

Northwich flood defences put to the test ahead of winter

- The £7m Northwich flood risk management scheme, which reduces the flood risk to around 400 homes and businesses throughout the town, will be put to the test on Sunday 7th November.
- The exercise to test the defences comes after a week of heavy rain.

A selection of temporary and permanent flood barriers, which would be deployed in emergencies, are to be put to the test in Northwich ahead of winter.

In a large scale exercise due to take place on Sunday 7th November at 8pm, 100 metres of temporary defences will be erected and 14 flood gates closed.

The exercise will start with the closing of floodgates at Waitrose and the Dane Street Bridge, as well as setting up temporary flood defences outside of Wildwood and the cinema. As part of this phase, the far end of London Road will also be closed and a viable alternative route provided.

Temporary defences are made of lightweight aluminium and can be erected in around 45 minutes in the event of a flood alert or warning.

At Dane Bridge, two layers of barrier act as a channel to keep water within the River Dane, preventing it from spilling over towards London Road or Watling Street.

The floodgates are closed in minutes and create a seal to protect the town from floodwater.

Since its launch in June 2018, the £7 million flood alleviation scheme, which reduces the flood risk to around 400 homes and businesses throughout the town, has been tested and maintained on regular basis.

This latest exercise is part of a series of training drills being carried out by the Environment Agency in the run-up to winter.

Ollie Hope Environment Agency Flood and Coastal Risk Manager for Cheshire and Merseyside said:

“We hope that the £7m Northwich flood risk management scheme won’t be needed this winter but our teams are well-prepared for whatever the elements may have in store.

“Alongside our partners, we are ready to take action wherever it is needed. We train all year round to make sure we are equipped to respond to incidents, but at this time of year with an increase in flood risk it’s vital we make sure we are prepared.

“I hope such emergency response plans will give reassurance to residents in

Northwich but, it is important to remember that we can never fully protect against flooding. Residents should always prepare in advance for this by going online at www.gov.uk and signing up for free flood warnings. Alternatively, they can telephone the Environment Agency Floodline on 0845 988 1188 and find out what they can do to protect themselves and their property when flooding hits.”

Councillor Karen Shore, Deputy Leader of Cheshire West and Chester Council and Cabinet Member – Environment, Highways & Strategic Transport, said:

“Northwich and many areas of our borough suffered badly from flooding last winter and we want to ensure these events are not repeated. We have been working with partners including the Environment Agency throughout the year to prevent a repeat of further flooding damage occurring to homes and businesses.

“Our teams are supporting the Environment Agency’s important and large-scale exercise this weekend to test temporary and permanent flood barriers, which would be deployed in emergencies. It is vital that all agencies are able to act swiftly to protect residents in the event of a flood in the future and testing such as this will help teams be well prepared for the future.”

The Environment Agency has already invested in 40km-worth of temporary flood barriers and 250 high volume pumps across the UK ahead of the winter weather. Other exercises will be carried out by Environment Agency teams from Leigh, Sale and Winsford depots in additional locations across the North West in the run-up to Christmas. The training for all three teams will include the operating of major assets such as pumping stations, sluice gates and both temporary and demountable barriers.

Throughout this year the Environment Agency has continued to build and maintain flood defences across Greater Manchester, Merseyside and Cheshire, including projects in Radcliffe and Redvales, Rochdale and Littleborough as well as Sanky Brook and supporting and funding projects in Lymn.

A record £5.2 billion is being invested between 2021-27, creating around 2,000 new flood and coastal defences to better protect 336,000 properties across England. These schemes will help to avoid £32 billion in wider economic damages and reduce the national flood risk by up to 11 per cent. More than £42 million of this will be spent in 2021-22 boosting the design and construction of more than 50 schemes across Greater Manchester, Merseyside and Cheshire.

Over 5 million homes are at risk of flooding in England alone and there are practical steps people can take to reduce the impact, including [signing up to flood warnings](#) and downloading our [‘What to do in a Flood’ plan](#).