

Exmouth tidal defence scheme construction pauses for summer season

The Environment Agency has removed most of the construction areas from the town and the road along the seafront is now open. The Environment Agency's schedule includes a summer break to protect tourism in the area.

Work on the project, which was identified by government as critical infrastructure, has continued in line with the government's coronavirus (COVID-19) advice with measures in place to ensure social distancing and safe working procedures on site. This has allowed the team to reach this milestone as planned.

Once complete in 2021, the scheme will reduce the risk of tidal flooding to over 1,400 residential and 400 commercial properties. Construction work started in June 2019 and covers 3 distinct areas:

- On the estuary side a wall approximately 660m long has been built from the boatyard to the Imperial Recreation Ground. Contractors worked during low tides to repair the revetment from the nature reserve to the Estuary View car park. A large area of the nature reserve was cleared of vegetation to create a continuous flood defence embankment which will be seeded this autumn.
- At Camperdown Creek new gabions, large metal baskets filled with stone, have been replaced with new. Sheet piled defences clad with recycled hardwood timber were installed by the Sea Cadets and foundations have been built for 3 flood gates.
- The Esplanade area from The Grove Pub, including Morton Crescent and the Imperial Hotel has had new defences built. This work included a combination of flood walls, new drainage, wall strengthening, rock armour installation and landscaping.

The newly completed wall in front of seafront properties

Environment Agency Flood Manager, Ben Johnstone said:

We are now one step closer to a finished tidal defence scheme for the people of Exmouth. I am extremely proud of the team who have worked so hard to keep this vital work on track whilst adhering to government guidance on coronavirus.

I would also like to thank residents for their understanding and

co-operation which has helped us get to this point. A lot has been achieved this year and I look forward to the next phase.

East Devon District Council is also contributing to the project, and will maintain the defences built on council-owned land in the future.

Cllr Geoff Jung, Coast, Countryside and Environment Portfolio Holder for East Devon District Council, said:

- I would like to thank the contractors Kier and the Environment Agency for continuing this important project at this most difficult of times. This scheme, once completed, will provide the many residents of Exmouth extra protection from coastal flooding.

Exmouth Town ward members for the district council, Cllr Olly Davey, Cllr Joe Whibley and Cllr Eileen Wragg said:

With more than two thirds of the scheme completed, thanks to the works continuing by Kier and the Environment Agency throughout the current crisis, Exmouth will have much better protection ahead of the winter storms.

When the Environment Agency contractors, Kier, return to site later in the year they will start at Alexandra Terrace junction with associated highways improvements, floodgate installation, landscaping and planting. The whole project is due for completion in 2021.