

River Severn partnership secures over £40m boost for flood defence

The government announcement, which included £200 million for innovative projects and £170 million for accelerated flood defence schemes, comes as welcome news to the partnership and its ambition to make the Severn river network the most vibrant and resilient in Britain.

The River Severn Partnership, formed in September 2019, brings together the Environment Agency, local authorities, local enterprise partnerships, Severn Trent Water, Water Resources West, Natural Resources Wales, wildlife trusts and others to establish a strategy for adapting to climate change and to improve resilience across an area which covers the Rivers Severn, Teme, Warwickshire Avon and the Wye.

Around £35 million will be used to accelerate delivery of schemes to manage flood risk, including Tenbury Wells, an additional £5.4 million to undertake carbon offsetting, resulting in significant tree planting and improving habitats and green spaces for local people along the river network.

Alongside scheme delivery a further £1.5 million was secured by the Partnership in recognition of the innovative action it is seeking to take to build resilience. The Partnership has been chosen as one of four nationally to trial and develop new ways of planning ahead and making wise investment choices based on the long term uncertainties brought by climate change. The hope is that this will provide a strong basis for the Partnership to bid into the wider £200 million Innovative Resilience Programme which will be available later this year.

Joint chairs for the River Severn Partnership, Mike Grimes from the Environment Agency and Mark Barrow from Shropshire Council said:

The river network impacts on us all and is fundamentally the one thing that binds us all together. We recognise the unique role of this river network as a wonderful natural asset and yet it also poses us with significant challenges such as flooding and drought. As a group of organisations, we recognise that we need a new truly joined up approach and are pleased that Government supports our vision.

The Partnership is working to finalise an investment plan setting out the long term vision and programme, with an ambition to be a national showcase on how to deliver sustainable and resilient growth and drive forward economic recovery.