

Communities to trial innovative ways of adapting to coastal erosion

As part of the Government's £200 million flood and coast innovation programme, £36 million will be invested to explore innovative approaches of adapting to the effects of coastal erosion.

Known as the Coastal Transition Accelerator Programme, the initial areas of focus will be East Riding of Yorkshire and North Norfolk. Both local authorities will receive funding to help communities on areas of the coast that cannot sustainably be defended from coastal erosion.

Residents will be supported to prepare and plan for the long term, while also trialling some immediate actions that support the long-term resilience of communities near the coast.

Such interventions might include:

- improving and replacing damaged community infrastructure, such as beach access or coastal transport links and replacing public or community owned buildings in areas at risk with removable, modular, or other innovative buildings
- repurposing land in coastal erosion zones for different uses such as temporary car parks and restoring and creating habitats to include green buffer zones
- working with the finance and property sectors to explore innovative finance or funding mechanisms to help move communities from the highest risk areas, for instance schemes to incentivise the relocation of at-risk infrastructure for businesses and homeowners
- developing the local planning system so it supports and facilitates the managed transition of communities from high-risk land and ensuring it restricts future development in areas affected by coastal erosion

The Environment Agency will manage the programme, supporting both areas as they develop and deliver their local projects. It will also ensure that ongoing learning is shared with other areas facing similar challenges.

Floods Minister Rebecca Pow said:

As climate change brings more extreme weather, we must redouble our efforts to build a more resilient nation. We have ramped up flood and coastal erosion policies, and we will always defend our coastline where it is sustainable and sensible to do so. Where it isn't we will support communities to adapt.

What we are announcing today will support innovative solutions to help those areas most vulnerable to coastal erosion to prepare and adapt.

The programme will run to March 2027, exploring and testing innovative opportunities. A full evaluation of the programme will help to inform future national policy direction and will add to our coastal resilience activity elsewhere, which includes a national coastal erosion risk map providing clearer data about local risks to help local planning, and the ongoing national refresh of existing Shoreline Management Plans.

This is in addition to the record £5.2 billion being invested in flood and coastal defences between 2021 and 2027, building around 2,000 new flood defences to better protect 336,000 properties from flooding and coastal erosion.

Emma Howard Boyd, Chair of the Environment Agency, said:

England's coastline has never been static. Today, 9,000 kilometres of open English coast is at risk from sea flooding, erosion and landslips, and by 2100 once-a-century sea level events are set to become annual events.

As a minimum, we need to plan for at least a metre rise of sea level rise by the end of the century. In some places the pace and scale of change may be so significant that, over a period of time, coastal authorities will need to help local communities transition away from the current shoreline over time.

This programme is about providing that local support while increasing the whole country's expertise and resilience in the face of climate and coastal change.

These two locations were chosen because they are already living with the challenges of coastal erosion and between them include 84% of the properties at risk of coastal erosion in England over the next 20 years.

Councillor Jonathan Owen, Leader of East Riding of Yorkshire Council, said:

Valuing our environment, tackling climate change, safeguarding our heritage and countryside whilst developing our infrastructure remain key priority areas for the council and on that basis, we very much welcome today's announcement.

Our coastal communities are vitally important to the East Riding and residents will be supported to prepare and plan for the long term impact of climate change, while also trialling some immediate actions that support the long-term resilience of communities near the coast.

Councillor Tim Adams, Leader of North Norfolk District Council, said:

This new initiative is going to build on our previous experiences and actions in meeting the constant challenge of coastal erosion in North Norfolk, to help us to continue to work together with our local communities and shape a positive future alongside those most at erosion risk.

We will be exploring practical actions which can be done now and in years to come, aided by this support from the CTAP programme.

Further information

- The Budget in 2020 provided £200 million to run a flood and coast innovation programme that could explore new approaches to help build resilience to the threat of flood and coastal risk.
- In March 2021, Minister Pow announced 25 areas to receive a share of £150 million from the Flood and Coastal Resilience Innovation Programme (FCRIP) between 2021 and 2027 to explore and test innovative practical actions to address flooding in their local areas.
- A further £8 million is trialling a new approach to strategic long-term adaptive pathways in Thames Estuary, Humber Estuary, Yorkshire and Severn Valley.
- The Coastal Transition Accelerator Programme (CTAP) is the third major component of the overall innovation programme. Some £36m is expected to be invested to explore innovative approaches to coastal transition by the end 2026/27.
- North Norfolk and East Riding of Yorkshire authorities have been identified as the areas to lead off the CTAP as they have proportionally the highest number of properties at risk from coastal erosion in England. Other areas will benefit from the programme in future years learning from their early experiences.
- The government is investing a record £5.2 billion in flood and coastal schemes between 2021 and 2027. This record investment will create 2,000 flood defences, better protect 336,000 properties, drive down flood risk and help to avoid £32 billion of wider economic damages along with a range of other benefits for local communities and the environment.
- The [government policy statement on flooding and coastal erosion](#), published on 14 July 2020, sets out the government's long-term ambition to create a nation more resilient to future flood and coastal erosion risk. The [press release](#) included information about the £200m resilience innovation programme.
- Alongside the policy statement, the Environment Agency published its new [National Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Strategy for England](#), which is also focused on improving overall resilience and provides a framework to guide the activities of those involved in flood and coastal erosion risk management.