

Press release: A14 Cambridge to Huntingdon nominated for top environmental award

The £1.5bn project is one of five finalists in the BBC Countryfile Magazines Awards 2018 in the Conservation Success of the Year category. The project will see 21 miles of A14 in Cambridgeshire upgraded to three lanes in each direction (four between Bar Hill and Girton) and is aiming to leave a positive footprint on the local environment when it is complete by the end of 2020.

Members of the public are able to vote for the project via the BBC Countryfile Magazine Awards website from Friday 19 January in a poll that stays open until Monday 5 March.

One of the ecologists at work releasing some of the water voles into their new habitat in August 2017

Carol Hardingham, environmental lead for the A14 Cambridge to Huntingdon project for Highways England, says:

I am delighted that the environmental mitigation on the A14 Cambridge to Huntingdon upgrade has been selected as one of the five finalists for the [BBC Countryfile Magazines Awards 2018](#) in the Conservation Success of the Year category.

Protecting the environment now and in the future is one of the golden threads that runs through all aspects of the scheme, from design to construction, project management to efficiency and delivering value for taxpayers' money.

Our work sets the standard high in terms of reducing the overall impact of a road scheme on the local environment during construction and after the scheme completion.

We began thinking about the environment at a very early stage in the A14 project, and we will continue our work well after the construction of the road has been completed.

We are proud to be able to achieve this at the same time as building a road that will make it faster and safer for people to travel through South Cambridgeshire, leave a positive legacy for local communities and businesses and support the country's economy.

The nomination was put forward by readers after an article about the industry-leading A14 environmental mitigation project was featured in BBC Wildlife Magazine's January 2018 issue. A panel of five expert judges

including nature journalists and authors selected the project among a long list of projects put forward for each category.

BBC Wildlife Magazine editor and awards judge Sheena Harvey says:

It's a project that should lead the way in how to mitigate that damage done by infrastructure works – this is an example that needs to be out there for people to follow.

Since the A14 upgrade scheme was given the go ahead in May 2016, the A14 ecology team has been busy planning and creating new habitats and protecting wildlife during construction, as well as surveying the construction site for protected flora, gathering rare wildflower seeds and specimens to replant after the end of construction, and planning the tree replanting scheme once construction has been completed.

When the project is complete, 271 hectares of new, connected habitat for wildlife (equivalent to 269 rugby pitches) will have been created, and twice as many trees as were felled before the start of the scheme will have been replanted.

To find out more about the BBC Countryfile Magazine awards, the A14 project's nomination and to vote, [visit the Countryfile website](#). The winners will be announced in mid-March.

Work on building the £1.5bn upgrade to the A14 between Cambridge and Huntingdon started in November 2016. The project includes widening a total of seven miles of the A14 in each direction (across two sections), a major new bypass south of Huntingdon, widening a three-mile section of the A1 and demolition of a viaduct at Huntingdon, which will support improvements in the town.

For the latest information about the A14 Cambridge to Huntingdon improvement scheme, visit the scheme page, <http://www.highways.gov.uk/A14C2H> follow @A14C2H on Twitter and like our [Facebook page](#).

General enquiries

Members of the public should contact the Highways England customer contact centre on 0300 123 5000.

Media enquiries

Journalists should contact the Highways England press office on 0844 693 1448 and use the menu to speak to the most appropriate press officer.

Press release: Gedling MP looks at Nottingham's flood defences

Gedling Member of Parliament Vernon Coaker has visited the Holme Sluices at Colwick, Nottinghamshire to find out more about the Trent flood defences and the work of the Environment Agency.

The MP met with EA officials, led by Louise Cresswell, Area Director for the East Midlands, to see how the sluices work in protecting properties from flooding and how they maintain levels in the River Trent during times of low flow.

He also discussed the general work of the EA including the ambitious plan to improve fish passage for all species in the lower River Trent.

The EA are seeking support for the Trent Gateway Project which aims to open up 8 barriers on the river which presently block fish migration.

At present, the EA has funded the design of a possible fish pass at Colwick sluices and are working in conjunction with Nottingham City Council on a proposed Heritage Lottery Fund bid to build a visitor hub at Colwick Country Park.

Louise Cresswell, Area Director, East Midlands, said:

The visit of one of our local MPs was a great opportunity to talk about how the EA works to improve the environment for everybody.

We took time to show how the sluices work and to explain the flood defences for the area generally which protect a huge number of people and properties, including many in his own constituency.

The Trent Gateway Project is an ambitious plan to improve fish passage on the River Trent. Our aspiration is to open up all of those 8 weirs for passes which will increase the fish populations both coarse and salmon.

Vernon Coaker, Member of Parliament for Gedling, said:

It was a fascinating visit and gave me a better understanding of the River Trent and how it works.

The Environment Agency are doing some great work and it is important that we continue to work together for the good of the local area.

I feel very passionately about protecting our local environment and

I was pleased to hear all about the Trent Gateway Project which is an ambitious project but one that will benefit everybody by helping to improve the environment.

News story: MHRA update to pharmaceutical companies on exit preparations

Update on negotiations

The European Council formally agreed on 15 December that sufficient progress has been made to move on to the second stage of the negotiations, and adopted [guidelines](#) for that second phase.

This followed the publication of a [Joint Report on progress during the first phase](#) by the Government and the European Commission on 8 December.

These are important steps forward for both sides and demonstrate the shared interest in managing our exit smoothly, and in moving on with our negotiations.

In the context of ensuring continuity in the availability of goods placed on the market under Union law before withdrawal, the Joint Report makes clear that “goods placed on the market under Union law before the withdrawal date may freely circulate on the markets of the UK and the Union with no need for product modifications or re-labelling; be put into service where provided in Union law, and that the goods concerned should be subject to continued oversight.”

The guidelines set out the need for the EU and the UK to complete work on all withdrawal issues and to start drafting the Withdrawal Agreement. The UK looks forward to continuing these discussions.

The EU guidelines also acknowledge the proposal put forward by the UK for a time-limited implementation period, based on the existing structure of EU rules and regulations. The aim is for access to one another’s markets to continue on current terms throughout this period, and for it to be based on the existing structure of EU rules and regulations.

Both parties have recognised the importance of such a period in the interests of providing certainty and continuity to businesses and individuals, and the EU is expected to adopt additional negotiating directives on transitional arrangements in January 2018. The UK expects to be able to rapidly agree the detail with the EU in 2018.

Finally, the guidelines reconfirm the EU's desire to establish a close future partnership with the UK. As the UK enters the second phase of negotiations, its position on medicines regulation remains clear. The UK is fully committed to continuing the close working relationship with its European partners, in the interests of public health and safety. Its aim is to ensure that patients in the UK and across the EU continue to be able to access the best and most innovative medicines and be assured that their safety is protected through the strongest regulatory framework and sharing of data.

Preparing for all outcomes

MHRA is aware that companies who market pharmaceuticals in the EU and UK will need to plan and make decisions in advance of the UK's departure from the EU in March 2019.

As noted above, the UK's intention remains to secure an implementation period based on the existing structure of EU rules and regulations as quickly as possible, and to agree a deep and special future partnership.

We will continue to advise businesses on the basis of the UK position and will continue to work with the European Medicines Agency in planning for the UK's withdrawal from the EU and future relationship.

Current regulatory relationship between UK and European network

It is also important to note that the UK's current regulatory relationship with the European network remains unchanged. The UK has underlined to Member States and to the EMA on several occasions that at present:

- the UK continues to be a full member of the EU: we will fulfil our responsibilities, and, in turn expect to be treated as such.
- the UK continues to bid for EMA work and expects its bids to be respected and considered on merit. There are simple, pragmatic solutions to manage the possibility of various outcomes in March 2019: we are, for example, putting forward UK bids in conjunction with other Member States, in the centralised procedure, to ensure business continuity where procedures are likely to run beyond this date.
- MHRA have committed to complete all assessments under evaluation at the time that the UK departs from the EU and will make assessment reports available to the network.
- the UK continues to carry out its Official Control Authority Batch Release (OCABR) responsibilities as part of the Official Medicines Control Laboratory (OMCL) network for human biologicals.
- the UK will continue to put candidates forward for leadership roles

where appropriate and expects the committees with responsibility for electing chairs to do so on merit.

UK regulatory requirements after March 2019 in the event of no ongoing relationship with EMA networks

Companies have been asking for detail about UK legislative requirements in different scenarios. We have been working closely with industry associations and other stakeholders and further details on all these issues and more – both our Day One and longer-term proposals – will be published when appropriate.

As stated above, the UK intends to agree a time-limited implementation period with the EU, and both parties have recognised its importance. Should however there be no implementation period, MHRA's approach would be in line with the following principles:

- the European Union (Withdrawal) Bill will convert the existing EU legislative framework into UK law at the moment of exit, so there would be no sudden changes to the UK regulatory framework.
- we would be pragmatic in establishing UK regulatory requirements. We would give adequate notice and ensure that companies had sufficient time to implement any changed requirements.
- where possible, we would be making use of the information we already have to complete administrative tasks for continuity of work and licences.
- we would ensure the minimum disruption and burden on companies as the UK exits the EU, while building on the existing relationship between MHRA and firms.

We will continue to engage with business, patient groups and other stakeholders to help plan ahead with certainty, and will look to publish more technical detail if appropriate.

[News story: New features for the UK House Price Index search tool and](#)

reports

We have added new functionality and data to the [UK HPI search tool](#) and monthly reports, to help users identify changing house price trends across the UK more easily. These changes are in response to feedback from customers.

With the new features of the search tool, you can:

- compare average house prices in up to five separate locations across England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland by county, region or local authority
- type the location name, or click on the area on the map to select your location choice
- get insight into market trend activity going back to 1968, by accessing historic data about the funding status, buyer status and property status information
- present your search results as a table or graph
- retrieve your search criteria at a later date, by bookmarking different stages of your search

When you have completed your search, you can download the data for the specific breakdown or all the data in the search results, in comma-separated (CSV) format. Linked data users can still explore the data further by accessing the SPARQL query behind the search.

We have added links in the published reports, so that users can download the data tables from the report itself in CSV format. This function benefits users who want to use the data without creating bespoke queries or accessing the full background files.

This change is part of the work being undertaken to improve our users' experience of the UK HPI. Since its launch in June 2016, HM Land Registry and partners have started a programme of enhancements and updates. This has resulted in more available data, improved accuracy and extra commentaries in the reports.

In November 2017, the Office for Statistics Regulation confirmed the UK House Price Index will be awarded National Statistics status when [some requirements](#) are met. These enhancements fulfil an element of those requirements.

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

Press release: UK House Price Index for November 2017

The lowest number of repossession sales in September 2017 was in the East of England.

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UK house prices grew by 5.1% in the year to November 2017, experiencing a 0.3 percentage point fall from the previous month.

The [UK Property Transaction Statistics for November 2017](#) show that the number of seasonally adjusted transactions on residential properties with a value of £40,000 or greater rose by 7.1% in the year to November 2017. Between October 2017 and November 2017, transactions increased by 0.6%.

Looking at the regional level, the largest annual price growth was recorded in the West Midlands at 7.2%, up from 7.1% in October 2017. It was followed by the East Midlands at 6.4%. At 2.3%, both London and the North East region showed the slowest annual growth of all UK regions. This is the 12th consecutive month where the annual growth in London has remained below the UK average.

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 December 2017 UK HPI will be published at 9.30am on 13 February 2018. See [calendar of release dates](#).
2. We have made some changes to improve the accuracy of the UK HPI. We are not publishing average price and percentage change for new builds and existing resold property as done previously because there are not currently enough new build transactions to provide a reliable result. This means that in this month's UK HPI reports, new builds and existing resold property are reported in line with the sales volumes currently available.
3. 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.

4. Sales volume data is also available by property status (new build and existing property) and funding status (cash and mortgage) in our [downloadable data tables](#). Transactions involving the creation of a new register, such as new builds, are more complex and require more time to process. Read [Revisions to the UK HPI data](#).
5. 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.
6. 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.
7. 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](#).
8. The [UK Property Transaction statistics](#) are taken from HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) monthly estimates of the number of residential and non-residential property transactions in the UK and its constituent countries. The number of property transactions in the UK is highly seasonal, with more activity in the summer months and less in the winter. This regular annual pattern can sometimes mask the underlying movements and trends in the data series so HMRC also presents the UK aggregate transaction figures on a seasonally adjusted basis. Adjustments are made for both the time of year and the construction of the calendar, including corrections for the position of Easter and the number of trading days in a particular month.
9. UK HPI seasonally adjusted series are calculated at regional and national levels only. See [data tables](#).
10. 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.
11. 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.

12. 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.
13. 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).
14. Repossession sales data is based on the number of transactions lodged with HM Land Registry by lenders exercising their power of sale.
15. For England, this is shown as volumes of repossession sales recorded by Government Office Region. For Wales, there is a headline figure for the number of repossession sales recorded in Wales.
16. The data can be downloaded as a .csv file. Repossession data prior to April 2016 is not available. Find out more information about [repossession sales](#).
17. 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.
18. HM Land Registry's mission is to guarantee and protect property rights in England and Wales.
19. HM Land Registry is a government department created in 1862. It operates as an executive agency and a trading fund and its running costs are covered by the fees paid by the users of its services. Its ambition is to become the world's leading land registry for speed, simplicity and an open approach to data.
20. HM Land Registry safeguards land and property ownership worth in excess of £4 trillion, including around £1 trillion of mortgages. The Land Register contains more than 25 million titles showing evidence of ownership for some 85% of the land mass of England and Wales.
21. For further information about HM Land Registry visit www.gov.uk/land-registry.
22. Follow us on: