

The Avenue Landscaping and Remediation Project – one of the UK's most significant brownfield projects

In 1992 the Avenue Coking Works closed its doors. For nearly forty years the Coking Works had produced coal and gas and processed tar and sulphuric acid. By the end of its life, the site was a mess of leaky tanks, pipelines, waste tips, lagoons filled with tar and soil poisoned with cyanide and arsenic.

The 98-hectare site had polluted the River Rother and was so contaminated that it breached regulations in place to protect against serious damage to people and the environment.

The ambition for the site was to prevent additional environmental damage and restore the Avenue to a condition in which it would be suitable for other uses.

Picture: BEIS/Coal Authority

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Homes England took ownership of the site in 1999 and demolition work began, dismantling the conveyor gantries, coke oven chimneys, concrete cooling towers, the boiler house and powerhouse.

Numerous site investigations, surveys, assessments and trials were undertaken, and a strategy was developed to bring the site back into use, alongside an Environmental Impact Assessment of the proposed development, with full planning permission secured in 2007.

The scale of the remediation works was unprecedented in size and complexity, with remediation trials in Rotterdam and detailed scientific assessments in Manchester helping to inform the approach.

Beyond the structures themselves, over two million cubic metres of soil were processed through a £6.5m soil treatment plant, which operated 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, heating the soil to up to 1,000°C, removing the contaminants.

The discharge in the 300,000 cubic metre waste tip was processed through a sorting station which sorted the waste by particle size. Once the contaminants were separated from the soil, they were stored separately prior to being effectively treated or recycled.

Homes England worked to find unique solutions to ensure that the ecology of the area was protected during the works. Prior to the works starting, an estimated 8,000 newts, 50 grass snakes and 250 water voles were translocated or otherwise protected. The final design of the project includes provision of a newt reserve as well as a vole retreat.

Working in partnership with the Environment Agency, a flood alleviation scheme was built to reduce the risk of flooding to properties in Chesterfield. This included construction of a flood storage reservoir at the site, capable of storing up to 245,000 cubic meters of flood water and controlling its flow down the river.

The project received several awards, notably the CEEQUAL Outstanding Achievement Award.

CEEQUAL is the world's leading sustainability rating scheme for infrastructure, engineering and public realm projects. The site was praised for its extensive ecological design and management, sustainability of the remediation works and effective stakeholder consultation.

The works took almost ten years to complete, finishing in 2018.

Picture: BEIS/Coal Authority

Picture: Commission Air Aerial Photography

New beginnings

Having completed the ambitious remediation works, the site was ready to be put to a new use. A masterplan was developed to provide nearly 500 homes supported by a sustainable drainage scheme, significant recreational space, a primary school and hectares of employment land.

The 70 hectares of open space contains some of the highest standard public sports pitches in the county, as well as fishing facilities, a remarkable fact given the former state of the site. The site connects to the local cycle network and provides an off-road link from the south of Chesterfield to the town centre, railway station and beyond via the Trans Pennine Trail.

The work to bring the former Avenue Coking Works site back into use spanned over two decades and required the experience, ingenuity and collaboration of a range of partners including Turner & Townsend, Jacobs UK Ltd, VSD Avenue, CA Blackwell, The Land Trust and a broad range of public bodies including the Environment Agency and North East Derbyshire District Council, Derbyshire County Council and Kier Living (now Tilia Homes).

The results of the project are clear to see. One of the most ambitious regeneration projects in UK history, the regeneration of Avenue Coking Works has taken an environmental and social hazard and transformed it into a safe place where people can live, work and play, and take pride in their community.

[The Avenue – transformed](#)

Video credit: Killingley, matthew.killingley@killingley.co.uk

[SLC celebrates Scottish Apprenticeship Week](#)

News story

SLC has planned a week of activity to celebrate Scottish Apprenticeship Week



Apprenticeships Work, that's the message from SLC as it celebrates Scottish Apprenticeship Week.

The organisation has activities planned throughout this week (7-11 March) to showcase the achievements of its apprentices and inspire the apprentices of the future.

On Monday, the Leadership Team will meet virtually with some of the current cohort of modern and graduate apprentices, to discuss their experience at SLC and hear their ideas about developing the apprenticeship programme.

On Wednesday, Paula Sussex, CEO, will go back to school and talk to S4 pupils at Springburn Academy in the outskirts of Glasgow, about apprenticeship opportunities within SLC. She will be joined by graduate apprentices who will share their experiences and answer any questions the students have about exploring an apprenticeship.

And to end the week, Kaukab Stewart, MSP for Glasgow Kelvin will visit the Glasgow Office, on Friday, to meet with CIO, Stephen Campbell, and apprentices Hazel Fulton, Aidan McCrae, Cairn Foster and Jamie Law. This will be an opportunity for her to find out more about SLC's approach to apprenticeships, and how they benefit people at different stages of their careers.

In addition, the organisation has also been nominated for a Scottish Apprenticeship Week Award in the Large Employer, Promoting Diversity category. The award recognises the commitment of large organisations to supporting diversity through apprenticeships and the winner will be announced at a virtual award ceremony on Wednesday night.

Follow us on [Twitter](#) and [LinkedIn](#) for more information and updates throughout the week.

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[The Student Loans Company urges people to apply for 150 new roles in the North East](#)

The organisation, which is based at Lingfield Point, has Customer Service roles available, supporting customers at various stages of their student finance journeys.

Based within SLC's Operations team, the jobs are central to processing maintenance loan applications for two million students each year and paying tuition fees to more than 600 higher education institutions.

Successful candidates will receive a reward package including flexible working, access to the civil service pension scheme and a generous holiday entitlement. They will also benefit from SLC's routes for progression, with opportunities to learn, develop and upskill.

SLC has a blended approach to work, with colleagues spending time in the office and at home, so applications are being encouraged from across the North East.

Chris Larmer, SLC Executive Director, Operations said: "As we strive to transform the customer experience and work with the Government on enabling higher education reform, there really has never been a more exciting time to join us. We have 150 frontline operational roles available in Darlington and we believe it's an excellent opportunity for local talent to find meaningful, secure and rewarding employment.

"We are committed to unlocking the potential of our workforce – we want people to develop a successful career with SLC so it's vital that we invest in them and their futures."

Peter Gibson, Member of Parliament for Darlington, said: "SLC is a major

employer in Darlington, providing exciting careers with huge prospects for development advancement and progression. I'm pleased to support SLC in its continuing expansion In Darlington and I am keen to help highlight the opportunities to our community to ensure that many more here can stay local AND go far"

For more information and to apply please visit [Customer Service Opportunities – Civil Service Jobs – GOV.UK](#)

Ministry of Defence Police ACC Dave Long retires

Dave joined the MDP in March 1984, following an early career in metallurgy engineering. His first MDP posting was as a beat patrol officer at RAF Caerwent, followed in 1985 with a move to USAS Menwith Hill.

In 1987, Dave was promoted to Sergeant and transferred to Royal Ordnance Radway Green, later transferring to HQ Hereford Garrison in 1990, where he specialised as a Quik-Kuf Instructor, a Rifle Officer, and a member of the Augmentation Force (supporting nuclear convoy operations). He completed secondments to the then Criminal Investigations Department (CID) and undertook periods of Acting Inspector duties.

Dave completed a national Inspectors promotion course with Devon and Cornwall Constabulary, and in 1997 he was promoted to Inspector as a Training Manager at the HQ Police Training Centre. Upon qualifying as a Fitness Leader, Dave delivered fitness testing and training sessions for potential recruits and probationary officers. He also completed a National Police Training (NPT) qualification as a Trainer Development Officer, to provide coaching and mentoring support to new MDP Trainers.

Dave was appointed to set up the first MDP Driver Training Department in 2001, coordinating the delivery of an in-house training programme through a network of newly appointed driver trainers. He received a Commendation for drafting and implementing a new Driver Training policy and achieved an MA in Training Management from Middlesex University.

By October 2002, Dave was promoted to Chief Inspector at HM Naval Base Clyde where he worked as an Operational Shift Commander. In 2003, following Force restructuring, Dave was appointed to lead the Scotland Division Operational Support team. He was promoted to Superintendent in 2004 and was initially appointed as Senior Police Officer (SPO) at Clyde, for a 6-month period, pending transfer to RAF Menwith Hill.

In 2007, Dave took up the role of North East Division Ops Superintendent and shortly after was appointed as the Divisional Commander on Temporary

Promotion to Chief Superintendent.

Dave returned to MDP HQ in 2010, as Head of Agency Business Services, to coordinate the review and restructure of HQ staffing, providing the interface between the Review Team and the (then) Agency Management Board. Upon implementation of the new structure, Dave was substantively promoted to Chief Superintendent and took up the role of Head of MDP Standards – for which he received a Chief Constable's commendation for his work to deliver a programme of reviews across MDP stations, required for restructuring as part of efficiency savings.

At the beginning of 2014, Dave was appointed Temporary Assistant Chief Constable (ACC) for HQ Central Operations and, following successful completion of the National Chief Police Officer Strategic Command Course (SCC), he was substantively promoted to ACC in 2016, covering the Organisational Development and Crime portfolio.

Since August 2018, Dave has led the Operations Portfolio, with oversight of all aspects of uniformed operational delivery, including MOD planned events, mutual aid support for national contingencies (including G7 and COP26) and enduring Gold Command oversight of the MDP response during the COVID pandemic.

During his time as ACC, Dave has overseen a range of change and improvement projects, including the Organisational Development strategy, the firearms relicensing process with the College of Policing, internal governance reviews with the Police Committee, Force complement reviews (working closely with stakeholders across Defence), and the recent HQ Operations restructure.

Reflecting on his MDP career, Dave said:

During my (almost) 38 years of public service in the MDP, I've had great opportunities, some of which haven't always been expected, but I've always embraced them as a challenge, with a personal commitment to do the right thing for the Force and to lead with compassion and integrity to gain the support of all those colleagues in my teams at the time.

I've been fortunate to have experienced some enjoyable command positions, as well as leading on some key change programmes, and have been able to oversee the delivery of our various capabilities, across the Force, for the benefit of Defence, our customers and those in the communities we serve. The opportunity and ability to influence and help shape the future of the MDP has resonated strongly with me, as a career MDP officer, and has been a key motivator for my contributions as a Chief Officer.

I have worked with some great colleagues over the years in the MDP,

MOD and other stakeholder teams – all of whom have helped shape me as a leader. However, I must place on record the support I have received from my family, which has been very significant and has enabled me to pursue various roles in different parts of the UK and to have a rewarding and enjoyable career with the MDP.

I look forward to my retirement but will miss the camaraderie of being part of a big organisation. The time is now ripe though for me to watch from the side-lines, reflect on very fond memories and focus on the things I want to achieve in the future, thank you.

Chief Constable Andy Adams commented:

Dave leaves us with an exemplary career record as a Ministry of Defence Police officer: he will be a sad loss to the Force and his profession. I would like to take the opportunity, on behalf of all his colleagues, to wish him and the family all the best for the future.

[New laws to end mobile coverage ‘no bar blues’](#)

- New rules to connect countryside to 4G quicker and accelerate 5G roll out
- Law changes will reduce need for new phone masts and boost signal on roads
- Comes with protections to preserve rural scenery and minimise impact of new infrastructure

Reforms to planning laws will mean fewer phone masts will be needed overall to level up the country with improved 4G and 5G mobile coverage as telecoms firms will be able to upgrade existing infrastructure over building new masts.

Mobile network operators will get more freedom to make new and existing phone masts up to five metres taller and two metres wider than current rules permit. This will boost the range of masts, create room for the extra equipment needed for faster networks and make it easier for operators to share infrastructure.

The government will put tough new legal duties on operators to minimise the visual impact of network equipment, particularly in protected areas such as

national parks, conservation areas, world heritage sites and areas of outstanding natural beauty.

Digital Infrastructure Minister Julia Lopez said:

We've all felt the frustration of having the 'no bar blues' when struggling to get a phone signal, so we're changing the law to wipe out mobile 'not spots' and dial up the roll out of next-generation 5G.

Phone users across the country will benefit – whether they are in a city, village or on the road – and tighter rules on the visual impact of new infrastructure will ensure our cherished countryside is protected.

5G offers download speeds up to 100 times that of 4G and is set to revolutionise our daily lives, industries and public services by powering game-changing technologies such as virtual and augmented reality services and autonomous cars.

The move will help deliver the government-led £1 billion [Shared Rural Network](#) being built to eliminate 4G mobile 'not spots' in the countryside and enable communities to enjoy the revolutionary benefits of 5G technologies sooner, including specialised robots and drones driving productivity in agricultural industries.

The plans will also bring better mobile coverage to road users by allowing building-based masts to be placed nearer to highways. Families and businesses will also benefit from faster 5G roll out by making it easier for operators to use buildings to host their kit.

Hamish MacLeod, Chief Executive of Mobile UK, said:

Building the mobile networks that provide the connectivity on which we all rely is both complex and challenging. The industry welcomes the reforms to planning regulations proposed by the Government. They will enable operators to deploy mobile networks more efficiently to meet ambitious targets for rural and urban coverage, including next-generation 5G.

In its [response](#) to an extensive consultation on the plans published today, the government confirmed it will make amendments to the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015.

The changes to existing permitted development rights include:

- Existing mobile masts to be strengthened without prior approval, so they can be upgraded for 5G and shared between mobile operators. This would allow increases to the width of existing masts by up to either 50 per

cent or two metres (whichever is greatest) and, in unprotected areas, allow increases in height up to a maximum of 25 metres (previously 20 metres). Greater increases will also be permitted subject to approval by the local authority;

- New masts to be built up to five metres higher – meaning a maximum of 30 metres in unprotected areas and 25 metres in protected areas, subject to approval by the planning authority;
- Buildings to host smaller masts (up to six metres in height above building) in unprotected areas without prior approval to accelerate network upgrades and reduce need to build new masts;
- Building-based masts to be set up nearer to public roads subject to prior approval to improve mobile coverage for road users;
- Cabinets containing radio equipment to be deployed alongside masts without prior approval and to allow greater flexibility for installing cabinets in existing compounds (fenced-off sites containing masts and other communications equipment) to support new 5G networks;
- Conditions to ensure telecoms equipment does not block pavements and access to properties.

Mobile operators will still need to obtain agreement from the landowner before building any new infrastructure. All new ground-based masts will also need to be approved by local authorities which will continue to have a say on where they are placed and their appearance.

Robust conditions and limits will also remain in place to make sure communities and stakeholders are properly consulted and the environment is protected. A new [Code of Practice for Wireless Network Development in England](#) has been published today to provide operators and councils with guidance to ensure that the impact of mobile infrastructure is minimised and that appropriate engagement takes place with local communities.

Housing Minister Stuart Andrew said:

Ensuring as many people as possible, wherever they live in the country, have access to fast, reliable mobile coverage and digital connectivity is crucial to our levelling up vision.

These changes to planning rules will help providers to give more people access to improved 4G and cutting edge 5G coverage, while also protecting our cherished natural landscape.

ENDS

Notes to editors

- The government intends to bring forward the changes via secondary legislation as soon as parliamentary time allows.
- In addition to the changes to permitted development rights, the government will amend the definition of small cell systems to ensure it encompasses new and emerging types of wireless technology.
- Operators will also be required to notify relevant authorities when

constructing new infrastructure near to aerodromes and defence assets.

- Planning permission requires a planning application to be submitted to the relevant local planning authority to consider. Permitted development rights grant planning permission, without the need for a planning application, for specific types of development. Some permitted development rights are subject to a requirement to seek the prior approval of the local planning authority for the location and appearance of infrastructure before carrying out development. Where prior approval is not required, the developer must notify the local planning authority of its intention to deploy.
- Planning is a devolved policy area. As such, the reforms will apply in England only.