the preparation of terrorist acts also relating to the Essex Islamic Academy.

Now the criminal proceedings are over, the regulator will resume its investigation in full. Once the Commission has completed its investigatory enquiries, it will deal with any failings or evidence of misconduct or mismanagement by taking appropriate regulatory action.

As part of the inquiry into the Essex Islamic Academy, the Commission will consider how Mr Haque was able to attempt to radicalise children, and what the trustees and others at the charity knew about this. The regulator will examine the level of supervision, due diligence and oversight the charity had over Mr Haque, and its adherence to safeguarding policies and procedures.

The Commission has liaised closely with multiple agencies including the police, educational regulators and the local authority on this matter since information was shared with the regulator by the Metropolitan Police's Counter Terrorism Command about Mr Haque in 2017.

Michelle Russell, Director of Investigations, Monitoring, and Enforcement at the Charity Commission said:

The crimes that Mr Haque has been convicted of today are horrendous, and are likely to have a devastating effect on many of the young people exposed to this harm.

This is one of the worst cases we have seen with children, as young as 11, being exposed to harm through attempted radicalisation and terrorist material by this man. The welfare of these children is of utmost importance to all agencies involved. Mr Haque's abhorrent actions don't just affect these children, but their families and the community as a whole. It is important that those affected have

the appropriate support made available to them, and the Commission will continue to do all it can to support the statutory agencies to ensure that this is the case.

The vast majority of mosques and supplementary schools including madrassahs do good work and are an important resource in local communities. What happened clearly damages the trust and confidence the children's parents had in the charity he was employed at, as well as wider public confidence. We and the public expect charities, particularly those working with children and young people, to be safe places, free from abuse or harm. This was not the case here, where Mr Haque grossly abused the trust placed in him because of his position and teaching role.

Today's conviction will reassure the public that such abuse is not tolerated, and that those responsible will be held accountable for their actions. We will continue to work closely with the police and other authorities to tackle the threat terrorism and extremism poses to charities, their beneficiaries and their work.

Essex Islamic Academy

The Commission opened a statutory inquiry into the Essex Islamic Academy on 2 October 2017 to investigate serious regulatory concerns relating to Mr Haque's time at the charity and the charity's safeguarding practices. The inquiry is examining the administration, governance and management of the charity, including the management and supervision of staff with access to children or young people and the charity's adherence to its policies and procedures including its Child Protection Policies. The inquiry is also examining the charity's financial controls. The regulator's engagement with the Essex Islamic Academy prior to opening the inquiry included corresponding with the trustees and conducting a compliance visit to the charity's premises in September 2017.

In January 2018, as part of the inquiry, the Commission exercised its temporary and protective powers and issued an order under section 84A of the Charities Act 2011 to direct the trustees of the Essex Islamic Academy not to provide educational classes or any recreational activities which involved regulated activity with those under the age of 18. This restriction and order will apply until the trustees are able to demonstrate that they have complied with a number of urgent actions required by the regulator.

The trustees gave assurances that they had voluntarily stopped regulated activity at the charity. However, given the seriousness of what happened, the regulator exercised its powers and issue an order in any event especially in light of its role to act in the public interest and the need to protect the charity's beneficiaries.

Further information

The Commission has also exercised its powers, under sections 47 and 52 of the

Charities Act 2011, to compel the provision of information and records relating to Mr Haque, and the general governance of the charity more generally.

No complaints were previously raised with the Commission regarding Mr Haque or his roles or employment at any charity.

The Commission is not a prosecuting authority. The investigation of criminal offences is a matter for the police and/or other authorities.

The lead on protecting children at risk are Children's Services and law enforcement agencies. The Commission is encouraging anyone who may be affected by this case to contact Children's Services for further advice on 020 8227 3811 in Barking and Dagenham. Social services, supported by the police, are delivering a comprehensive and long-term safeguarding plan to protect and support them.

It is the Commission's intention, in accordance with its policy, to publish a report after it has concluded the inquiry, detailing what issues the inquiry looked at, what actions were undertaken and what the outcome was. [Reports of previous inquiries](#) by the Commission are available on GOV.UK.

If there has been misconduct or mismanagement in a charity or the charity's beneficiaries, staff, property or assets are at risk, the Commission will take robust action to both protect these and deal with the failings either of its own motion and/or in collaboration with other agencies.

The charity's details can be viewed on the Commission's online charity search tool: [Essex Islamic Academy](#).

Ends

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1. The Charity Commission is the independent regulator of charities in England and Wales. To find out more about our work, see our [annual report](#).
2. Search for charities on our [online register](#).
3. The Commission's role is as charity regulator to oversee charity trustees' compliance with charity law duties and responsibilities. Regulation of the standards of education in supplementary schools is not within the Commission's legal remit. In 2015, the Department for Education ran [a consultation on registration and inspection of out-of-school educational settings](#) providing intensive tuition, training or instruction to children outside of school.
4. Section 46 of the Charities Act 2011 gives the Commission the power to institute inquiries. The opening of an inquiry gives the Commission access to a range of investigative, protective and remedial legal powers.
5. Mr Haque was employed at the Essex Islamic Academy from 2014 to the date of his arrest (May 2017).
6. The Commission issued the order under section 84A of the Charities Act

2011 on 19 January 2018.

7. Regulated activity is work which involves close and unsupervised contact with vulnerable groups including children. The full legal definition of regulated activity is set out in [Schedule 4 of the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006](#) as amended by the [Protection of Freedoms Act 2012](#).
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News story: Military support for snow relief

The military has been using vehicles and personnel to transport essential NHS staff to hospitals and vulnerable people in the community. The military has also been supporting local police forces to assist people stranded on motorways.

The Defence Secretary has met with soldiers from 1 Royal Irish, who have been carrying out vital work transporting health workers in the Shropshire area, which has been hit by heavy snow.

Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson said:

Our Armed Forces are doing an incredible job up and down the country, helping the emergency services, local authorities, and the NHS supporting those in need.

From Scotland to Cornwall, more than 100 personnel from across the forces are making a real difference in getting nurses and doctors to vulnerable and elderly patients, and helping rescue those left stranded in freezing conditions.

I pay tribute to their professionalism, dedication and sense of duty. They are proving once again that Britain can always depend on our troops to protect us no matter the time, no matter the place, and no matter the problem.

I witnessed for myself the vital role they are playing in helping the British people during the treacherous weather which has caused so much difficulty for so many people.

I am extremely grateful for all that our personnel are doing and will continue to do over the weekend – and I want to thank them for answering calls for help across the country.

Military assistance to date:

- 20 RAF personnel and 10 4x4 RAF vehicles are transporting health staff to hospitals and communities in Lincolnshire
- 20 Army soldiers and 10 4x4 vehicles are transporting NHS Scotland staff needed to deliver critical care services to and from Edinburgh Royal Infirmary and the Western General Hospital.
- 20 Army soldiers and 10 4x4s are transporting health staff to hospitals and support health workers in visiting vulnerable people in the community in Shropshire.
- 20 Royal Marines and 10 4x4 vehicles are transporting health staff to hospitals and communities in Devon and Cornwall
- The military is assisting Greater Manchester Police to enable them to access and assist motorists on the M62

Military assistance will continue as necessary during the current adverse weather conditions, and will be regularly reviewed in line with the requirement.

There are three UK standby battalions held at high readiness to respond to UK contingencies and emergencies, including support to local authorities. We have the right people with the right training to respond to a range of contingencies.