

Press release: 'Critical asset' for predicting flooding in York being built

Anyone who frequently travels on the A59 between York and Harrogate is likely to have noticed a construction site at Skipbridge, Green Hammerton.

Taking place under the bridge, the Environment Agency is building a new channel to enable river flow meter readings to be taken.

Project manager Oliver Wilson said:

This is one of the Environment Agency's critical assets for our flood warning service and for managing water resource available for abstraction.

Having an early warning that the Ouse could overtop in York means we can act early to prevent flooding by closing flood gates in the city.

The project involves building a concrete lined channel under the width of the River Nidd.

But building structures in a river channel is no easy feat, so a cofferdam has been built.

One half of the river is dammed off to create a dry working area to enable construction on that side, before the other side is dammed and the new channel structure can be completed.

The construction under the river enables an ultrasonic device attached under the bridge to measure the exact flow of water coming down the Nidd, which joins the Ouse about a mile downstream at Nun Monkton.

There was an existing concrete channel built a number of years ago but due to the design and flow dynamics it created in the river the bed got silted up, causing incorrect flow readings and it not working as an effective gauge station.

The new channel is designed to make sure sediment passes through it and flow readings are accurate.

Mr Wilson added:

Lower river levels have enabled us to make really good progress and we expect the gauge station to be fully functioning this winter.

North Yorkshire County Council's Highways Department has carried out work on the bridge and road earlier this year and Northern Powergrid also recently installed an electricity line across the bridge.

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Speech: Chief Medical Officer on the Amesbury nerve agent incident

Two patients are in a critical condition following exposure to the nerve agent Novichok.

Following events in March, we have a well-established response to this type of incident and a clear processes to follow. Our priority at this time is to understand the circumstances surrounding how these 2 individuals became unwell, and to ensure there is no further risk to the public's health from this incident.

As the country's Chief Medical Officer, I want to reassure the public that the risk to the general public remains low. I understand that those in Salisbury and its surrounding areas will be concerned at this news, particularly those who have recently visited the areas now cordoned off by the police.

My advice for any individual that may have been in any of the areas now cordoned off from 10pm on Friday evening onwards is highly precautionary. As before, wash your clothes and wipe down any personal items, shoes and bags with cleansing or baby wipes before disposing of them in the usual way.

This is the same public health advice I gave during the previous incident, a belt and braces approach. I should also warn that the public should be careful, as always, of picking up any unknown or already dangerous objects such as needles and syringes.

You do not need to seek advice from a health professional unless you are experiencing symptoms – any individual who had been significantly exposed at the same time would by now have symptoms. Those people from that area who are concerned that they are experiencing symptoms should call NHS 111.

I also want to highlight, that the areas of Salisbury already cleaned and

back in use, like the Maltings, are safe.

I'd like to commend the professionalism of our emergency staff as well as those at Salisbury District Hospital, particularly the intensive care unit.

And I particularly want to reiterate, the police are still investigating how this event happened. The public should continue to follow the advice of the police and that of Public Health England. We will ensure regular updates as we get further information.

Press release: Government leads energy charge across public sector, saving up to £340 million

At a speech celebrating the Northern Powerhouse in Newcastle today (Thursday 5 July), the Business and Energy Secretary Greg Clark announced a range of measures to place the UK at the forefront of the global shift towards clean growth as part of our [Industrial Strategy](#).

Following a speech by the Prime Minister last month, Greg Clark outlined how the government will deliver the Clean Growth Grand Challenge's first 'mission' to halve the energy use of new buildings by 2030, saving families money.

Building on the momentum of ambitious energy efficiency measures within the public sector, the Secretary of State announced that central government will work towards a more stretching target with a reduction of 43% greenhouse gas emissions by 2019 to 2020 compared to 2009 to 2010 levels, potentially delivering £340 million in savings. We will also be publishing guidance on targets for the wider public and higher education sectors.

Business and Energy Secretary Greg Clark said:

Our new, ambitious target for reducing emission across our central estate shows how this government is continuing to lead the world and rise to the challenge of tackling climate change. We have made significant progress so far, meeting our previous target 3 years early and saving just over £100 million last financial year as a result.

The potential savings from this can make a big difference across the wider public sector, with the NHS saving £2 billion over the last decade; money that can be put straight back into frontline services where it's needed most.

Industry energy efficiency

We need to revolutionise the way we heat our homes and businesses, to support this, the Business Secretary announced that government will be launching the £18 million Industrial Heat Recovery Support programme with applications invited in the autumn. This is intended to encourage industry to invest in heat recovery technologies, harnessing the power of heat which would otherwise go to waste to help improve the efficiency of industry and reduce costs.

Speaking today, Greg Clark said:

Of the more than \$11 trillion investment expected in global power in the next three decades, 86% – is expected to be in low carbon. And by 2040, electric vehicles could make up over half of global car sales, compared to 1% today.

We will be working with businesses to highlight these opportunities during the first ever annual Green GB Week starting on the 15 October.

The Business Secretary also launched the [Construction Sector Deal](#) will bring together the construction, manufacturing, energy and digital sectors to deliver innovative approaches that improve productivity in construction and accelerate a shift to building safer, healthier and more affordable places to live and learn that use less energy.

Notes to editors

1. The [Greening Government Commitments](#) require central government departments to adopt sustainable practices, including greenhouse gas emissions.
2. We have announced a new target to reduce emissions by 43% by 2020, compared with 2009 to 2010 levels. This has the potential to deliver savings of £340 million in 2020 compared to a 2009 to 2010 baseline.
3. The previous target for government, as a whole, was to reduce emissions by 32% by 2019 to 2020, compared with 2009 to 2010 levels. This was exceeded 3 years early with a 33% reduction by the end of 2016 to 2017, resulting in a saving of £104 million in 2016 to 2017 compared to the 2009 to 2010 baseline.
4. We are also publishing guidance for wider public and higher education sectors to report against a voluntary target of more than 30% reduction in emissions by 2020 to 2021: [Emissions Reduction Pledge 2020: emissions](#)

[reporting in public and higher education sectors](#)

5. The [Industrial Heat Recovery Programme](#) will open for applications in Autumn 2018.
6. The [successful applicants from the 2 £10 million innovation competitions](#) include northern companies such as Free Running Buildings in Leeds who are pioneering low energy ventilation technology, and Hull University who will develop a high efficiency, low carbon heating system for public buildings in Yorkshire.

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