

# Off the starting blocks for multi-million pound flood scheme

- The new scheme is led by the Environment Agency in partnership with Rochdale Borough Council, Network Rail, the North West RFCC, TfGM, and the Departments for Education and Transport.
- It features a range of measures to reduce the risk of flooding to 1,000 residential properties and 200 local businesses across Rochdale and Littleborough

Enabling works for a multi-million pound flood alleviation scheme in Littleborough which will help protect around 1,000 homes are set to get underway in the coming weeks.

The first phase of the scheme involves the construction of a storage reservoir at Gale, just off Todmorden Road, and a programme of measures to improve water flow and flood defences along the River Roch and its tributaries. These measures will improve flood protection for 1,000 residential properties and 200 local businesses.

The project, part of the wider £56m Rochdale and Littleborough flood alleviation scheme, will also protect vital infrastructure, including local transport networks, schools and colleges.

These initial works, scheduled to start early April, will prepare the sites for further construction later this year with a second planning application set to be submitted in the autumn

Led by the Environment Agency, with support from Rochdale Borough Council, Network Rail, Transport for Greater Manchester (TfGM) and the North West Regional Flood and Coastal Committee, the Rochdale and Littleborough flood alleviation scheme will be one of the largest inland flood management projects in the north of England.

The scheme, which is also supported by the Departments of Education and Transport, is one of a number of flood alleviation measures which have taken place across the borough following the devastating Boxing Day floods of 2015.

The next phase of the project will focus on storage reservoirs and flood defence improvements between Smithy Bridge and Rochdale town centre and the whole project is expected to be completed by late 2025.

The initial enabling works at Gale will require the closure of a single lane of Todmorden Road, between Elim Terrace and Reddyshore Brow from 6 April to 30 September.

Some work on the railway line running through the Gale site is also needed and will involve a closure of the railway line during October 21. These works are being carried out by Network Rail and their contractors and further supports the partnership approach being adopted for the scheme delivery.

Nick Pearson Flood Risk Advisor with the Environment Agency said:

“This is a step closer to constructing the Rochdale and Littleborough Flood Risk Management scheme which is fantastic news as it will benefit residents, businesses, the local economy and local wildlife. The improved flood defences will play a crucial role in better protecting the wider community from the risk of flooding into the future.

“By delivering these works ahead of constructing the main flood alleviation scheme, we will be able to reduce the risk of unknown issues coming to light and keep any disruption for the local community, to a minimum. All our work will be carried out in line with the Government coronavirus guidelines and activities will continue to be reviewed so that they can be completed safely.”

Councillor Neil Emmott, Cabinet Member for Quality of Place at Rochdale Borough Council, said:

“We’ve been working with the Environment Agency and other partners over a number of years to bring this much needed investment in to help us mitigate the impact of floods, which can have such a devastating impact on communities.

“This project, one of the biggest flood alleviation schemes in the north of England, will make a huge difference to residents and businesses on the ground and I’m really pleased to see it progress.”

Rory Kingdon, senior sponsor at Network Rail, said:

“Pooling resources with the Environment Agency to tackle flooding in Rochdale and Littleborough is win-win for householders and passengers on the Calder Valley line.

“This section of track has flooded 33 times in eight years. It’s caused trains to be delayed for a combined total of 14,000 minutes – that’s more than nine and a half days of significant disruption to passengers travelling in Lancashire, Yorkshire and Greater Manchester.”

“The £3m Department of Transport investment to build a new underbridge this October will divert floodwater away from high risk sites and increase the weather resilience of the line, which will be used as a diversionary route for passengers during the Transpennine Route Upgrade.”