

Press release: £21 million Sheffield flood defence completed

A £21 million flood defence scheme to better protect hundreds of businesses in Sheffield's Lower Don Valley has opened today (Thursday 25 January).

The Lower Don Valley area is second only to the city centre for economic importance to Sheffield. The new flood alleviation scheme will benefit more than 500 businesses and safeguard around five thousand jobs, key roads in and out of the city and homes along a five mile stretch of the River Don.

New 'hard defences' have been installed along an 8km stretch of the river to raise flood defence levels comprising new gravity walls, installation of flood gates and the fitting of more than 300 flap valves to pipes and openings which discharge to the river.

Sir James Bevan, Environment Agency Chief Executive, said:

Flooding has devastating costs for people and businesses – and we know this has been the case for the people of Sheffield. This fantastic scheme will not only benefit homes and businesses in the city but it will also safeguard thousands of jobs due to the increased level of protection it provides.

It's been great to see Sheffield City Council and the Environment Agency working together in partnership to better protect the Lower Don Valley.

It is the first scheme of its kind in the UK to have business owners contributing to the costs of the flood protection through the creation of a formal Business Improvement District – a business led partnership created to bring additional services to local businesses. The Environment Agency and Defra contributed £19.3 million towards the total capital cost (£20.7 million), with local businesses contributing £1.4 million.

Floods Minister Thérèse Coffey said:

This partnership funding model showcases the way industry can work with Government to provide wider benefits to the community with local business investment in this project. The Sheffield Lower Don Valley scheme is protecting jobs, businesses and vital infrastructure which the whole city can be very proud of.

In Yorkshire, the Government is investing £430 million over the next four years to reduce the flood risk to a further 63,000 homes

and businesses.

The Chief Executive of the Environment Agency, Sir James Bevan, and the Leader of Sheffield City Council Councillor Julie Dore were among those at the event, also attended by local business owners, to mark the completion of the work.

Councillor Julie Dore said:

I am delighted to see we have fulfilled our promise to strengthen our defences against floods. I would like to express my thanks to all the partners involved in creating flood protection that is fit for purpose.

Our investment in this scheme means we are not only securing the future of existing businesses and homes but also making land more suitable for new homes and regeneration. This will create more jobs, investment and growth in the city.

Today marks the beginning of our commitment to preventing any future devastation. In the coming months and years we will be doing more work to ensure that we reduce the risk of floods and protect residents, homes and businesses across Sheffield.

The scheme has been shortlisted for an award as the best project over £5 million in the Institute of Civil Engineers Yorkshire and Humber Awards 2018.

Sheffield has suffered severe flooding with the most recent in 2007, 2009 and 2012.