

First boats set to pass through the new Boston Barrier

The first boats will be able to pass through the new Boston Barrier flood defence today in what marks a major milestone for the project.

It is now possible for boats to safely navigate through the Environment Agency's £100 million tidal flood defence, with the barrier gate resting flush on the bed of the River Haven.

The milestone marks yet another step towards the completion of the barrier, which is expected to be fully operational by the end of the summer. Work on the project, which has been identified by government as critical infrastructure, continues in line with the government's coronavirus advice. Measures are in place to ensure social distancing and safe working procedures on site.

Next, teams will work to close and fill the temporary bypass that allowed vessels to navigate around the barrier while it was being constructed.

Earlier this year, the barrier passed all of its wet and dry testing and the cofferdam, which provided the safe dry construction space to build the barrier within the river, has since been removed.

Once finished, the barrier will provide Boston with one of the best standards of defence outside of London, reducing the risk of flooding to over 14,000 homes and 800 businesses.

The 300-tonne rotating barrier, which is the centrepiece of the project, will be able to be raised in minutes, helping to keep the town safe from tidal surges from the North Sea.

Adam Robinson, Boston Barrier project director, said:

This is a huge milestone for the project and we're now 1 step closer to a fully operational tidal flood barrier for the people of Boston.

The team has worked tirelessly in collaboration with partners and river users to make sure the new channel through the barrier works for everyone, and we have worked incredibly hard to keep this vital work on track whilst adhering to Government guidance on coronavirus.

Next steps for the scheme include installing over 2500 tonnes of steel sheet piles for new flood walls along the North Bank, the installation of a replacement flood gate at the Port of Boston wet dock entrance in 2021, and associated works to tie the project into the Haven Banks Improvement Scheme – a separate Environment Agency project which will raise and strengthen 5

kilometres of existing flood banks running from the Barrier towards the Wash.

Boaters are reminded to check what rules and restrictions maybe in place on a waterway before undertaking their journeys, as the situation may change in line with new coronavirus guidance from the government. The latest information on Environment Agency waterways can be viewed [on our website](#).