

Press release: North West awarded £1 million funding for natural flood scheme

People, homes and businesses across the North West will be better protected from flooding thanks to a £1 million natural flood scheme, the Floods Minister Thérèse Coffey announced Friday (14 July).

More than 1,000 properties across Delph, Uppermill, Stalybridge, Mossley, Hayfield, Glossop and Whaley Bridge will benefit from the pioneering 'Slow the Flow' project. The project will 'slow the flow' of water reaching rivers and watercourses upstream of communities at flood risk.

Measures to slow the flow of water – from peat restoration to woodland planting and leaky barriers – will trap sediment and help to reduce the need for channel maintenance. The project will be carried out by a wide range of partners, including the Irwell River Trust, United Utilities and Cheshire Wildlife Trust.

The scheme is one of 58 across England which will benefit from £15 million of government funding for natural flood defences.

Floods Minister Thérèse Coffey said:

I am thrilled to announce £1 million to help communities across the North West make the most of the innovative natural flood management measures now on offer. By restoring peat and planting woodlands, multiple 'slow-the flow' schemes across the region will help protect families, homes and businesses from flooding, benefiting the wider environment and the people who live in those communities.

Emma Howard Boyd, Chair of the Environment Agency, said:

Natural flood management is an important part of our approach, alongside traditional flood defences and helping homeowners to improve their own property resilience. There is no 'one size fits all' solution to flooding and this scheme is a fantastic example of how we can use a variety of measures that work together to reduce flood risk.

Two other projects aiming to 'slow the flow' of water in catchments in the Pennines have each been awarded £50,000 funding from the natural flood management pot. One will reduce flood risk to nearly 300 homes in the Upper Dove catchment, while the other will benefit approximately 50 homes in the Upper Dean catchment.

David Brown of the Environment Agency said:

In the Greater Manchester, Merseyside and Cheshire area, we are pleased with this funding allocation and are keen to work in partnership going forward on projects that will benefit nature at the same time as reducing the risk of flooding.

The more of these schemes we have, the more we can use our natural habitats to build-up flood resilience, so it really is a win-win situation. We are now looking forward to developing a programme of projects in the catchment to 'slow the flow' and reduce flood risk.

Natural flood management involves restoring the natural function of catchments, rivers, floodplains and coasts. This can include methods such as reinstating floodplains, creating wetlands, installing debris dams and planting trees.

The government's natural flood management drive builds on the 1,500 flood schemes the Environment Agency is already building across the country to better protect more than 300,000 homes by 2021.

The £15 million of government funding also includes the £1 million competition for smaller community projects to fund natural flood management schemes.