

Press release: Lower Otter Restoration Project now applying for funding

The Environment Agency has today confirmed its commitment to the Lower Otter Restoration Project while applications for funding grants are made.

This assurance means that work to manage the estuary can press ahead and avoid delays on delivering the £8-9 million scheme.

Ben Johnstone, Environment Agency flood risk manager, said:

We are completely committed to the Lower Otter Restoration Project and, together with our partners, want to drive forward our work to create multiple benefits for people and wildlife.

Following public consultation the project team has selected the best option for the Lower Otter, which will include restoring the Big and Little Marsh floodplain. Most of the existing embankments will be kept with breaches to allow water to flow through. It will also create new intertidal and freshwater habitats with no increase in height to current water levels and flood risk.

The partnership scheme will provide new and improved access and amenities including maintaining the South West Coast Path and relocating the Budleigh Salterton Cricket Club. It will also protect the old municipal tip in the flood plain and deliver compensatory habitat for the construction and maintenance of flood defences in the Exe Estuary such as Starcross, Cockwood and Exmouth.

Dr Sam Bridgewater from the Lower Otter Restoration Project team said:

This is great news from one of the key project partners. We can now seek the necessary consents and permissions from a variety of authorities, so that we are ready to start work on the ground as soon as possible once funding is confirmed.

A public exhibition on the Lower Otter Restoration Project will be held later this year – details to follow.