

Press release: Warrington's £34 million flood defence scheme officially complete

More than 2,000 Warrington homes and businesses will benefit from the town's multi-million pound flood defence scheme, officially opened today (26 January) by Environment Agency Chief Executive, Sir James Bevan and the town's Mayor, Councillor Les Morgan.

The scheme is one of the largest value flood defence projects constructed in the region in recent times, and will significantly reduce flood risk to the town which has been no stranger to flooding – given it sits in naturally low-lying land and within the path of the River Mersey and its tributaries.

The £34 million scheme brings increased flood protection to properties in 9 residential and public areas of Warrington, better protecting the hundreds of families and businesses who have experienced flooding in the past and are aware of the destruction it can bring.

Sir James Bevan, Environment Agency Chief Executive, said:

The scheme not only brings flood risk benefits but the work in the area is also good news for walkers, birdwatchers and wildlife. It's been great to see the Environment Agency working together in partnership to better protect Warrington – a fine example of what can be achieved by working with others.

These new flood defences will not only benefit hundreds of homes and businesses in the area but will also safeguard critical infrastructure, vital in keeping the town moving.

Due to the scale and complexity of works, the scheme was delivered in 3 phases – parts of which have been effectively operating for some time. Phase one (the Knutsford Road section) was put to the test during the 2013 December high tides, preventing some 200 properties from being flooded. The predicted value of damage to properties that would have otherwise occurred, covered the actual cost of this section of the scheme.

Floods Minister Thérèse Coffey said:

Warrington's new £34 million flood scheme will reduce the flood risk to over 2,000 homes and businesses, and protect vital infrastructure helping to bring investment to the area.

This scheme is an excellent example of how working together with councils and local businesses allows us to make the most of

government funding to secure the best possible defences for communities. By 2021, we will have invested £47 million in flood defences to better protect 4,280 homes in Cheshire.

Comprising 5km of flood walls and 2.2km of embankment, the 7.2km scheme has improved amenity and recreational opportunities, as well as habitat conditions along the river corridor.

The widening and clearing of formerly impassable footpaths has improved connectivity, as well as views of the river and across the town, and extensive tree planting has created many pleasant vantage points for walkers and cyclists.

At the Twiggeries site behind Kingsway North, a 500m section of Padgate Brook has been realigned to create a more natural look and 5 hectares of reed bed habitat has been established to attract wildlife to the area.

The town's main park, Victoria Park, has seen major improvement works to the main entrance, and a 'wavy-topped' railing along the road frontage at Knutsford Road makes a strong urban design statement.

The scheme was designed not only to be functional but to be aesthetically fitting within its environment. Children from local primary schools were challenged to create the winning artworks that adorn the defence walls, from Kingsway North all the way along Knutsford Road.

Funding for the scheme came from a number of sources. The majority – £29m – came from Government Grant-in-Aid, the remaining came from the partners the Environment Agency worked with to deliver the scheme.

The Environment Agency worked closely with Warrington Borough Council, who contributed £4 million towards the scheme, of which £1 million was 'works in kind'. Scottish Power, who owns and operates a high voltage substation in the Howley area that serves almost half of the town, also contributed £2 million to the scheme to better protect this key piece of Warrington infrastructure.

As well as contributing funding, the Council was a key partner in cementing a strong relationship with stakeholders and landowners within the scheme's footprint.

Councillor Hans Mundry, Warrington Borough Council's executive board member for public realm, said:

The work done by the Environment Agency will bring peace of mind to many Warrington people as we work together to protect homes and businesses along the Mersey.

It is more than just functional though, as you will see if you take a walk by the river. It is an attractive addition to the waterfront and has improved the ecology and helped protect wildlife in the area.

You can view [aerial drone footage of the Warrington flood defence scheme on YouTube](#).

Drone footage filmed by Suave Air Photos

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Guidance: Marine planning: second outputs for north east, north west, south east and south west marine plan areas Marine planning engagement events

Updated: updated page and added iteration 2 engagement summary

These documents were the second outputs of marine planning in the north east, north west, south east and south west marine plan areas (iteration 2). They followed on from iteration 1 (February to April 2017).

The Iteration 2 engagement gathered stakeholder views on:

- draft marine plan area visions
- draft options to address issues in each marine plan area

All input has been recorded and is in the process of being analysed and reviewed by the marine planning team.

The second outputs of the marine planning process for the north east, north west, south east and south west marine plan areas were presented during the Iteration 2 engagement period which ran between 29 January 2018 and 29 March 2018.

During this period 11 workshops were held over four marine plan areas in the north west, south east, south west and north east. Local coastal partnerships supported these events. partnerships Online engagement also ran simultaneously. The engagement survey links from this engagement have now been removed.

Over 350 stakeholders from a wide range of organisations attended the workshops, representing an array of national and local stakeholders, while we received 1030 online surveys and 26 email responses.

Press release: Bridging payments for Basic Payment Scheme 2017 confirmed by Farming Minister

More than 93% of farmers in England signed up to the 2017 Basic Payment Scheme (BPS) have now received their payment. While the RPA continue to pay farmers, those who haven't received their money by the end of March will be offered a bridging payment of 75% in April, Farming Minister George Eustice said today (Friday 26 January).

Payments made to date are worth more than £1.5 billion. The 79,000 farmers who have been paid include a range of claim types and sizes including cross-border, young farmer and common land claims.

Farming Minister George Eustice said:

We have made good progress towards getting payments to farmers this year with over 93 per cent now paid and we are working hard on the final seven per cent.

The burden of EU rules continues to be a barrier to some of the remaining processing so we will ensure that, as we did last year, any farmer not paid by the end of March will receive a bridging Payment in April.

As the Environment Secretary has made clear, when we leave the EU we will match the £3 billion that farmers currently receive in support from the CAP until 2022, and we intend to go on supporting farmers for years to come where the environmental benefits of that spending are clear.

News story: Innovative engineering

[firm to open Midlands manufacturing base](#)

Steve Lindsey, Chief Executive and Founder of Lontra.

High-tech engineering company [Lontra](#) is to build a new manufacturing facility in Warwickshire for its innovative industrial compressors and create new jobs.

The first part of the factory will open later this year. It will complement the business's research and development technology centre at Napton.

Up to £65 million will ultimately be invested in the new manufacturing facility, creating 75 new jobs by 2020 to more than double its workforce.

The project has been backed by [Shield Group Engineering](#), one of the largest manufacturers in the UK, which has contracts to supply Caterpillar, Cummins, Aston Martin, Jaguar Land Rover and JCB.

Vote of confidence in UK manufacturing

Steve Lindsey, Chief Executive and Founder of Lontra, said:

This is a vote of confidence in Britain's ability to manufacture at volume and high specification at globally competitive prices.

We've long led the world in innovative ideas. The spread of technology across prototyping and manufacturing means that Britain is perfectly placed to lead the fourth industrial revolution.

This is a new chapter for our business and we are delighted to be spearheading a new wave of precision manufacturing in the UK, and are committed to the Midlands where we believe that some of the world's very best engineering minds can be found.

Lontra's compressor offers big energy savings

The business developed its Blade Compressor® – a revolutionary new design for an air compressor – with the support of Innovate UK.

Compressors are used to pump air into sewage. They account for 1% of all UK electricity usage. In a trial with [Severn Water](#), the Blade Compressor® led to energy savings of 21.2%.

It has been licensed to global pumping equipment business, [Sulzer](#) for use in the municipal and regulated wastewater sector. Aeration equipment incorporating the compressor will be sold in 150 countries.

Manufacture of the compressor for Sulzer will continue at a factory in Southern Ireland, while the factory in Warwickshire will manufacture compressors for new applications and markets.

Investment in innovation leads to growth

Innovate UK support for the development of the Blade Compressor came through a number of projects. This includes initial feasibility studies, development of a prototype, and investigating its use in industrial areas including power generation and food processing.

Simon Edmonds, Director – Manufacturing and Materials, Innovate UK, said:

This excellent news from Lontra is testament to the strengths of UK high-value manufacturing and in particular the West Midlands region. It illustrates how investing in innovation leads to jobs and growth for the UK economy.