

# Press release: Working with nature to reduce flood risk in Norfolk

Work is under way on the first of five natural flood management schemes along rivers in Norfolk to help manage flood risk to local properties and improve habitats.

Natural flood management helps store flood water upstream and slows the flow of water along river channels, complementing the use of more traditional hard engineering downstream such as flood walls and embankments. Techniques such as tree-planting, restoring peatland, building leaky dams and reconnecting rivers to natural flood plains can all be used to reduce flood risk naturally.

The first two schemes under construction in Norfolk are on Camping Beck in the Bure Catchment at Buxton, and the River Yare at Marlingford.

The Buxton project is being carried out through a partnership between the Norfolk Rivers Internal Drainage Board, the Broadland Catchment Partnership and the Environment Agency. Works here involve storing flood flows upstream of Buxton village in an area that will enhance the environment through providing habitat, whilst helping to reduce flood risk downstream.

The Marlingford scheme is being carried out by a partnership involving Natural England, the Broadland Catchment Partnership and Environment Agency. A series of 'flow deflectors' and lengths of woody debris will be constructed in the channel of the River Yare to redirect flood water on to the flood plain, so it is stored upstream for longer and reduces the risk to communities downstream.

Sections of the riverbank will also be lowered at strategic locations for the same reason, and 'scrapes' will be dug in to the floodplain to increase water storage capacity. This will have the added benefit of providing habitat for wading birds such as lapwing, teal and snipe, plus invertebrates and other wildlife.

Similar techniques will be used at Ingworth on the River Bure, and Weybourne on the Spring Beck, with work due to begin soon.

A fifth scheme will be constructed at Worthing on the River Blackwater in partnership with the Norfolk Rivers Trust, with work taking place late Autumn.

The work is being carried out as part of a £15million Natural Flood Management programme, which was announced by Defra in 2017.

The Environment Agency's Peta Denham, Area Flood Risk Manager for Essex, Norfolk and Suffolk, said:

I've always had an interest in how we can work more with nature to reduce flood risk, so I'm really pleased to get the opportunity to work on these natural flood management schemes in Norfolk.

We'll help manage flood risk to communities at the same time as improving habitats – so it's a win-win situation. I'm really looking forward to working with partners and our Regional Flood & Coastal Committee on these exciting projects on the ground, which will leave a real legacy of multiple benefits for future generations.

Environment minister Thérèse Coffey said:

The start of work on the new natural flood management (NFM) schemes is excellent news for Norfolk. The county is just one of the areas across England benefitting from our £15m investment in NFM and in the record £2.6 billion we are investing overall to better protect against flooding.

Once finished, the Norfolk schemes will provide additional support in reducing the flood risks to local land, homes and businesses. On top of this, they will also enhance and restore some of the county's wildlife habitats and improve water quality in its rivers.

This is a great example of how the Environment Agency is working with partners to protect Norfolk's communities from the damage caused by flooding.

Emily Swan, Natural England lead adviser in farming and conservation, said:

The scheme at Marlingford is an exciting opportunity for us all to work together to create a resilient landscape along the Yare river valley.

Local communities and wildlife will benefit from a package of measures put together which are aimed at reducing flood risk, improving the water quality of the river and enhancing and preserving a mosaic of important habitats for fish, wintering birds and wildflower rich floodplain meadows in the valley.

Neil Punchard, Broadland Catchment Partnership officer, said:

This partnership helps co-ordinate farmers and organisations in working together. This can cost-effectively provide multiple benefits including wetland wildlife habitat, improved water quality, and reduced flood risk for local communities

Matthew Philpot, Project Engineer for Broads & Norfolk Rivers IDB said:

The joint working on natural flood management projects has delivered important, tangible benefits for many local communities across our county.

The integration of staff, resource and ideas has opened up a number of projects, which have given significant efficiencies along with multiple benefits to wildlife, people and property.

Working with nature and thinking in new, progressive ways about drainage opportunities has been highly beneficial and will continue to provide positive outcomes for many years to come.

Notes to Editors:

- Natural flood management is an important part of the Environment Agency's strategy in protecting communities from flood and coastal erosion risk.
- It can be a cost-effective and sustainable way to manage flood risk and coastal erosion alongside traditional engineering, while creating habitat for wildlife and helping regenerate rural and urban areas through tourism.
- Many flood and coastal schemes feature a mixture of hard and soft engineering and natural flood management.

For East Anglia press office please contact (24 hours): 0800 917 9250

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## **[News story: White Helmets resettlement](#)**

Under the well-established practices of the Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme (VPRS), the Home Office is working closely with UNHCR, the Department for International Development and the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government to resettle the families.

The Home Secretary Sajid Javid said:

White Helmets volunteers saved the lives of thousands of innocent civilians during the Syrian conflict and suffered terrible losses in the process.

I am therefore proud that the UK is resettling these brave individuals and their families and giving them the opportunity to rebuild their lives here.

The Foreign Secretary Jeremy Hunt said:

The actions of the White Helmets demonstrate true modern day heroism. They are rightly respected for their courageous, life-saving work and have previously been nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize. We welcome the first White Helmets to be resettled in the UK.

These brave volunteers have rushed to pull people from the rubble when bombs have rained down on Syria and I'm proud that the UK has led the way in their evacuation and resettlement.

International Development Secretary Penny Mordaunt said:

The White Helmets who have risked their lives to rescue thousands of Syrian civilians are facing persecution from the Assad regime. We should be so proud of Britain's role supporting their life-saving work and now providing them and their families with sanctuary and helping them rebuild their lives.

We are also exploring how we can learn from their valuable experience and expertise protecting civilians in need.

The White Helmets are a civil defence organisation that has saved over 115,000 lives and protected the Syrian people who are bearing the brunt of the conflict.

The UK has already resettled over 12,800 of the most vulnerable refugees fleeing the Syrian conflict, with the government on track to meet its commitment of resettling 20,000 by 2020.

Over £2.71 billion has been committed by the UK government since 2012 to meet the immediate needs of vulnerable people in Syria and of refugees in the region making it one of the largest donors. This is the largest ever response from the UK to a single humanitarian crisis.

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# Government response: Minister for Asia welcomes Maldives elections

FCO Minister Mark Field said:

I welcome the announcement of the preliminary results of the Presidential election in Maldives on 23 September, and offer my congratulations to the winner, Mr Ibrahim Mohamed Solih. I wish him and his coalition partners well as they prepare for a smooth and peaceful transition of government.

I hope to visit Maldives in the near future, and I look forward to working with the new government on issues of shared concern to Maldives and the UK.

## **Further information**

- Follow Foreign Office Minister Mark Field [@MarkFieldUK](#)
- Follow the Foreign Office on Twitter [@foreignoffice](#) and [Facebook](#)
- Follow the Foreign Office on [Instagram](#), [YouTube](#) and [LinkedIn](#)

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# Press release: UK and US further collaboration in science and innovation by deepening ties in medical technology

- Science Minister Sam Gyimah has visited Boston, Houston and Washington DC marking one year on from the signing of the landmark science and

technology accord

- following his return, he confirmed a new fact-finding mission to Texas for UK businesses and academics to open up opportunities to the UK Life Sciences sector
- during the visit, the minister met with leading academic institutions, innovative businesses and tech disruptors to learn first-hand how the US supports innovation

Marking one year on from the UK signing a landmark Science and Technology Cooperation Agreement with the US, Science Minister Sam Gyimah has visited Boston, Houston and Washington DC to meet disruptive businesses, hear from innovators and announce a further research partnership in medical technology.

The minister confirmed a winter fact-finding mission with UK experts from the life sciences sector set to visit Texas to seek out opportunities for global innovation. Both the UK and Texas have a stellar reputation in the life sciences and the US state is home to America's leading cancer hospital. During the November visit, businesses and academics will explore new access to US markets for more UK innovators.

A total of 17% of UK research and development investment is financed from abroad, and the modern Industrial Strategy commits to keeping the UK connected to other leading international sources of ideas and learn about advances being made around the world.

Science Minister Sam Gyimah said:

Science has no borders. By collaborating with our US colleagues, we are pooling our power to find the answers to the biggest science questions of today and making the most of the inventions of tomorrow.

Building on our reputation as a global force in science is at the heart of our modern Industrial Strategy and we will continue to learn with and from international innovators to push new boundaries.

The minister used the opportunity to learn how leading academic and business partnerships between the UK and the US are commercialising technology. One example being the partnership between the University of Cambridge and Massachusetts Institute of Technology in Boston, which is developing research programmes to generate new ideas and encourage entrepreneurship that improve productivity and competitiveness.

During the trip the minister met:

- LearnLaunch and its member community to learn about the emerging Education Technology in Boston
- aerospace start-ups in Houston and NASA's senior leaders at the Johnson Space Centre and in DC to promote UK investment in aerospace and to highlight our ambitions for the UK space sector

- the Challenger Education Centre about how we can work together to use space to inspire and challenge more young people to take up stem subjects
  - National Institutes for Standards and Technology (NIST) where he discussed the vital role that science and technological standards play in supporting US innovation
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## [News story: Collaborative decommissioning research TRANSCENDS the individual approach](#)

The research will span 40 projects lasting up to 4 years each, helping to build the next generation of nuclear experts as well as developing technical solutions.

Building on a core grant of £4.6 million from the [Engineering & Physical Sciences Research Council \(EPSRC\)](#), AWE, Cavendish Nuclear, Low Level Waste Repository Ltd, National Nuclear Laboratory, Radioactive Waste Management Ltd, Sellafield Ltd and TUV SUD Nuclear Technologies are all supporting the programme through direct funding and/or supervisory expertise, use of facilities and researcher training, resulting in the total funding pot of more than £9 million.

Those working on the projects will include a mixture of PhD students and Post-Doctoral Researchers, each with academic and industrial supervisors, the latter being technical experts from within industry to ensure maximum 2-way knowledge transfer.

Known as TRANSCEND (Transformative Science and Engineering for Nuclear Decommissioning), the work builds on 2 previous programmes, DIAMOND and DISTINCTIVE, the former having concluded in 2013, with the latter due to finish in early 2019.

The consortium of 11 universities will be led by the University of Leeds and includes:

- Imperial College London
- Lancaster University
- Queen's University Belfast
- University of Birmingham
- University of Bristol
- University of Leeds
- University of Manchester
- University of Sheffield
- University of Southampton

- University of Strathclyde
- University of Surrey

The research topics to be explored by the TRANSCEND consortium align with the NDA's key themes of:

- Integrated waste management
- Site decommissioning and remediation
- Spent fuel
- Nuclear materials

TRANSCEND's work will build on the significant progress made in these areas by the DISTINCTIVE consortium, contributing to tackling the UK's nuclear legacy.

NDA Research Manager Dr Rick Short said:

Our industry benefits hugely when high-level academic research is focused at some of the challenges we face in decommissioning our nuclear legacy. We welcome this collaboration and look forward to seeing the progress that these important projects will deliver. Equally valuable will be the development of knowledge and expertise for the participants – we hope their skills will be with us for many years ahead.

Jon Martin, Head of Research at RWM, said:

Research is critical to exploring and understanding all aspects of the science associated with a future geological disposal facility that will be required to keep radioactive waste safe for many thousands of years. We welcome the news that the TRANSCEND collaboration has received approval and look forward to working in partnership with the many world-class research institutions and industry representatives involved.

NNL's Science Ambassador, Gareth Headdock, said:

As a national research lab, NNL will provide the key integrating interface between those carrying out the research and those needing solutions, to ensure they are aligned. This is primarily through the provision of industrial supervision and access to the world-leading facilities in our Central Laboratory on the Sellafield site.

We know that to achieve transformational developments in the way we approach waste management and decommissioning, we need to think differently, disrupt the established ways of working and collaborate with others like never before.



Geoff Randall, Senior Scientist at Sellafield Ltd, said:

The previous programmes have led directly to the development of new equipment like Acoustic Back Scattering technology that is being installed in a settling tank for Pile Fuel Storage Pond sludge removal. We've also been able to accelerate hazard reduction, partly as a result of fundamental research into Magnox Swarf Storage Silo materials, and prepare the next generation of engineers and scientist to face our challenges. We are pleased to be part of this exciting new programme.

Principal Investigator for the DISTINCTIVE and TRANSCEND programmes, Professor Michael Fairweather of the University of Leeds, said:

This research consortium represents an important activity in reinforcing the industry-academia links that have grown significantly in recent years, and provides key support to underpin an academic skill base in this crucial area for the UK. The world-leading team of academic experts provides both depth and breadth across all areas of current research need, and the strong support of our key industry partners validates the usefulness of the research programme we will undertake.