



5 December 2018

CECA North West

NEWS DIGEST FROM CECA NORTH WEST

Welcome to this round up of news from CECA North West. If there are any items you wish to include, please let me know. If you would like to contact me, or wish to arrange a meeting, I can be reached via email: guy.lawson@cecanw.co.uk or mobile 07703 585027.

Civil Engineering Contractors' Association North West news

Contact details

The office address is: CECA North West, The White House, Wilderspool Business Park, Greenalls Avenue, Warrington WA4 6HL Email: guy.lawson@cecanw.co.uk; Tel: 07703 585027. Although the office is not manned full time, I can be contacted on the above email and mobile number. We are also on Twitter: <https://twitter.com/CECANW>

Free and discounted services for members - what can we do for you?

CECA NW always wants to make sure it delivers the services that members want. So, please tell us what your priorities are. We are always looking for ways to enhance the services CECA NW offers to members, which currently include:

- Legal services (see below)
- Training
- Tendering support
- Market intelligence
- Lobbying

But, please contact Guy Lawson if there are any specific areas where we can be of assistance.

CECA NW Legal Advice Service

Willow Contracts has provided very high quality advice to CECA NW members over the last year - and their support and expertise for legal and contractual matters is highly recommended. The email address exclusively for members is CECAsupport@willowcontracts.co.uk and this will automatically contact Chris Hutchinson and his colleague. For the telephone service, the dedicated number is 01924 919392. In the event that the call cannot be taken any voicemail left is automatically routed to Chris's mobile phone. Call costs I am advised are at standard rates.

Tendering workshops

Members are invited to contact Guy Lawson for 1-2-1 tendering workshops, where he will advise on PQQs and ITTs, eg on how to present socio-economic and CSR data as effectively as possible. This is a free service to CECA NW members. Please contact him at the above number or email.

Story Contracting Rail England joins CECA

I am delighted to welcome Story Contracting Rail England into membership of CECA.

CECA NW - the NEW video!

Please find a link to the 2018 CECA NW video - aimed at promoting careers in the industry. It is now available on YouTube: <https://youtu.be/r6ieFJ2LAPQ>

CECA NW in the news:

Comment on the report for CECA on the social benefits of infrastructure

<https://bdaily.co.uk/articles/2018/12/04/infrastructure-can-create-new-industrial-heartlands-across-the-uk>

<https://www.businessupnorth.co.uk/infrastructure-can-create-new-industrial-heartlands-across-the-uk/>

Working Rule Agreement

Hard copies or a pdf version of the new edition of the Working Rule Agreement are available to CECA NW members free of charge. Please contact Guy Lawson to order your copy.

CECA NW meeting with Cumbria County Council, Wednesday 12 December, 14.00-16.00

A meeting for CECA NW members has been arranged with Stephen Hall and the council's Highways & Transport team, North Lakes Hotel, Penrith. Interested parties should contact Guy Lawson.

Three early dates for your diary:

CECA North by NW Dinner, Penrith, Thursday 23 May 2019

CECA NW Annual Golf Day, Leigh Golf Club, Thursday 27 June 2019

CECA NW annual awards dinner, Manchester, Friday 11 October 2019

Sponsoring the Civil Engineering Challenge

We are sponsoring resource packs to enable scouts and guides to achieve the Civil Engineering badge, developed by Pippa Higgins of Vinci. Please let me know if you would like more information. We are now funding over twenty groups to undertake the civil engineering challenge.

Training & Development

CECA NW/Driver Trett Legal Seminars

Breakfast seminars:

- Brexit 15 January
- Collateral warranties 30 April
- Payment update 5 March
- NEC compensation events 11 June

Half day seminar:

- NEC Update 26 February

Interested parties should book their places with Jemma Carmody: Jemma.Carmody@ceca-yorks.co.uk

CECA Training & Development Survey 2018

Key messages from the CECA Training & Development Survey, carried out between May and October.

- The approach taken was both online and telephone survey. Now in its third year, the response rate is regrettably again lower in 2018 (56 responses compared to 70 in 2017).
- In total, 21% of CECA member companies responded to the survey, with over 15,000 employees represented (2017: 27,000). Year on year, members report static employment levels between 2016 and 2017.
- In part due to the Apprenticeship Levy, large firms are forecasting a significant increase in apprenticeship recruitment in 2018, with a corresponding decrease in the number of graduate roles.
- While CECA members continue to report that their ability to access affordable high-quality training locally is valued, feedback on CITB's grant reforms show high levels of frustration with the system, but more importantly, an actual or expected reduction in the level of grant members will be able to claim. This is very likely to lead to reduced levels of training activity, especially in hitherto high take up areas such as short duration seminars where reduced number of courses will be grant eligible. This year, 45% report not being able to find or claim for this type of course.

<https://www.ceca.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/CECA-Training-Survey-Report-2018-1.pdf>

NW Contractors' Training Group - free for all CECA NW members

The Group provides access to CITB funding to support training, and its members receive free or substantially discounted training. If you are interested in joining the Group, please let Gill Steele know: mgtpsteele@hotmail.co.uk Please could CECA NW members advise their Training Managers of this opportunity. Please contact Gill to book your place at the next meeting (January 2019).

CITB Employer Update

<http://elink-eu.azure.send.com/m/023a3170cc3440b2b5de2b317aba2411/610813C4/A6E289F7/102018n>

Fairness, Inclusion and Respect Programme (FIR) update

More introduction to FIR workshops are being run, plus Ambassador training session, and Ambassador coaching sessions. If any of this is of interest and you want your organisation to get involved or build on its existing activity then please do get in touch: Tolu Oke, T: 020 7697 1985; M: 07469 159 788

FIR Training and Project Manager, E: Tolu@supplychainschool.co.uk

FIR Toolkit: <https://www.supplychainschool.co.uk/default/fairness-inclusion-and-respect/fir-toolkit.aspx>

GoConstruct

A campaign by CITB to attract more entrants to the industry: <https://www.goconstruct.org/en/>

GoConstruct has also produced a new infrastructure video which can be viewed here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=98rc8Ac-mF4>

Policy & Industry Affairs

CECA: Infrastructure Can Create New Industrial Heartlands Across The UK

Companies that build and maintain the UK's infrastructure predict a revival of former industrial towns and cities as hubs to manufacture and assemble components for transport and infrastructure projects. Working with economic consultancy Cebr, the Civil Engineering Contractors Association publishes a research report that highlights the social impact of investment in infrastructure.

The report - The social benefits of infrastructure investment - highlights the positive impact that investing in infrastructure has on the lives of people in the UK, supporting creation of new homes, improving health and rebalancing the economy away from London.

One of its key recommendations relates to the opportunities to revive former industrial areas as hubs for manufacturing and logistics to support major infrastructure projects.

Such areas tend to already have good transport links, and an experienced engineering workforce. By looking to site new factories and logistics centres in these locations, there is an opportunity to reinvigorate them, creating new jobs and growth. This would mean that the benefits of investment in major infrastructure projects could be felt far away from the areas where projects are being delivered. The report contributes to a better understanding of the different ways in which various forms of infrastructure investment affect people's lives and includes a series of recommendations for Government to consider as it considers its long term spending plans.

The report also recommends:

- Northern English cities collaborating with one another to increase their global competitiveness.
- UK Government continuing to fund infrastructure at 1.2 per cent of the GDP fiscal remit and examine the case for higher social and economic outcomes.
- Recognising that investment outside London supports growth in London and vice versa.

<https://www.ceca.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/Cebr-CECA-report-The-Social-Benefits-of-Infrastructure-Investment-FINAL-December-2018-compressed.pdf>

.... also regional construction hubs needed for infrastructure plan

The Civil Engineering Contractors Association has said that former industrial towns and cities would be prime locations, helping to spread the social benefits of big project spending. It is one of the key recommendations in the above report calling for a shift away from just using hard economic returns to judge the viability of infrastructure projects towards considering wider social impacts.

Major contractors face public work ban over late payment

The government could bar main contractors from winning public work if they fail to pay their supply chain on time. New rules will come into force next Autumn to ensure the government only does business with companies who pay their suppliers promptly. Cabinet Office Minister, Oliver Dowden said:

“Companies providing crucial services to the public sector, like delivering road infrastructure projects, must be paid on time. Paying invoices promptly is vital in providing healthy cash flow, particularly for smaller businesses who are the backbone of the UK economy, to help them survive and thrive. “From next year, if government contractors are late with supplier payments, they could stop winning public contracts altogether - until they clean up their act.”

CITB sells CPCS

CITB has confirmed it is selling its Construction Plant Competence Scheme (CPCS) to awarding organisation NOCN Group. The move is part of CITB's Vision 2020 programme to “take on a more strategic and influential role focusing on securing the right training mix, high standards and quality assurance building employer confidence in the market.” The programme has already seen CITB announce plans to exit direct training.

PR19 Review

Ofwat has come up with 4 key themes or 'pillars' for AMP7:

- Customer service
- Long term resilience
- Affordable bills
- Innovation - e.g. water companies' attitude to risk and reward and intention to 'do things differently'

Hunt for smart motorway trio to deliver £7bn plan

Highways England is advancing plans to deliver all the smart motorway programme through a single alliance arrangement. Radical plans to adopt a full alliance model for all smart motorway work are now underway with bids being invited to find three tier one contractors, two designers and a new production manager specialist to create a production hub. This promises a major shake-up in the motorway industry where around eight contractors are presently engaged.

The entire 10-year spend is expected to be around £7bn with the new 'on-site assembly partners' sharing out £5.95bn across three new operating regions in the north, midlands and south.

The arrangement will also include two design partners allocated to the north or south and a single production management partner, accountable for the programme-wide management activities within the production hub. Further documents will soon be available on the website, with submissions due back on **18 January**: <https://highways.bravosolution.co.uk/web/login.shtml>

Government launches Core Innovation Hub for construction

The government has confirmed the arrangements for a new construction innovation centre following an announcement on 30 November by construction minister Richard Harrington of the final element of the Construction Sector Deal. The new Core Innovation Hub aims to transform the UK's construction industry by supporting the development and use of technologies such as digital design, advanced manufacturing, robotics, drones and augmented and virtual reality. Many of these techniques are used and proven in other sectors, such as automotive manufacturing, but it will be a first for construction. The government hopes that increased use of technology will enable the sector to design and build faster, cheaper and more sustainably. Smart sensors and digital systems will be incorporated into buildings and infrastructure, so they can manage and maintain themselves and the data they gather will enable the government and industry to make our towns and cities better places to live, work and travel in.

Project 13 welcomes 2 new organisations

The Institution of Civil Engineers (ICE) launched its 'Project 13' initiative earlier this year. It welcomed two new organisations into its fold this month and Network Rail and Sellafield Ltd have been announced as "Project 13 Early Adopters".

"Adopters" are organisations which commit to implementing the project's principles and to change working practice, creating a new approach to delivering infrastructure projects. Project 13, is an industry-led response, has been developed to provide a new business model based on an enterprise, not on traditional transactional arrangements - to boost certainty and productivity in delivery, improve whole life outcomes in operation and support a more sustainable, innovative, highly skilled industry.

New consultation on the draft NPS for Water Resources Infrastructure begins

Defra has published its consultation on the draft National Policy Statement (NPS) for Water Resources Infrastructure. The deadline for responses is **31 January 2019**. Defra has said that it is looking for views and responses on "whether the draft NPS provides an appropriate and effective framework for the examining authority (the Planning Inspectorate) and the Secretary of State to examine and make decisions on development consent order applications for nationally significant water resources infrastructure projects in England". It is also looking for comments on sustainability assessments and Habitats Regulations Assessments that accompany the NPS.

<https://consult.defra.gov.uk/water/draft-national-policy-statement/>

'Planning 2020' - the Raynsford Review's final report

The final report of the Raynsford Review of the planning regime in England has been published and sets out 24 recommendations for reform. It builds on the nine propositions set out in the May 2018 interim report. The report concludes that there are "big problems with our current planning system, but equally there is a major opportunity to reimagine the system so that it can help make people's lives better by driving effective change". This will require "cross-sector political consensus", according to the report. Those involved in construction and infrastructure delivery will reap the benefits, as certainty will provide "greater hope of investment and innovation in the supply chain and in new construction techniques and design skills - productive activities that can help strengthen our economy".

<https://www.tcpa.org.uk/Handlers/Download.ashx?IDMF=30864427-d8dc-4b0b-88ed-c6e0f08c0edd>

Recommendation on Tilbury 2

The examining authority has sent its report of recommendation to the Secretary of State following the end of the examination into the Tilbury 2 proposals in August this year. The recommendation was sent on 20 November which means that the Secretary of State will decide whether or not to grant development consent for the scheme by 20 February 2019. The scheme proposals comprise a "new port facility acting alongside the existing Port of Tilbury".

<https://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/projects/south-east/tilbury2/>

10-year government pledge sets out £600bn of infrastructure investment by 2028

Ministers have reiterated their commitment to developing major infrastructure projects with £600bn worth of investment over the next decade. The mass investment programme within national infrastructure and construction pipeline include the £28 billion national roads fund, as well as other flagship projects like East West Rail, upgrading the M6 to a smart motorway and Hornsea Project One - the world's largest offshore wind. Planned projects in the north include: Up to £37m additional development funding for Northern Powerhouse Rail; Transforming Cities Fund additional funding including £16.5m for Tees Valley transport projects, £38.5m for Liverpool, and £69.5m for Greater Manchester; A5036 Princess Way - Access to Port of Liverpool (part of Liverpool Local Growth Deal).

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/759222/CCS207_CCS1118987248-001_National_Infrastructure_and_Construction_Pipeline_2018_Accessible.pdf

Bidders day for £630m southern highways framework

Hampshire County Council is preparing to hold a bidders' day for its fourth generation framework for highways infrastructure and civil engineering work across the South of England.

An estimated £630m pipeline of works from 2020-2024 will be split between three separate frameworks covering different project value bands.

Firms will mainly be engaged with highways related projects although the framework will also be available for rail, river and sea defence and airport work.

Framework 1 will cover small projects up to £250,000 in Hampshire, including the cities of Southampton and Portsmouth.

Framework 2 will consist of a panel of a dozen firms for medium-sized project of £50,000 to £18m.

This will be split into two regional lots covering South East of England and the South West.

While framework 3 will be used for more complex and large-scale projects worth between £15m and £150m, again split into two regional lots.

The preliminary supplier engagement event is to be held on 18 January in Winchester.

To register an interest for the event send an email to gen4@hants.gov.uk containing the names and contact details of attendees.

Industry unites for largest ever poll on skills shortages

Companies from across the UK construction sector are being invited to take part in the largest ever research project on skills shortages. As the UK prepares for the departure from the EU next year, construction's leading trade and professional bodies have joined forces to build a picture of those occupations that are in greatest demand. The survey - which will go out to more than 20,000 companies nationwide - will ask respondents to indicate which roles they are finding it difficult to recruit now, and which they expect to be challenging post-Brexit.

The survey is supported by:

- Association for Consultancy & Engineering
- Build UK and member trade bodies
- Chartered Institute of Building
- Civil Engineering Contractors Association
- Construction Plant-hire Association
- Construction Products Association and member trade bodies
- Federation of Master Builders
- Highways Term Maintenance Association
- National Federation of Builders

In order to ensure that the survey has as wide reach as possible, companies that are not members are also invited to take part in the survey, which can be found at

<https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/shortoccupations>

Safe use of forward tipping dumpers

Please find details of the current Construction Plant-hire Association consultation on forward tipping dumper guidance. A link for the guidance can be found at: www.cpa.uk.net/sfpsgdumpers/

CECA: Retentions

In 2013, following consultation with members, CECA signed up to support the delivery of Construction 2025. This included delivering on a commitment to the complete abolition of cash retentions by 2025. CECA is now working with other industry representatives to deliver these objectives and we would like to form a short working group to generate updated evidence to feed into this workstream. If you would like to be part of this then please email marieclaudhemming@ceca.co.uk

A46 Stage One Corridor Study

This summary outlines Midlands Connect's 20-year improvement plan for the A46 - one of the country's most important trade routes. Midlands Connect has released the first ever improvement plan for the entire A46 corridor, with a 20-year vision to future-proof the route and boost the national economy. The A46 corridor stretches for 155 miles from Gloucestershire to Lincolnshire, is home to 5.5 million people and 2.9 million jobs, with an economic output of £115 billion a year, equivalent to 9% of the English economy.

https://www.midlandsconnect.uk/publications/a46-stage-one-corridor-study-summary-report/?utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=November%20Newsletter&utm_content=November%20Newsletter+CID_d7274f507aa28a7033b20c2aaab5a899&utm_source=Campaign%20Monitor&utm_term=here

MoD £15bn defence estate pipeline

The Ministry of Defence plans to spend £4bn optimising its defence estate as part of its latest £15bn five-year procurement pipeline. The MoD's estates management arm the Defence Infrastructure Organisation (DIO) has announced schemes covering the next five financial years. Among these is the defence estate optimisation programme, which aims to help deliver a 30 per cent reduction in the MoD's built estate by 2040. The programme will also release surplus land to support wider government targets, and see £1bn of capital disposals by 2021.

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/748581/20180808-Procurement_Plan_FINAL.pdf

Homes England launches Strategic Plan 2018/19 - 2022/23

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/752686/Homes_England_Strategic_Plan_AW_REV_150dpi_REV.pdf

CECA: Too many frameworks don't work

Contractors are being hit as too many frameworks are failing to deliver expected work, while putting firms through unneeded extra bids to secure projects. That is the key finding of CECA's year-long study into the use of frameworks. Members told CECA that, for their frameworks:

- 71 % frequently reported less than anticipated workloads.
- 64% indicated a regular lack of workload visibility.
- 56% reported it is common for frameworks to have unnecessary second competitions.
- 54% said frameworks frequently favoured lowest cost over quality.

In order to start the drive forward towards best practice, CECA worked with its members and others in industry to develop a series of recommendations for infrastructure clients:

- Frameworks to be based around a clear valued work bank with a commitment to deliver work in the framework.
- Once established, frameworks must be used by customers.
- Frameworks to deliver a specified minimum value of work for all participants with subsequent work distributed on quality of tender performance and delivery.
- The number of companies on a framework should be proportionate and balanced in relation to the framework's value and the number and type of projects available.
- Customers should refrain from using multiple frameworks for greater flexibility which comes at the expense of increased uncertainty for the supply chain.
- More use should be made of limited requests for tenders from a select number of suppliers, contractors or service providers in order to reduce the time and cost of the selection process.
- Framework operators should only consider the use of mini competitions if there is a clear commercial reason for doing so.
- Frameworks must recognise SME specialisms and expertise.
- PQQs for frameworks should adopt proposals being developed by industry for a single industry standard approach.

<https://www.ceca.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/CECA-Frameworks-Report-November-2018.pdf>

HS2 reveals HS2 Crewe Link £1.6bn civils procurement

HS2 has outlined plans to split the proposed West Midlands to Crewe section of the high speed railway into two civils contract packages. Procurement chiefs said they are still keeping procurement options open with the possibility of running a competition between its four existing phase one joint venture contractors instead of prequalifying a fresh field of bidders. A current market testing exercise will help to inform the decision about which procurement route to take later next year. The 39km southern section of the HS2a route is expected to cost up to £870m while the shorter 28km northern section including two short tunnels is estimated to cost up to £750m to build. The procurement process could start by the third quarter of next year, with bids being invited in the first quarter of 2020, and the winning bidder announced by spring 2021. Design work for phase 2a is expected to begin next year, with construction scheduled to start as early as 2021.

HS2 opens race for £435m Birmingham Curzon St station

HS2 has begun the search for a construction team to deliver the design-and-build package for Birmingham's Curzon Street station worth up to £435m. The contract has an estimated value of between £355m and £435m. Early works contractors are on site in the centre of Birmingham preparing for main construction works. The new Curzon Street station is described as the first new intercity station built in the UK since the 19th century. Featuring 400 m-long platforms to accommodate the high-speed services, the station will include seven platforms in 2026 when the first phase of HS2 is expected to open.

New 'employer toolkit' to support EU staff

The Home Office have launched an official 'employer toolkit' aimed at helping HR teams support their EU staff. Its purpose is to arm employers with practical information on how EU citizens will be able to apply for 'settled status'. This is so HR teams are better equipped to answer potential questions and directly help their EU employees over the next few years.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/eu-settlement-scheme-employer-toolkit>

Skills and Training Fund - up to £10k grant for members with less than 100 employees

CITB established an annual fund of £3m to support small businesses with their training and development needs. Few CECA members have applied for this funding which is worth £10k a year to a business with 99 employees - there's a sliding scale. According to the records, more than half CECA members would be entitled to apply. The closing date is: **March 2019**. To be eligible for funding companies must:

- Have fewer than 100 PAYE staff
- Be up to date with CITB Levy payments and Levy Returns
- Be CITB registered

<https://www.citb.co.uk/funding/types-of-funding/skills-and-training/>

...and launches new £5m fund

CITB will welcome applications from organisations that work with one or more of these groups, to help them find work in construction:

- Young people not in education, training or work, particularly where existing networks are already in place
- Long-term unemployed
- Service Leavers who left the military at least 12 months ago
- Women wishing to join construction
- Full-time learners (focussed on CBE diploma students)

<http://elinkeu.clickdimensions.com/m/1/84168655/p1-b18302-5dc525a607fc4285a3030f4aecca751/1/99/e9e62d1f-0534-4dc5-83cc-83b9be75c79b>

Court of Appeal: entitlement to a second adjudication for clients

The Court of Appeal has confirmed, in S&T (UK) Ltd v Grove Developments Ltd, an employer is entitled to run a second adjudication to determine the 'true' value of an interim application for payment, even if the employer's payment notice and payless notice were invalid.

ACAS performance management guidelines

<https://acasnational.cmail19.com/t/r-l-jtztity-ujwykhdtk-j/>

Lockton November Health & Safety briefing

<http://emailcc.com/rv/ff00441865eae876b0830fe8ac4ebf4c56d4fdc8>

North West - and the North

Report calls on government to prioritise infrastructure investment and narrow north-south divide

The Government should champion investment in regional infrastructure to support economic growth and help eradicate the north-south divide. That's according to a new report, Investing in the Future, published by the economic consultancy, Metro Dynamics, and backed by The Peel Group.

<https://www.peel.co.uk/government-urged-to-prioritise-infrastructure-spending-to-grow-and-rebalance-the-economy/metro-dynamics-investing-in-the-future-november-2018/>

£250 million Merseytravel framework announced

Merseytravel has announced a new £250 million multi-party framework to deliver a range of schemes across Britain's fifth-largest metropolitan area. The four-year framework will cover a variety of projects across Merseytravel-owned sites, which include offices, bus stations, ferry terminals, the Kingsway and Queensway Mersey Tunnels, and several visitor attractions such as the Spaceport and U-boat Story experience. The framework is divided into 14 lots, and teams chosen for the agreement will have the opportunity to work with both Merseytravel and other major public bodies within the wider city region on projects such as libraries, housing, depots, municipal offices, health centres and schools.

Merseytravel requires a multi-party Framework Agreement with suitably experienced consultants in the following areas: tunnels engineering consultancy; rail engineering consultancy; marine-naval architectural services; civil and structural engineering consultancy; mechanical and electrical engineering consultancy; architectural services; transport policy and planning consultancy; quantity surveying; safety, quality and environmental consultancy; programme/project management; highways infrastructure consultancy; business case development; and topographical surveys. The deadline for applications is **11am on 2 January**.

<https://ted.europa.eu/TED/notice/udl?uri=TED:NOTICE:528107-2018:TEXT:EN:HTML&src=0>

Langtree sets out Parkside plans

The group has increased its focus on local authority joint ventures in recent years, with projects including Sci-Tech Daresbury - a joint venture with Halton Council - and at Hollinwood, where the company has partnered with Oldham Council. Other large projects include the Parkside Colliery regeneration in St Helens, which is again being delivered in a joint venture with the council. A link road to connect this site with the M6 has recently secured £24m of funding. Plans are already in for the first phase, totalling 1m sq ft of logistics space, while Langtree said an application for the second phase is expected in the second quarter of next year.

Eden Project North unveiled

The Eden Project has unveiled the design for a new £80million major attraction that may be built in Morecambe Bay. Two artist's impressions show what the giant seafront pavilions, inspired by the shape of a mussel, would look like in what has been dubbed 'Eden Project North'.

Plans to regenerate Birkenhead town centre move one step closer

Plans for a £150 million overhaul of Birkenhead town centre are one step closer after draft proposals and recommendations were approved. Wirral Council's cabinet approved the proposals for the Birkenhead Commercial District draft business case. The draft case proposes new Grade A commercial offices, an improved leisure and retail offer and the creation of a new Birkenhead Market.

21st century trams could be part of new mass transit system for West Yorkshire

A mass transit system for West Yorkshire could involve "21st century trams" which would link to the proposed high speed Northern Powerhouse Rail, according to a council report. Senior councillors in Bradford will meet to discuss the first steps towards a Leeds City Region transit network which officials say "would have significant benefits for the Bradford district".

Chris Boardman's £13.4m vision unveiled for Manchester

Plans for a 5km cycle route through Greater Manchester are being hailed as one of the UK's most ambitious cycling and walking schemes as a British Olympian attempts to ensure drivers make way for cyclists and pedestrians.

Chris Boardman, who won gold for Great Britain at the 1992 summer Olympics, is now the region's cycling and walking commissioner, and is central to now putting greener, more sustainable methods at the heart of Greater Manchester's future transport decisions.

The latest proposals are integral to the cycling advisor's 1,000-mile cycling infrastructure plan with the 5km cycle route to run from Manchester to Chorlton, giving cyclists and pedestrians priority over cars at key junctions along the route, if given the go ahead.

Back in June, Boardman and Greater Manchester mayor Andy Burnham revealed plans to invest £150m in walking and cycling infrastructure for the region. This £13.4m route is just one of the 'Beelines' - interlinked bike and walking lanes - that was proposed earlier this year.

GMCA identifies station development opportunities

The Greater Manchester Combined Authority has earmarked areas around a number of the region's railway stations for development with 87 acres of land potentially up for grabs. As part of the combined authority's station partnership programme, the GMCA alongside its Rail Station Alliance partners - Network Rail, Transport for Greater Manchester, London Continental Railway, Northern Rail, and Transpennine Express - has identified development opportunities around railway stations across Greater Manchester. So far, 87 acres of potential development land has been identified, with 14 stations singled out as having significant opportunities with an average site size of around 5 acres. These stations are:

- Ashton-under-Lyne
- Atherton
- Bredbury
- Cheadle Hulme
- Hale
- Hazel Grove
- Heald Green
- Lostock
- Marple
- Mills Hill
- Navigation Road
- Rochdale
- Rose Hill Marple
- Stalybridge

The Rail Station Alliance will look to work alongside local authorities to deliver feasibility studies for each of these sites in 2019, which will identify "potentially investable opportunities" including homes and job-creation.

Department of Transport to invest £53m in North West roads

The Department of Transport have revealed that some £53m is set to be invested in the North West's roads, with Lancashire to receive the fourth-highest amount of funding per 1,000 people in the region. Following the announcement of the Budget, drivers and cyclists will be encouraged to see that the extra £53m from the DfT will be committed to road repairs across the North West counties of Cumbria, Greater Manchester, Merseyside, Cheshire, and Lancashire, with the Roads Minister keen to "keep drivers and cyclists safe."

Transport spending in London still twice northern England's

The "northern powerhouse" was the Conservatives' big idea for closing the north-south divide and winning over sceptical voters in the north of England. But an analysis of government figures shows that in the four and a half years since the northern powerhouse agenda was set by the then chancellor, George Osborne, transport spending per person has gone up twice as much in London as in the north.

Transport for The North to launch Smart on Rail project

Transport for the North is set to launch the first phase of its Smart on Rail project, beginning on lines in Yorkshire. The initial phase, in partnership with Northern and TransPennine Express, will be run on rail lines between Hull, Scarborough and Malton, before being rolled out across the network.

New platform to be delivered at Leeds Station as part of £161m investment

A new platform is set to be developed at Leeds Station as part of a £161m investment programme. Network Rail announced that 'platform zero' will form part of the major investment in the station's rail infrastructure that will also see improvements to the track alignment for more efficient journeys into platforms 1-6, as well as an upgrade to the signalling across the entire station, in a boost to train service reliability. Platforms 1-6 will also be lengthened to cater for longer trains with more seats.

New TalkTalk company to build broadband network in north of England

TalkTalk has created a new company to invest in expanding its full fibre network despite an agreement with financial investor Infracapital falling through. The broadband company has formed a new company called FibreNation that will own its full fibre network in York. It will expand that network to nearby towns Harrogate, Ripon and Knaresborough to grow its footprint to 100,000 houses within 18 months.

Cumbria local government shake-up talks planned

Council leaders have agreed to start talks with the government about Cumbria becoming a unitary authority. A restructure could see seven existing authorities replaced by either one or two new councils. The county council was told that having just one authority could save an estimated £24.6m a year.

£12.4m cash injection for pothole repairs in Greater Manchester

Greater Manchester will get an extra £12.4m cash injection to tackle potholes after a freezing winter and scorching summer have left many roads in a crumbling state. The funding will come from the £420m announced by the Chancellor in the Autumn budget, with Manchester, Stockport and Bolton to benefit from the biggest shares.

Sefton loses judicial review on A5036 route

Sefton Council has lost its legal fight to order Highways England to re-consult on proposals to ease traffic on the A5036 Dunning's Bridge Road by building a dual carriageway through Rimrose Valley country park. Dunning's Bridge Road is the main route from the motorway network through South Sefton to the Port of Liverpool, and its congestion has long been a point of contention. But when consulting on its port access project, HE only considered two options, the £250m Rimrose route and a revamped Dunning's Bridge Road. Following a High Court hearing in Manchester on October 23, a judgement has been issued dismissing the application, with Mr Justice Kerr ruling that he would not order Highways England to re-open consultation.

Oxford Road Corridor plan identifies four development sites

Manchester City Council's executive has endorsed plans to bring forward a strategic regeneration framework for the Oxford Road Corridor, set to see more than 4m sq ft of development by 2025, focussed on four sites offering commercial space for science, health, and technology. The draft framework, which looks to take advantage of the growing commercial, health, science, and education clusters in the area, is split into four key sites: Upper Brook Street, the former Elizabeth Gaskell Campus, Willmott Street, and Birchall Way.

Green light for Surf Snowdonia expansion

Plans for an activity centre and 106-bedroom hotel at the Surf Snowdonia Adventure Parc can proceed after Conwy Council's planning committee gave a "minded to approve" verdict.

West Cumbria Mining announces date for end of year update event

West Cumbria Mining will be hosting its end of year update event at its Haig Office on **Thursday 13th December** between 12:00 and 19:00 hrs.

.... and Ian Rae appointed Head of Programme at West Cumbria Mining

WCM is delighted to announce the appointment of Ian Rae as Head of Programme, who joins from NuGen

DCO submitted for Preston Western Distributor

Robertson Group and the Tom Barron Pension Fund have submitted a development consent order for Preston's £190m Western Distributor link road directly to the Secretary of State after discussions with Lancashire County Council broke down.

Lancashire County Council approved a planning application for the road, which is due to link the M55 with the A583 Riversway to the west of the city, in October last year, and a business case was signed off in January this year, despite costs on the project rising by around £60m.

The compulsory purchase order and land assembly process was signed off in February this year.

The Manchester Lecture 2019: Trains, planes & automobiles, 17 January 2019

<https://www.cices.org/news/events/manchester-lecture/>

Work Experience

A 17 year old student, currently studying Architectural Engineering at Cronton College, is seeking work experience. His course includes an Industry Placement module on which requires him to complete 45-60 days of work experience, working Thursdays and Fridays every week. In his GCSEs, he achieved an A in Level 2 Design Engineer Construct and he is continuing with Level 3 as part of the course. He also achieved an A* in ICT.

If you are able to offer a placement in the Halton, Warrington and Frodsham areas, please let me know.

Tenders

Spital Park & Ride Design & Build Contract

Expressions of interest close on 06/12/2018.

Contact: Merseytravel, Email: tender@merseytravel.gov.uk

Register via The Chest: <https://www.the-chest.org.uk/>

Mossley Road East Retaining Wall

Expressions of interest close on 04/01/2019.

Contact: Michael Fanning, Tameside MBC, Email: michael.fanning@star-procurement.gov.uk

Register via The Chest: <https://www.the-chest.org.uk/>

Hard Ings Road Improvement Works

Expressions of interest close on 16/01/2019.

Contact: Richard Bruce, Bradford MDC, Email: richard.bruce@bradford.gov.uk

Register via YOR Tender: <https://www.yortender.co.uk/>

....and finally

Tunnelling begins at Thames Tideway Tunnel

Tunnelling has begun on the Thames Tideway Tunnel 'super sewer' with the first of six tunnel boring machines that have begun laying a ring on the project. Tunnelling had been scheduled to commence in summer but was delayed. Tideway has also announced that twelve new apprenticeships are "being offered to train the next generation of tunnellers" in a first of a kind initiative.

<https://www.tideway.london/news/media-centre/super-sewer-machine-starts-work-as-first-of-its-kind-tunnelling-apprenticeship-launched-in-uk/>