

[Boston Barrier flood gate fully operational](#)

The Boston Barrier gate is now fully ready and working to give an enhanced level of flood protection to over 13,000 homes and businesses in the town.

As the centrepiece of the flood scheme, the barrier gate can be raised in just 20 minutes, responding quickly to threats of North Sea tidal surges.

With the whole of the £100m [Environment Agency](#) scheme now two-thirds complete, the project will provide Boston with one of the best standards of flood defence outside of London. Once the scheme is fully completed in 2022, flood risk to over 14,000 homes and 800 businesses will be greatly reduced and allow for the effects of climate change for the next 100 years.

This barrier is part of the [government's long term investment](#) in flood and coastal defences. Since 2015 it has invested £2.6bn to better protect the country from flooding and coastal erosion and is on course to have better protected 300,000 homes by March 2021. Earlier this year, the government announced a [record £5.2 billion investment](#) in flood and coastal defences and the [National FCRM Strategy](#) will help build a better prepared and more resilient nation.

The Boston Barrier project is expected to be fully completed in 2022.

Minister for Floods, Water and Emergencies Rebecca Pow said:

Flooding has a devastating impact on lives and livelihoods, but for communities like Boston the barrier project brings a real sense of support for the years ahead, better protecting 13,000 properties.

We are determined to support flood-hit communities as we build back greener and we are investing a further £5.2 billion over the next six years to reduce flood risk to hundreds of thousands more homes.

Environment Agency chief executive Sir James Bevan said:

Reaching this stage of the Boston Barrier project represents a huge development for the town and for the Environment Agency.

During this most difficult of years, I want to thank all of the teams who have shown great dedication and determination to reach this important milestone in a Covid-secure way.

Now that the barrier gate is fully operational, Boston is better prepared for what winter may bring, this year and for many years to come.

Environment Agency Boston Barrier project director Adam Robinson said:

It gives me great pleasure to see the barrier gate fully operational following rigorous testing.

This marks a huge leap forward for the scheme and there is now a significant reduction to the risk from tidal flooding in Boston. The majority of properties covered by the scheme will be better protected for a similar event to that of December 2013.

Work on the scheme, which has been identified by government as critical infrastructure, continues in line with the government's coronavirus advice with measures in place to ensure safe working procedures on site.

Our team have worked incredibly hard throughout the pandemic to minimise disruption while maintaining the health and safety of staff, suppliers and members of the public. That effort has definitely paid off and means we now have a winter-ready operational tidal flood defence.

Further stages

The next stages of work will focus on tying-in the further parts of the scheme downstream, including:

- Installing a replacement flood gate at the Port of Boston wet dock entrance.
- Work to tie the project into the Haven Banks Improvement Scheme, a separate Environment Agency project to raise and strengthen the existing flood banks running from the Barrier towards The Wash for a distance of 5 km.

Background information

- The Boston Barrier is a critical infrastructure project and national priority project for the Environment Agency, delivered by BAM Nuttall Mott MacDonald Joint Venture.
- Over 800 properties were flooded across the town in a tidal surge on 5 December 2013. The surge highlighted the need for improved tidal flood defences in Boston, and the barrier scheme became a national priority project for the Environment Agency's Six-Year Programme six months later.
- With total funding of over £100m, the scheme will protect Boston town centre against a tidal surge similar to what was experienced in 2013.
- When complete, the scheme as a whole will give 14,000 homes and 800 businesses a better standard of protection against tidal flooding, giving Boston one of the best standards of defence outside of London.
- It will help deliver economic benefits to the area estimated to be worth over £1 billion.
- The Boston Barrier project was granted the Transport and Work Act

legislation which gave the permissions to start the project in December 2017, and had spades in the ground at the beginning of January 2018.

Winter readiness

- The Environment Agency is prepared to take action this winter wherever it is needed. Throughout the year, it has continued to build and repair flood defences. It has 250 high-volume pumps available and 6,500 trained staff across the country, including 314 trained flood support officers.
- The Environment Agency is also making the most of new technology to prepare for and respond to floods:
 - It uses drones and aeroplanes to map river channels and the extent of flooding
 - Nimble, remote-controlled boats help it monitor river flows and collect data
 - It uses its [flood warning system](#) to directly alert over 1.4 million properties at the touch of a button when flooding is expected.
 - It uses a wide range of social media and media channels to increase the reach of its warning messages.