

Multi-million pound flood scheme in Rochdale and Littleborough given the green light

Led by the Environment Agency in partnership with Rochdale Council, the new scheme features a range of measures to reduce the risk of flooding across Rochdale and Littleborough including a new flood storage area at Gale, as well as raised walls and improvements to culverts and bridges in areas including Greenvale Brook, Town House Brook, Eales Brook, Buckley Brook and Hey Brook.

The approved plans incorporate the first phase of a three-step process that has been developed to create what will eventually become one of the largest and most complex inland flood risk management schemes in the north of England. Once completed, the Rochdale and Littleborough Flood Alleviation Scheme will improve flood protection for 1,000 residential properties and 200 local businesses as well as major infrastructure such as the tram network, the bus interchange, schools and colleges, a grid substation and the waste water treatment works.

Proposed works for the Phase 1a planning application are set to include defences at various locations in Littleborough, the replacement of Riverstone Bridge and the widening of the river channel at the same location as well as the removal of Charles Street Bridge and temporary access works into the Gale site to allow it to be turned into a flood storage reservoir, as part of Phase 1B. Works will also combine the permanent diversion of Greenvale Brook at Gale East and a culvert extension within the same site.

During the planning application process, Rochdale Borough Council's planning department consulted with a large number of customers and stakeholders before making the recommendation to grant planning permission on Friday 8th May.

Approval for the scheme was granted subject to the discharge of a series of planning conditions prior to commencement of actual construction related works

Pete Costello, Area Flood and Coastal Risk Manager for the Environment Agency, said: "Rochdale and Littleborough residents have been waiting for a number of years for increased flood protection in their community. Those who still live with the trauma of the Boxing Day 2015 flood event, and more recent instances of flooding during Storm Ciara and Dennis, should not be made to wait any longer than necessary get these flood defences in place. We are therefore delighted that the planning authority has now approved the plans for the first phase of the Rochdale and Littleborough Flood Alleviation Scheme.

"This is great news for the area as it will allow us to better protect hundreds of homes and businesses while also bringing improved environmental

and economic benefits to the areas. We look forward to additional progress on the ground in the coming months and will continue to keep residents and businesses affected by our work informed about the scheme at every stage of its development. Community drop in events for Riverstone Bridge will restart once it is safe to do so as and when coronavirus restrictions are lifted.”

Councillor Neil Emmott, cabinet member for environment at Rochdale Borough Council, said: “It’s great to see this vital scheme taking a major step forward. We saw first-hand the devastation caused by the Boxing day floods in 2015 and have been working hand in hand with the Environment Agency to protect our communities and businesses from the impact of any future floods.

“We’ve already completed a number of important projects with the Environment Agency, including the construction of new storage reservoirs at Calder Brook, Littleborough. This scheme is one of the largest flood defence projects in the North West with the potential to protect 1,000 residential properties and 200 businesses. It will help protect many of our residents and businesses at significant risk of future flooding and provide important infrastructure to support our economic growth.”