

Press release: £21 million Sheffield flood defence completed

A £21 million flood defence scheme to better protect hundreds of businesses in Sheffield's Lower Don Valley has opened today (Thursday 25 January).

The Lower Don Valley area is second only to the city centre for economic importance to Sheffield. The new flood alleviation scheme will benefit more than 500 businesses and safeguard around five thousand jobs, key roads in and out of the city and homes along a five mile stretch of the River Don.

New 'hard defences' have been installed along an 8km stretch of the river to raise flood defence levels comprising new gravity walls, installation of flood gates and the fitting of more than 300 flap valves to pipes and openings which discharge to the river.

Sir James Bevan, Environment Agency Chief Executive, said:

Flooding has devastating costs for people and businesses – and we know this has been the case for the people of Sheffield. This fantastic scheme will not only benefit homes and businesses in the city but it will also safeguard thousands of jobs due to the increased level of protection it provides.

It's been great to see Sheffield City Council and the Environment Agency working together in partnership to better protect the Lower Don Valley.

It is the first scheme of its kind in the UK to have business owners contributing to the costs of the flood protection through the creation of a formal Business Improvement District – a business led partnership created to bring additional services to local businesses. The Environment Agency and Defra contributed £19.3 million towards the total capital cost (£20.7 million), with local businesses contributing £1.4 million.

Floods Minister Thérèse Coffey said:

This partnership funding model showcases the way industry can work with Government to provide wider benefits to the community with local business investment in this project. The Sheffield Lower Don Valley scheme is protecting jobs, businesses and vital infrastructure which the whole city can be very proud of.

In Yorkshire, the Government is investing £430 million over the next four years to reduce the flood risk to a further 63,000 homes

and businesses.

The Chief Executive of the Environment Agency, Sir James Bevan, and the Leader of Sheffield City Council Councillor Julie Dore were among those at the event, also attended by local business owners, to mark the completion of the work.

Councillor Julie Dore said:

I am delighted to see we have fulfilled our promise to strengthen our defences against floods. I would like to express my thanks to all the partners involved in creating flood protection that is fit for purpose.

Our investment in this scheme means we are not only securing the future of existing businesses and homes but also making land more suitable for new homes and regeneration. This will create more jobs, investment and growth in the city.

Today marks the beginning of our commitment to preventing any future devastation. In the coming months and years we will be doing more work to ensure that we reduce the risk of floods and protect residents, homes and businesses across Sheffield.

The scheme has been shortlisted for an award as the best project over £5 million in the Institute of Civil Engineers Yorkshire and Humber Awards 2018.

Sheffield has suffered severe flooding with the most recent in 2007, 2009 and 2012.

Form: River Thames accommodation licence: application for new accommodation

You need a River Thames accommodation licence for any structure on, in or over the river or cut into the river bank.

Complete this application form to apply for permission to install a new accommodation structure.

Examples of a structure are jetties, pontoons, docks and slipways.

To complete the form print and fill in the above PDF and return to the

Environment Agency at the address contained within the form.

[News story: Search for Leader of Centre for Data Ethics and Innovation Launched](#)

Government is investing £9 million in the centre as part of plans to make the UK the best place in the world for businesses developing artificial intelligence (AI) to start, grow and thrive.

It will advise on the measures needed to enable and ensure safe, ethical and innovative uses of data-driven technologies.

The UK already benefits from a world-class regulatory regime and the centre will build on this by making sure we understand and respond to the rapidly evolving ways in which data is impacting our lives.

The centre will make sure we have a governance regime which fully supports both ethical and innovative uses of these technologies. It will deliver its work through extensive engagement with industry, regulators, civil society and the public.

Digital and Culture Secretary Matt Hancock said:

We are determined to be the best place in the world to start and grow a digital business while ensuring safe, ethical and innovative uses of data-driven technologies.

Our Centre for Data Ethics and Innovation will be crucial in helping us achieve this aim by building public confidence, providing certainty for business and helping maximise the exceptional potential of AI and data.

Today we're launching a call for a chair to lead the interim centre. This is a fantastic opportunity to shape its early work and establish the permanent centre on a firm and credible footing.

It is essential to get the design of the permanent centre right and a public consultation on its exact remit and functions will be launched in due course.

Expression of Interest: Chair of Interim Centre for Data Ethics

and Innovation

The interim Chair will have a unique opportunity to shape the early phase of the Centre's work, as well as help to establish the permanent Centre on a firm and credible footing. Read information about the opportunity and [how to apply](#).

[Speech: Rushlight Cleantech Conference](#)

Recent progress – the Clean Growth Strategy and Industrial Strategy

Since I last spoke to you, just starting out at the department in June, a great deal has changed, and we have made real progress towards the goal of an economy built around clean growth.

We launched the [Clean Growth Strategy](#) in October, discussing carbon budgets and the gap that has opened over time, we are now estimating that we are just a couple of percentage points off our 4th and 5th budgets, which end in 10-15 years time. Given the pace of change, and the work in R&D and the help of so many of our innovators, I am confident that those gaps will be closed.

And the following month we published the white paper of our modern [Industrial Strategy](#), which works to link up what we are doing in government, with what we would like to see industry doing, and change the game, to make the conversation between government and industry to drive productivity gains. You will see in there some of the highlights of sector deals and examples of how we will work together going forward. Also included are four big Grand Challenges, things that we know we have to do both to solve our own economic transitional challenges, but also to grow and prosper in a global economy, and one of those challenges is the Grand Challenge of Clean Growth. What is exciting about the past few months is that not only have we put forward 15 policies of how we will get our own carbon budgets, we've put that firmly in front of the way in which we want business and government to work together. And this is probably the first time that clean growth and technology has been prioritised as a challenge and opportunity right across government. It is important for clean tech and growth to have a voice at the cabinet table because so much we do works right across government.

What has also struck me, taking on this portfolio, is that we have focused on delivering on our low carbon budget targets and being one of the first countries to pass our climate change act but we have been a bit shy to celebrate this.

Since 1990 we have led the G7 group, in cutting emissions in our economy, without sacrificing growth, in fact we have had the fastest growing economy

in the G7 over that time. Last year, the PWC report said there were only two countries in the world that were doing enough in terms of decarbonisation to meet the 2 degree global target, and that was China and the United Kingdom so we have been rather shy to celebrate what we have achieved.

There is a triple test for anything that we do in the green tech space. Does it reduce carbon emissions? Can we see a cost effective pathway for deployment so that we are not overburdening consumers? And does it create a competitive advantage that we can effectively invest in and grow in the UK so that we can be part of this global shift to green technology?

By setting out what we've done and setting out our progress and great successes to date, we have created a much stronger environment for business investment. And for investment in different forms of local technologies.

I was also struck by successes in renewable energy in the UK, I think it is a strength that the UK has chosen to have a diverse energy mix. There is a role for nuclear at the right cost going forward, we will continue to investigate the scientific truisms of fracking, does it make sense to frack, does it deliver what we want, can it be done in the right way?

We have also done a lot to bring on the renewables portfolio, buying offshore wind at unimaginably low prices. Building the largest installed offshore wind base in the world and we want to replicate that across the economy, taking the partnership between government and business setting out early stage investment, using tax payer's money, co-investing with the private sector, using auction mechanisms to drive costs down and continuing to commit to those technologies moving forward.

So this momentum needs to translate into long term commitments. That is why we were clear in our Clean Growth Strategy about our big R&D investment, hopefully to show that government is making the largest investment of public funds ever into R&D and £2.5 billion of that will do into clean tech.

Whether it is through the transport sector, through the Faraday Challenge where we want to lead the world in the creation of the next generation of battery technology and use that technology to support what we need in terms of better storage and renewable energy generation.

We must use these opportunities is to create opportunities with other countries to deliver maximum take up of new technologies, and make them low cost. We want to work with other countries to work together, to drive down costs and create productivity in the UK. Global appetite is huge, in spite of the US pulling out of Paris, all the other countries have worked hard to continue to deliver on the Paris commitments. There is an unstoppable force happening in the world which is a global effort to reduce emissions output and a global effort to collaborate and cooperate in solving some of these low carbon problem solving technologies. We talk a lot to our friends in Norway and removing hydrocarbons from the north sea basin it seems obvious we should work together on carbon capture storage.

UK-Republic of Korea Smart Energy Innovation Partnership

It is my pleasure to have Ambassador Hwang joining me today to announce an agreement of £3 million to support a bilateral innovation programme, with just over £3 million in matched funding from the Republic of Korea. This exciting programme will support development and demonstration projects on innovative smart energy technologies and business models, each one involving companies from both the UK and Republic of Korea. Our countries are natural allies in this – we have similar population sizes spread across similarly-sized countries, and we are at similar stages in our development and deployment of smart systems, including the rollout of smart meters.

Both countries are members of the Mission Innovation Smart Grids Challenge, and actively support innovation in smart energy technologies like storage and demand-side response, accelerating clean energy innovation around the world. As well as learning from one another, we can develop new approaches and, potentially, new technologies together. And we can decarbonise our countries together as a result of this cooperation.

This partnership will have tangible benefits, including reduced costs for designing and implementing smart systems and technologies. For the UK we can expect accelerated adoption of smart, flexible energy systems, which will save money by reducing deployment time, while our understanding of, and access to, Korean markets will increase, presenting great opportunities for UK businesses. We expect similar acceleration in Korea, again leading to savings, while Korean businesses and policy makers can gain experience of the British system, from regulation to incentives.

Developing a new platform

Where government can help we will use all the tools at our disposal to support clean growth and low carbon innovation in our economy, including market design, taxation and regulation, as well as the funding of £2.5 billion we are providing. But as ever it will be industry which leads the way.

After the last event in June, I asked what more we could do to help the companies we have been supporting to get to market and that's why today I am delighted to announce the first stage in the development of a new [GOV.UK portfolio list](#) bringing together all of the companies we have invested in since 2012. It's a great first step in terms of showcasing what we are doing and how government is investing.

This is part of the commitment, made in our Industrial Strategy, to promote overseas investment into the UK's clean economy, and strengthen our support for UK exporters. It will also be a showcase for our clean tech investments at home and abroad.

The first iteration of the platform will exist in the GOV.UK energy innovation pages and will include a trial version of the database, providing

detailed information on the innovation projects and organisations which have benefitted from government funding since April 2012. This will bring greater transparency to the actions of government, but also highlighting the support on offer, and the types of projects which we in government want to encourage. Ceres Power and Anvil Semiconductors are two such companies, and I am pleased to see them here today.

Through this platform, we want to engage with investors interested in UK businesses and the level of R&D support available; with UK businesses looking for partnerships and export opportunities; and with colleagues abroad looking for international opportunities. This is just the first stage, and we are inviting feedback from all users – including you, I hope – on how we can expand and perfect the information we provide in time for launching the final site at our Green Britain Week, an annual event that we will be launching to happen every October, where we will be showcasing progress we have made and challenges we need to focus on. I look forward to that, and to hearing your thoughts.

Ultimately I am here to say thank you, because we can set the mission, the laws that hold our collective parliamentary feet to the fire, when it comes to carbon reduction, we can say the right things in terms of productivity and improvements, but ultimately it comes down to where is the technical excellence, where is the investment, how can we best work together, in solving the challenges that we face and to me it is exciting that clean growth is at the forefront of the government's Industrial Strategy.

The opportunity it gives with the unstoppable momentum that the globe is on towards a low carbon future is absolutely huge and I feel privileged to have a chance to work on this portfolio and to meet so many people who are working together on this journey.

Corporate report: CRC annual report publication: 2016 to 2017

The report contains:

- a [spreadsheet](#) with information for each participant
- an explanation of the spreadsheet and accompanying information on the CRC scheme