

# Newhaven flood barrier success

Environment Agency staff last night (7 November 2021) temporarily installed a flood barrier, the first of its type in the UK, across the railway at Newhaven, East Sussex.

The successful exercise was done in close cooperation with Network Rail to ensure that if flooding struck, the Environment Agency's plans for protecting the community and the safety of all those involved could be achieved.

The exercise was arranged to coincide with planned engineering works on the railway to avoid disruption to the local community.

The Environment Agency's work on the railway forms part of the £17.5 million Newhaven flood alleviation scheme, which was opened by Maria Caulfield MP last month. It is just one of many 'winter ready' schemes and projects ensuring communities are prepared for the stormy conditions and increased flood risk that can be experienced during the winter months.

Two newly built large earth embankments sit either side of the railway north of the town adjacent to Parsons level crossing. An impermeable barrier sits underneath the tracks in the ballast and any time forecasts show that flooding is expected, the line will be closed and the Environment Agency will deploy the temporary flood barrier across the tracks on the modified crossing.

Nick Gray, Solent and South Downs Flood and Coastal Risk Manager said:

The need to extend defences across a live railway line was a notable challenge for the scheme. A unique solution was needed so we built a base and new walls to tie into the flood embankments and installed drainage as well as diverting signalling, power and telecoms cables.

By temporarily joining these two embankments we can form a complete flood defence in the event of a major flood.

Geodesign Barriers, the barrier provider, was on site to support the Environment Agency alongside the Newhaven flood alleviation scheme contractor JacksonHyder, with Network Rail overseeing rail health and safety.

The work on the railway has been complex involving close collaboration between numerous organisations, both in the private and public sectors, to design and build this unique solution.

Logan Subramaniam, Head of Asset Protection for Network Rail said:

Network Rail's Kent and Sussex Asset Protection team have worked

very closely with the Environment Agency and it has given us great satisfaction at having been part of this successful project. We are working hard to understand the impacts that climate change will have on the performance of our assets and services, along with the safety of our workforce and passengers.

[There is further information on the Newhaven scheme](#). Completed in 2021, the scheme better protects over 800 properties and vital infrastructure from flooding from the tidal River Ouse.

A film about the scheme is available to view [Newhaven flood alleviation scheme – YouTube](#).

- The barriers are demountable flood defences that can be quickly mobilised and demobilised with minimal plant and consist of collapsible galvanised steel supports, which are easily opened and locked into a 45-degree position.
- The temporary barriers and supporting equipment will be stored locally. Environment Agency staff will deliver the equipment to site and deploy it when required.
- The recently completed Newhaven flood alleviation scheme, opened by Maria Caulfield MP on 15 October 2021, was part of the £2.6 billion being spent over 2015-21 across the country, delivering more than 1,500 projects to better protect 300,000 homes. This is on top of £1 billion by 2020 to maintain flood defences.
- We have doubled this investment to a record £5.2 billion for the current capital programme, which began earlier this year and will see around 2,000 new flood and coastal defences created to better protect 336,000 properties across England.
- The majority of funding for the Newhaven flood alleviation scheme has come from the government in the form of Flood and Coastal Risk Management Grant in Aid (GIA).
- The 'Coast to Capital' and 'South East' Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs), each contributed £1.5 million, working in partnership with us to help deliver their wider commitment to the regeneration of Newhaven.
- You can [check whether you are at risk of flooding or to register for free flood alerts and warnings](#).