

# Press release: Environment Agency says that a different approach is needed to tackle flooding over next 50 years

- Country is better protected than ever against flooding
- Every £1 invested in flood schemes saves £10 in damages avoided
- During this century a new approach is needed to tackle flood risk in 21st Century

Over the next century a different approach is needed to protect the country from flooding, the Environment Agency's Chief Executive said in a keynote speech at the annual Flood and Coast Conference today (Tuesday 20 March).

As he revealed that every £1 invested in new flood schemes saves the economy £10 in damages avoided, Sir James Bevan said that despite huge advances in flood protection, what worked so well in the past will not be enough in the future. Rising sea levels and higher populations in built-up areas will mean new approaches are needed to combat increasing flood risk. Since 2015, new flood schemes completed by the Environment Agency have benefitted more than 100,000 homes but to continue building on this success new 21st century approaches are needed.

These include a call for greater business investment, quicker emergency response and increased use of natural flood schemes, in addition to 'hard' defences, in order to reduce the impact of flooding on communities around the country. He questioned how these challenges should be dealt with and suggest that more concrete – simply building our flood defences higher and higher – is not the answer.

As he laid out his thoughts on the future of flood protection, Sir James Bevan said that tough questions had to be asked about what to protect. He questioned whether there might be a case for considering future funding priorities.

He said that everyone has a part to play to reduce flood risk and that homeowners in flood risk areas should know the risks and what action they can take – and he praised communities and flood groups who have already taken great steps in this area.

Sir James Bevan said:

Almost every day in this country, when rivers and tides rise, rain falls and storms blow, thousands of people sleep safe and unaware that they are being protected by flood defences.

But what works so well now – and has done in the past – may not be enough in the future. Over the next fifty years if we are going to give the country the best possible protection against flooding, we

are going to need a different approach.

The Environment Agency manages flood risk on over 36,000 km of river, 9,000km raised flood defences and over 22,000 flood structures – from the Thames Barrier to local pumping stations. Since 2016, it has upgraded its response capability with more than 6,500 staff trained and ready to help protect communities when floods threaten, 40km of temporary barriers, 250 mobile pumps, and 500,000 sandbags. Partnerships to help respond during incidents have also been strengthened – including with the army.

Government is investing £2.6 billion in flood and coastal erosion risk management projects between 2015 and 2021.

Now in its third year, the annual Flood and Coast Conference brings together experts from across the globe to share ideas and opportunities to work together to tackle the risk of flooding and coastal erosion. More on the conference here: <https://www.floodandcoast.com/>.

The Environment Agency is currently working in its next National Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Strategy which will address these challenging questions raised in Sir James Bevan's speech.

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## **[Press release: Meet mytholmroyd team constructing vital flood defences](#)**

People living and working in Mytholmroyd are invited to meet the construction team who are building the flood defence scheme to protect 400 homes and businesses in the village.

A construction open day is being held at Mytholmroyd Community Centre on Thursday 22 March, 11am – 8pm, for members of the community to drop in to find out more about the Mytholmroyd Flood Alleviation Scheme which will cost in the region of £30m.

The flood alleviation scheme has been developed by the Environment Agency in partnership with Calderdale Council and is expected to be completed by Winter 2019. Design and construction of the scheme has been carried out by main contractor VBA, a joint venture comprising VolkerStevin, Boskalis Westminster and SNC-Lavalin's Atkins business.

Staff will be on hand throughout the day to explain what work is being carried out in each planning area of the village and answer questions on many issues including access routes and the size and type of equipment being used during construction.

Visitors will be told about the schedule of works and be asked during the event how they would like to be provided with up-to-date information about the progress of the scheme.

Vital works to be completed as part of the scheme include construction of new, raised and improved flood walls, relocation of Caldene Bridge, widening of the river channel at key locations and flood proofing of the buildings next to the river.

During the next stage of the scheme, which begins in April, drainage improvements will be made along Burnley Road to reduce the risk of surface water flooding.

Helen Batt, Calder catchment director for the Environment Agency said:

We're keen for local residents and businesses to take this opportunity to find out about our plans for the Mytholmroyd Flood Scheme which will provide them much better protection against flood risk in the future.

Our team is committed to involving the community where possible in the delivery of the scheme and keep them informed at every stage of its progress.

Chris Blenkarn, project manager for VBA, said:

We are pleased that flood defence works are moving into the next phase on site, which will make a difference to the community and protect local homes and businesses. We look forward to hosting the event and answering any questions about the construction work.

Cllr Barry Collins, Calderdale Council's Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Economic Strategy, said

> The Mytholmroyd Flood Alleviation Scheme is part of our ongoing partnership work to help protect local communities and improve resilience following the devastating 2015 floods.

With the second phase of the scheme on its way, we encourage local people to come along to the open day and talk to the experts to help them visualise the scheme and understand the impacts.

If anyone has any questions about the scheme they can email the project team: [mytholmroydFAS@environment-agency.gov.uk](mailto:mytholmroydFAS@environment-agency.gov.uk)

There is also a regular news bulletin produced with information about the scheme which is distributed throughout the village and you can request online

by emailing the team.

Drop in surgeries are held at the Mytholmroyd Community Centre each week on: Tuesdays 12pm-3pm and Fridays 9am-12pm.

[For latest updates visit:](#)

or follow #MytholmroydFAS @EnvAgencyYNE on Twitter.

The Environment Agency is investing £475m in Yorkshire to better protect 66,000 homes across the county as part of our current six year programme to 2021.

Residents are urged to check their flood risk online at (<https://www.gov.uk/check-flood-risk>) and sign up for free flood warnings to give them vital time to save themselves and their possessions from the devastating effects of flooding. Find out how to prepare for a flood at the Floods Destroy website

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## [News story: Nine beaches designated as bathing waters on the south coast](#)

Beach goers can take to the seas this summer at nine beaches newly designated as bathing waters on the south coast.

Eight beaches in Cornwall, including Booby's Bay and South Fistral, and one in Bournemouth – Manor Steps received their designation today, bringing the total number of designated bathing waters across England to 423.

At designated bathing waters, the Environment Agency help protect the health of swimmers, surfers and other visitors, by testing the water for levels of bacteria and publishing the results online. Across England there are currently 270 bathing waters with "excellent" water quality.

Environment Minister Thérèse Coffey said:

This is great news for anyone who enjoys a trip to the seaside. Britain's beaches are visited around 150 million times each year and the water at these nine beaches, along with more than 400 bathing waters around England, will be tested by the Environment Agency to help protect the health of visitors.

I would encourage everyone to use the online 'Bathing Water Data Explorer' to check the water quality at designated bathing spots before heading out for a dip in the sea.

The eight beaches to be designated in Cornwall will take the number of

designated beaches in the county to 89. The newly designated bathing waters in Cornwall are:

- South Fistral beach in Newquay
- Booby's Bay near Trevoze Head
- Mexico Towan, Upton Towan and Godrevy, all situated on a long stretch of dunes in St Ives Bay
- Northcott Mouth beach to the north of Bude
- Gwynver Beach which forms part Whitesand Bay
- Tregonhawke in Whitsand Bay

In Bournemouth, Manor Steps Beach, part of the 15 kilometre coastline of Poole Bay on the Dorset coast, has also been designated as a bathing water.

Beachgoers can find a list of designated bathing waters around the UK and their water quality ratings on the [Bathing Water Data Explorer](#).

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## [Press release: Anglers reminded close season runs from 15 March to 15 June](#)

No fishing for coarse fish in rivers from 15 March to 15 June

The Environment Agency is reminding anglers the 'close season' for coarse fish in rivers comes into effect today (Thursday 15 March) and runs until 15 June. The close season prevents fishing for coarse fish, like barbel and chub, for 3 months to give the fish a chance to breed. The close season applies to all rivers, streams and drains in England but does not apply to most still-waters and canals.

During the close season Environment Agency enforcement offices along with support from the Angling Trusts Voluntary Water Bailiffs will be out on rivers and streams making sure people are observing the close season. They will also be checking lakes and ponds to make sure people who are fishing have a valid rod licence. Anyone fishing without a fishing licence can expected to be prosecuted.

Kevin Austin, Deputy Director, Agriculture, Fisheries and the Natural Environment, said:

Our job is to protect fish stocks and improve fisheries. This includes rescuing fish in distress, improving habitat and restocking rivers with 450,000 fish a year. The majority of anglers, who fish legally, rightly demand that we take action to catch offenders.

Our enforcement officers, supported by Angling Trust voluntary bailiffs, will be targeting illegal fishing. We urge anyone to report illegal fishing as quickly as possible by calling our incident hotline on 0800 80 70 60.

Last year the Environment Agency Enforcement Officers ran 670 close season patrols, reporting 122 anglers for illegally fishing in the close season.

Coarse fishing is still allowed on most still waters and canals, depending on fishery owner agreement, though a valid fishing licence is still required. You can check which still waters and canals still have a close season in operation by checking the byelaws which apply in your area at <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/local-fishing-byelaws>. We will be finalising a review of the close season on rivers during 2018. Any changes that arise from this review will be implemented in 2019.

Anyone who wants to go fishing needs to buy a fishing licence. A full annual licence costs £30 (short term and some concessionary licences are also available) and are available online at [www.gov.uk/get-a-fishing-licence](http://www.gov.uk/get-a-fishing-licence).

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## **Press release: Anglian Water pays £50,000 after water pollution incident**

Anglian Water has agreed to pay £50,000 to an environmental charity after a manhole overflowed with black sludge and grey liquid into a watercourse in Bedfordshire due to a blocked sewer.

An enforcement undertaking (EU) has been agreed with the water company, which has donated £50,000 to the Wildlife Trust for Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire and Northamptonshire.

The Environment Agency accepted the offer by the water company to put right any damage caused by the pollution and to donate to an environmental charity.

The money is to benefit the local environment of Nene Valley and Ouse Valley Living Landscape areas. Anglian Water also paid back the Environment Agency's costs of £3,451.

Chris Tate, Environment Agency Team Leader, said:

Enforcement undertakings allow those who commit offences to restore the environment and to take steps to prevent a recurrence.

When appropriate, they allow a quicker resolution than a prosecution and help offenders who are prepared to take

responsibility for their actions to put things right voluntarily working with their local communities.

Due to the pollution, which raised ammonia levels in the watercourse at Highfield Farm near Ravensden, the incident was classified as a category 2 by the Environment Agency.

The blockage in the sewer was in the branch from Yarlswood Immigration Centre and included single-use shampoo sachets which the immigration centre provided for its residents. There had been six blockages on the same stretch of sewer since 2011 when the sewer was transferred to AWS. It was not mapped onto the company's mapping system until after this incident in June 2015.

Practices for checking the sewer and at the immigration centre have since changed.