

# Press release: Climate change means more frequent flooding, warns Environment Agency

Intense bouts of flooding are set to become more frequent, the Environment Agency has warned today (Friday 16 February).

The warning follows a pattern of severe flooding over the past 10 years linked to an increase in extreme weather events as the country's climate changes. Met Office records show that since 1910 there have been 17 record breaking rainfall months or seasons – with 9 of them since 2000. As intense storms are becoming more frequent, sea levels are also rising because of climate change.

The Environment Agency has today launched its [Flood Action Campaign](#), targeting younger people through social media and online advertising to encourage them to check their flood risk at GOV.UK, sign up for free warnings and be prepared to take action when flooding hits. Research shows that 18 to 34 year olds are least likely to perceive flood risk to their area, know how to protect their homes or where to go for information. They are also at highest risk of fatality as they are less likely to perceive their personal risk.

Sir James Bevan, Chief Executive of the Environment Agency, said:

Climate change is likely to mean more frequent and intense flooding. Floods destroy – lives, livelihoods, and property.

Our flood defences reduce the risk of flooding, and our flood warnings help keep communities safe when it threatens. But we can never entirely eliminate the risk of flooding. Checking your flood risk is the first step to protecting yourself, your loved ones and your home.

In summer 2012, the lengthy period of drought the country had experienced came to an abrupt end when prolonged and intense rainfall increased the risk of flooding from rivers and surface water for long periods. Almost 8,000 homes and businesses were flooded across the country, particularly in the south west.

The winter of 2013 to 2014 started with a coastal surge and record sea levels on the north and east coasts. This was followed by 12 storms in succession and became the wettest winter for 250 years – 11,000 homes were flooded.

Winter 2015 to 2016 brought widespread flooding to 17,000 properties across the north of England, with named storms Desmond, Eva and Frank causing December 2015 to be the wettest month ever recorded.

The threat of flooding is real and increasing – as is also demonstrated by its listing as one of the [nation's major threats](#).

Last year, the Met Office published new innovative research which found that for England and Wales there is a 1 in 3 chance of a new monthly rainfall record in at least one region each winter.

By their very nature extreme events are rare and a novel research method was needed to quantify the risk of extreme rainfall within the current climate.

Professor Adam Scaife, who leads this area of research at the Met Office, said:

“The Met Office supercomputer was used to simulate thousands of possible winters, some of them much more extreme than we’ve yet witnessed. This gave many more extreme events than have happened in the real world, helping us work out how severe things could get.”

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**[Press release: £45 million funding](#)**

# boost to support councils unlock land for thousands of homes

A £45 million cash injection into key community projects will help kick-start the building of thousands of new homes, Housing Minister Dominic Raab announced today (16 February 2018).

As part of government's drive to get Britain building homes again, a total of 79 projects from Newcastle to Plymouth will receive funding to support building up to 7,280 homes on council owned land.

To support local councils to meet their ambition to unlock enough of land they own for at least 160,000 homes by 2020, they will be able to use the Land Release Fund money to combat barriers which would otherwise make land unusable for development.

The projects – which aim to support building strong communities – include a range of necessary works such as asbestos removal and bat alleviation, as well as schemes that will significantly improve quality of life such as essential relocating of a pelican crossing.

This move comes 2 weeks after the projects set to benefit from the first wave of funding from the [£5 billion Housing Infrastructure Fund were announced](#), helping to get up to 200,000 homes off the ground through investment in local housing projects. This is part of the government's comprehensive strategy of planning reform and targeted investment to build 300,000 homes a year.

Housing and Planning Minister Dominic Raab said:

We are investing £45 million to build roads and provide utilities, so councils can release the land to get up to 7,280 new homes built.

It's part of our strategy to build the homes Britain needs, and carry local communities with us.

We're determined to make buying or renting more affordable for young families and those on low or middle incomes.

Projects from Newcastle to Plymouth will receive funding from the Land Release Fund, which will enable:

- Poulton-Le-Fylde, Lancashire, to build new roads, roundabouts, and utility services, which will unlock up to 330 homes potentially built with Japanese modular housing techniques. The works will cost £1.7 million.

- Worcester to demolish a leisure centre and undergo asbestos decontamination works near its city centre, helping to unlock up to 50 homes. The project will cost £750,000.
- Paignton, Devon, to build a new 350m sewer, drainage upgrades and 2 new roads, which will help unlock up to 200 homes. The works will cost £1.9 million.
- Brighton, Sussex, to divert a public sewer and make electricity substation and highways improvements. The £335,000 project will help unlock up to 30 homes.

The Land Release Fund is being administered through a partnership with the Local Government Association and Cabinet Office's One Public Estate (OPE) programme, which make the best use of council land and resources through practical advice and support.

OPE already works with over 70% of councils in England to transform local communities and services through large scale economic growth, delivering new jobs and new homes.

## **Further information**

The Land Release Fund competitively assessed bids from local authorities on value for money, innovation, and the contribution to wider government housing objectives.

A total of 79 bids were successful in the assessment process, which will see £45 million being awarded to 41 authorities.

The fund was oversubscribed with more than £100 million received in funding requests for 143 projects.

The successful bids will release land for homes by March 2020.

In a [funding announcement](#) on 11 December 2017, One Public Estate gave councils – and their public sector partners – access to £8.7 million of funding, as well as practical support and expertise, to help them develop and deliver ambitious property programmes to benefit their communities.

OPE provides councils with funding and access to practical support and expertise to deliver property-based projects with wider public sector partners, including central government departments.

The joint initiative enables publicly-owned land and buildings to be used more efficiently and deliver real benefits to communities across the country, including new jobs and better services.

See details on the bids:

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## **[Press release: New measures to help farmers and growers in the food supply chain](#)**

A 'collaboration fund' of up to £10 million has been announced today (16 February) as part of a series of measures to help farmers and small producers compete and thrive alongside larger businesses in the food supply chain.

The fund will be designed in consultation with the farming industry and will work by bringing together those interested in co-operation. These groups will be supported by the funding to formally establish, develop or expand, so that farmers and growers can take advantage of new market opportunities to help their businesses thrive. Collaboration between farmers can bring substantial economic benefits, enabling farmers to benefit from economies of scale, share knowledge and jointly market their produce.

The move was announced today in the [Government response](#) to the consultation on the remit of the [Groceries Code Adjudicator](#), along with a range of other measures which will come into force to help protect the rights of farmers and small producers, including:

- Introducing compulsory milk contracts between producers and purchasers to help protect dairy farmers by setting out clear terms, including the price for the delivery of milk, the timing of deliveries, the duration of the contract, details of payment procedures, and arrangements for collecting and delivering raw milk
- A requirement that slaughterhouses use a standard grid for the classification of sheep carcasses to help ensure farmers are paid per carcass in a more transparent manner, providing more certainty for farmers in the price they will get for their animals
- A commitment to work with industry to explore improving transparency and access to prices along the supply chain, to help farmers and small producers see if they are getting a fair deal for their produce

- An assessment from the Competition and Markets Authority into whether more grocery retailers could come under the remit of the GCA
- Tackling late payments by highlighting to farmers and small producers the role of the [Small Business Commissioner](#)

Announcing the measures Farming Minister George Eustice said:

This package of measures is designed to improve transparency and integrity within the food supply chain and to support collaborative business models where producers can come together to strengthen their position or work jointly on specific areas of work.

Too often in the past, farmers have ended up being price takers and there have been too many instances where a lack of transparency in prices and charges by some processors has undermined the market. If we want a successful farming industry in the future then it is essential that we have properly functioning markets and that farmers receive a fair share of the value of the food they produce.

Business Minister Andrew Griffiths said:

This Government's Industrial Strategy is building a Britain in which suppliers of all sizes can get a fair deal. The Groceries Code Adjudicator has already made a significant impact, with suppliers reporting retailers' improved compliance with the Code.

Today's announcement will build on this good work, protecting suppliers and ensuring their rights are enforced when it comes to late payments.

The measures will be designed with the farming industry and apply to farmers and smaller producers in England and are expected to be brought in later this year. The collaboration fund will open for applications later this year.

1. The Groceries Code Adjudicator is the independent regulator ensuring that the UK's largest grocery retailers treat their direct suppliers lawfully and fairly
  2. Small Business Commissioner was launched in December 2017 to support small businesses in resolving payment disputes and tackle unfair payment practices. The Commissioner handles complaints between small business suppliers (with fewer than 50 staff) and their larger customers
  3. The Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy introduced a regulatory amendment on 5 February clarifying business representatives' right to legally challenge unfair payment behaviour, such as late payment, on behalf of their members.
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## **Background:**

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