# More than 300,000 homes better protected from flooding since 2015

More than 300,000 homes are better protected from the effects of climate change compared with 2015, the Environment Agency has announced today (Wednesday 24 March).

Exceeding its target in delivering the government's £2.6 billion investment in flood and coastal defence schemes since 2015, the Environment Agency and partners have completed more than 700 projects to better protect more than 300,000 homes, nearly 600,000 acres of agricultural land, thousands of businesses and major pieces of infrastructure.

The milestone was reached with the completion of the Hull: Humber Frontages scheme, a £42 million project which will better protect the city of Hull from the devastation of tidal surges which caused flooding to hundreds of properties in 2013.

The delivery of the nation's new defences, which has continued through lockdown with Covid-secure working arrangements, will not only help to save the economy more than £28 billion in avoided damages over the lifetime of defence assets, but also provide reassurance and peace of mind for communities and encourage economic growth.

The successful delivery of the programme comes ahead of the start of the record £5.2 billion investment in 2,000 new flood and coastal defences between 2021 and 2027.

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

> The success of this programme is measured in numbers – 700 projects, 300,000 homes, nearly 600,000 acres of agricultural land, thousands of businesses and major pieces of infrastructure, on time and within budget. But the sense of security these protections bring to people, and the benefits to nature, can't easily be demonstrated on a spreadsheet.
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> With the COP26 climate talks coming to Glasgow this year, this programme is a fantastic example of adaptation in action, but there's a lot more to do.

Sir James Bevan, Chief Executive of the Environment Agency, said:

> I pay tribute to our skilled teams and our partners who have worked so hard to achieve this – it's not easy to bring major infrastructure projects in on time and on budget.

> The Environment Agency’s six-year flood defence building programme has done exactly that, better protecting 300,000 homes against the damage and misery of flooding.
>
> The climate emergency is bringing more extreme weather, so we must now redouble our efforts to make our communities more resilient in future

George Eustice, Environment Secretary, said:

> This important milestone means that 300,000 households are better protected against flooding and coastal erosion. I commend the hard work of the Environment Agency and its partners in supporting flood-hit communities.
>
> We know there is more to do, which is why a record £5.2 billion is being invested in 2,000 new flood and coastal erosion schemes over the next six years, to protect thousands more people, homes and businesses.

Some of the most significant schemes delivered by the Environment Agency since 2015 include:

## Hull Frontages, Yorkshire

The Humber: Hull Frontage scheme is a £42 million flood defence upgrade of the defences along the edge of the Humber Estuary to protect the city of Hull from tidal flooding. The scheme will reduce the risk of flooding from the estuary for 113,000 properties. Tidal flood defences at eight locations along the estuary foreshore, including at St Andrew’s Quay Retail Park, Victoria Pier and Victoria Dock Village have also been upgraded, with more than seven kilometres of tidal flood defences along the estuary frontage now improved.

## Ipswich Barrier, Suffolk

The £67 million Ipswich Barrier is one of the most significant defences that the Environment Agency has constructed in recent years, protecting 1,600 homes and 400 businesses from flooding and the impacts of climate change over the course of the next century. Costing almost £70 million, the new flood defences centrepiece is a 200-tonne rotating barrier which can be raised in minutes, helping to keep the town safe from tidal surges during storms. The scheme will better protect homes and businesses in Ipswich over the next 100 years and provide a much higher level of protection from the type of tidal surge which threatened the town in 2007 and 2013, both of which were close to spilling over the previous defences.

## Natural Flood Management

One key example is at Smithills near Bolton, where log dams and tree planting help to store water in upland areas in order to reduce flood risk for

communities in Bolton downstream. The dams help to store the equivalent of four Olympic swimming pools' worth of water upstream. Around 38,000 native broadleaf deciduous trees have also planted to intercept surface water, create habitat for the local wildlife populations, and help with carbon sequestration, with more to come.

## Boston Barrier, Lincolnshire

The Boston Barrier gate is now fully ready and working, giving 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 £100 million 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

Work is already under way on the delivery of some of the 2,000 new flood and coastal defences that will better protect a further 336,000 properties from flooding and coastal erosion by 2027, which will also see the implementation of the Environment Agency's Flood and Coastal Risk Management Strategy.

Alongside building new defences, the strategy sets out how the Environment Agency and partners will work to make communities more resilient to the effects of climate change, ensuring they are better prepared for when flooding sadly hits, and able to recover quickly. It will also ensure a greater use of nature to reduce flood risk.