

Press release: New £1 million flood competition to protect more communities

A new ground-breaking competition will allow flood defence projects around the country to apply for a share of £1 million to help protect even more homes and businesses, Environment Secretary Andrea Leadsom announced today.

This government funded competition is the first of its kind and will be open to innovative projects that plan to use landscape features such as ponds, banks, meanders, channels, and trees to store, drain or slow flood water.

Natural flood management already forms an important part of the government's flood strategy and funding these new projects builds on £14m already committed to similar schemes across the country.

Environment Secretary Andrea Leadsom said:

I am delighted to offer more support for local communities looking to employ natural flood management measures to better protect their homes and businesses.

We now carefully look at flood risk across an entire catchment area from a river's source to the sea – to make sure we have in place the best tailored mix of natural as well as concrete, engineered defences to better protect communities.

The Environment Secretary announced the new competition in Leicester, where a natural flood management scheme is already successfully in place reconnecting the floodplain with the river.

This scheme has not only reduced the flood risk to 1,200 properties, it has transformed public spaces along the river, with improved seating areas and cycle paths for the local community to enjoy. A total of 100 trees and 7,000 shrubs have been planted and wildlife such as grey heron and little egret are now regularly seen around the area.

The new natural flood management competition will give small-scale natural flood management projects around the country the opportunity to apply for funding, so they too can achieve similar results.

Environment Agency Chair, Emma Howard Boyd, said:

At places such as Leicester, Morpeth, and Medmerry, the Environment Agency has already shown that natural flood management can reduce flood risk alongside traditional flood defences and property

resilience.

There is no 'one size fits all' approach to natural flood management: it's about using a range of measures, from creating ponds and woody dams to redirecting river channels, that work together to reduce flood risk. This competition is a great way to explore the different ways these approaches can benefit communities and the environment.

Details of the competition and how to apply are available [here](#).

The deadline for competition entries is 19 May 2017 and the successful projects are expected to be announced by the end of June 2017.

Notes to editors:

- Applications are to be submitted through existing Catchment Partnerships – bodies formed of local people, landowners and statutory bodies that work together to manage whole river catchments.
- Upstream management of flooding is already a central theme in many areas, including the Cumbria and Calderdale Flood Action Plans.
- The Government has already provided £4.1m to natural flood management demonstration projects in Holnicote (Somerset), Pickering (North Yorks) and Upper Derwent (Derbyshire).