

Press release: Isle of Axholme to benefit from £35m flood protection investment

An 80-year-old pumping station is to be given a new lease of life, bringing environmental and flood-risk benefits to an area almost twice the size of Birmingham, the Environment Agency has announced.

The work is part of a £35m investment to upgrade Keadby Pumping Station near Scunthorpe and construction is set to get underway from mid-April. Preparation work on the site is currently underway.

The improvements will see the facility's diesel pumps replaced by more reliable and efficient electric versions. As well as reducing flood risk, the new pumps will also lessen the station's carbon footprint and are designed to be safe for fish and eels.

Keadby Pumping Station is used to manage water levels across the Isle of Axholme – around a 500 kilometre square area of North Lincolnshire, South Yorkshire and North Nottinghamshire.

The facility helps reduce the risk of flooding by transferring flood water from the 'Three Rivers' into the River Trent during high tides.

The Pumping Station reduces flood risk to more than 15,000 homes, 30,000 hectares of high-grade agricultural land, businesses, internationally important habitats, and critical infrastructure such as transport links, a power station and Doncaster Sheffield Airport.

The current station has reached the end of its working life. The current pumps and equipment are unreliable, costly to maintain and are increasingly at risk of breaking down.

The scheme also includes the construction of new electrical equipment buildings within the existing site and rebuilding of the outfall headwall, where the 'Three Rivers' discharges to the River Trent.

The introduction of 'fish-friendly' pumps will mean both fish and eels can pass safely through the facility, helping them overcome man-made obstacles to their natural migration. The measure is recognised as vital to protecting wildlife and improving the health of rivers.

Environment Minister Thérèse Coffey said:

The Isle of Axholme will benefit greatly from this £35m government funding which will better protect the local community and businesses from flooding for years to come.

I am pleased to see the plan will not only bring more protection against flooding, but also have environmental benefits for wildlife and improve the health of the rivers in the area.

I look forward to seeing the work completed.

Andrew Haigh, the Environment Agency's senior advisor for flood risk management, said:

The £35m investment in a new state-of-the-art pumping station at Keadby will enable us to continue to protect over 15,000 homes, businesses and agricultural land from the risk of flooding across the Isle of Axholme.

We have been working in partnership with the local authorities and the Internal Drainage Boards on our plans to upgrade the current facility with new electric pumps and equipment that will increase reliability and efficiency, leading to more effective water level management in this area. It also offers improved access for fish and eels to migrate between the 'Three Rivers' and the River Trent.

The contract to design and build the improved flood defence has been awarded to GBV, a joint venture between Galliford Try and Black & Veatch.