

Press release: Town's flood gates to be replaced

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Part of:

Environment Agency hosts drop-in event where community can find out more about Yarm flood gates replacement.

Residents in Yarm are invited to a community drop-in this week to find out more about Environment Agency work to replace the flood gates in the town.

The project will start in April and is expected to be complete by June, taking around 12 weeks.

There are 30 flood gates along the flood defence in Yarm, and as part of the work some of the gates may be replaced and others may be removed and the flood wall bricked up, subject to further discussions with residents.

The work will start by replacing the flood gates along True Lover's Walk riverside path, starting with flood gates at West Street and working towards Silver Street.

Residents are invited to find out more at a community event taking place at Yarm Town Hall on Friday 24 February. They can drop in any time between 3pm and 6pm.

Project Manager Neil Smith said:

The gates are being replaced because many of the existing flood gates are approaching the end of their usable life. To maintain the current standard of protection for the town it's essential these gates are replaced.

By carrying out this work we will ensure the town continues to be protected from flooding from the River Tees in the future. I'd urge residents to come along to the event where they can find out more about the work we are carrying out in the town.

Work is also already underway to carry out improvements at the Boat Landing stage. Some wall coping stones and block paving have been repaired and new handrails will be put up along the waterside of the boat landing in May.

In addition, there will be restoration and repainting of the perimeter fence and replacement of benches and litter bins in the area.

Press release: Green light for North Tyneside sea defence scheme

A revised scheme to strengthen and safeguard sea defences – which has saved more than £1m of public money – has been given the go-ahead.

North Tyneside Council's Planning Committee has approved proposals for the sea defence scheme at the Central Lower Promenade in Whitley Bay, which will protect homes, businesses and the surrounding area.

It means vital work can now get underway to refurbish the structure, which is around 100 years old and is reaching the end of its serviceable life.

Elected Mayor Norma Redfearn said:

This is yet more great news for Whitley Bay. The Central Lower Promenade really needs important structural work to be carried out and the general appearance of the area is in need of improvement.

The scheme promises to achieve just that by strengthening and safeguarding sea defences and giving this stretch of the coastline a major boost. It will also save a significant amount of public money and takes into account ideas and suggestions raised by residents.

The revised scheme, which has received strong public support, involves building a new rear wall and strengthening the existing sea wall on the lower promenade.

It was drawn up after the Mayor decided the original plans and proposed price was unacceptable and a value for money exercise was carried out, which has resulted in savings of more than £1m.

It has also allowed the opportunity to include some suggestions from residents.

The project, which is being funded jointly by the council and partners Northumbrian Water and the Environment Agency, will be carried out in partnership with Hartlepool Borough Council.

An open space will be created on the lower walkway with new seating, providing a great opportunity for leisure activities and events.

The design also incorporates a commercial opportunity for 'pop-up' style stalls/units on the lower promenade.

The wide upper footway will be refurbished and enhanced while the design also includes the Mayor's commitment to replacing the balustrades.

The work, which is due to be complete in winter 2017, will complement the improvements being made to the Northern Promenade.

The Central Lower Promenade scheme is part of the council's £36m Seafront Master Plan, which aims to breathe new life into the coast between Cullercoats Bay and St Mary's Island.

As part of the Master Plan, restoration work to return the Spanish City Dome to its former glory is continuing apace, a new Premier Inn is nearing completion next door, improvement work – including new surfacing and seating – is taking place along the Northern Promenade, efforts are underway to secure funding to refurbish St Mary's Lighthouse and a number of private sector schemes are also underway.

Employers shouldn't be allowed to break their promises on pensions – Debbie Abrahams

Debbie Abrahams MP, Labour's Shadow

Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, commented on the Governments Defined Benefit Green Paper, said:

"Moves to allow employers to erode the value of their workers' pensions, which could reportedly cost 11 million pensioners thousands of pounds, are absolutely unacceptable.

"Employers shouldn't be allowed to break their promises on pensions and we will not stand by while the Government gives the green light to companies to downgrade them.

"The Tories are letting older people down, Labour will fight to guarantee a secure retirement."

DVLA gets out and about to the Motorcycle Trade Expo

Back in September 2016 we blogged about how DVLA is developing a [new web service](#) for our stakeholder customers to register new vehicles.

Since then we have continued to develop the service based on customer feedback.

Last month Alison Wolley (Corporate Services Relationship Manager) and I were invited to exhibit at the [Motorcycle Trade Expo](#) event in Coventry by the Motorcycle Industry Association.



This is an ideal opportunity to spend time with our customers and chat with them face to face. We set up camp in the 'Knowledge Shop' section of the show – a perfect place to showcase the new service. And that's just what we did during the 3 day event.

We demonstrated and answered lots of queries about all aspects of vehicle registration and licensing. Knowing that there were customers still using our paper process, we were also able to showcase all of the digital services DVLA offers to help dealers registering motorcycles.



Being present at events such as these is invaluable in helping us to get a deeper understanding of the industry in general and it was great to see this reciprocated in the feedback we received about the new service:

- “this will save me a lot of time and money”
- “this is so much easier to use”
- “this looks like a service I could use, I would be able to register the vehicle much quicker to allow my customer to use their bike”

Many thanks to all that took the time to visit us and we look forward to seeing you again soon at another event.

If you want to be involved in testing the new service please contact us at ved.reform@dvla.gsi.gov.uk

Follow DVLA on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#) and [LinkedIn](#) and subscribe to our [Digital Services Blog](#).

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[Press release: Still time to have your say on plans to widen A12 in Essex](#)

Highways England has held seven consultation events over the last fortnight, with staff available to speak to over 1,853 members of the public who attended.

The events showcased Highways England's plans to widen the A12 between junction 19 (Boreham interchange) and junction 25 (Marks Tey interchange), which will reduce congestion, improve safety and boost the economy. It is part of the Government's record £15 billion investment in England's motorways and major A roads.

Highways England programme leader Richard Hofton said:

I want to thank everyone who has taken part in the consultation so far. We've heard some really interesting views and opinions from people and have encouraged everyone to contribute to our consultation. It is vital that we get that local feedback, as well as from wider stakeholders to help us reach a final decision.

There is still time for you to take part, so I urge anyone who is affected by and interested in our improvement work on the A12 to take part and share your views with us. There are important choices to be made and we are keen to get as many views as we can, so be sure to join in with the consultation so you can help us to make these decisions.

Some 89 per cent of respondents were positive about the events, which were held alongside Essex County Council's consultation into plans for widening the A120 between Braintree and Colchester. The figure rose to 94 per cent satisfaction at Boreham, with residents and other interested parties sharing their views and learning more about both schemes at the events.

Despite the last of these events taking place last Wednesday (15 February) in Chelmsford, the public can still have their say by contributing to the consultation, which will close on Friday 3 March.

All responses to the consultation will help Highways England take the best possible improvements forward. The four options shortlisted in the consultation are:

- option 1 – widening the existing A12 corridor (the online option)
- option 2 – widening the existing A12 corridor between junctions 19 to 22 and 23 to 24 and two new bypasses between junctions 22 and 23 (Rivenhall) and between junctions 24 and 25 (Marks Tey)
- option 3 – a variation of option 2 with only one new bypass between junctions 22 and 23 (Rivenhall)
- option 4 – a variation of option 2 with only one new bypass between junctions 24 and 25 (Marks Tey)

For more information about our proposals and to share your views, [visit the scheme website](#).

Alternatively, you can call the Highways England information line on 0300 123 5000 for further information or write to Freepost A12 Chelmsford to A120 Widening

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.