

Press release: Medway Flood Action Plan Launched

The Medway Flood Partnership has today launched the [Medway Flood Action Plan](#), outlining how it will reduce the risk of flooding to 9,000 properties in communities along the River Medway in Kent.

The plan is owned by the Medway Flood Partnership and outlines how the members will work with communities to manage the risk of in the Medway catchment. This covers all land draining into the Rivers Medway, Beult, Teise, Bourne and Eden, as well their tributaries. During the December 2013 flood event, over 900 homes were flooded across the Medway catchment, devastating people and livelihoods.

Over the next 5 years, at least £19 million will be invested in the Medway catchment on projects that help to manage and reduce flood risk. Measures include increasing the capacity of the Leigh Flood Storage Area and providing property-level resilience measures to homes in Yalding, Collier Street and Laddingford. The Environment Agency will be spending about £1 million each year on maintenance of river channels and flood defences such as flood walls, sluices and weirs, to ensure they remain in good condition.

Many organisations have a role in managing and responding to flooding: parish councils, local authorities, national agencies, landowner representatives and local businesses. Reducing the risk of flooding in the Medway catchment is a complex problem, which can only be solved by working in partnership.

The Medway Flood Partnership was established in January 2017 to bring these organisations together to co-ordinate these activities. We have also developed a Medway Action Plan that sets out our shared objectives and priorities for the next 5 years and a vision for the next 25 years.

Together the partnership are looking at where they can build defences to better protect communities as well as where they can slow the flow of floodwaters and reduce flood levels through natural flood management. Where it is not possible to prevent flooding, they are working with local communities to help them be better prepared and resilient to flooding so that they can recover more quickly after a flood.

Julie Foley, Environment Agency Area Manager, said:

The launch of this plan demonstrates our commitment to finding practicable solutions to manage flood risk. Over the next 5 years, fully funded schemes within the Medway Flood Action Plan will reduce the risk of flooding to over 1,700 homes along the River Medway. With our partners, we will also be exploring further opportunities for schemes that help to reduce flood risk and improve the local environment.

Matthew Balfour, Cabinet Member at Kent County Council, said:

I'm delighted that the Medway Flood Action Plan has been launched and that we can finally get to work on flood defences in the area. During the winter 2013 to 14 floods, over 900 homes and businesses in Tonbridge, Yalding, East Peckham and other smaller communities were flooded from the River Medway. We are determined to reduce the risk of flooding to these communities. This is tremendous news for those communities affected and goes to show that the hard work we have put in with our partners has helped us secure the funding and draw up a robust plan to help manage and reduce flood risk.

Contact

- All media enquiries: 0800 141 2743
- Email: southeastpressoffice1@environment-agency.gov.uk
- Follow us on Twitter: @EnvAgencySE

Notice: WA5 1A0, PQ Silicas UK Limited: environmental permit issued (EPR/RP3233GW/V007)

The Environment Agency publish permits that they issue under the Industrial Emissions Directive (IED).

This decision includes the permit and decision document for:

- Operator name: PQ Silicas UK Limited
- Installation name: Warrington Silicas Installation
- Permit number: EPR/RP3233GW/V007

Notice: DN14 7XD, Mr Michael Hardcastle, Mrs Christine Hardcastle and Mr Richard Hardcastle:

environmental permit application advertisement

The Environment Agency consults the public on certain applications for waste operations, mining waste operations, installations, water discharge and groundwater activities. The arrangements are explained in its [Public Participation Statement](#)

These notices explain:

- what the application is about
- how you can view the application documents
- when you need to comment by

The Environment Agency will decide:

- whether to grant or refuse the application
- what conditions to include in the permit (if granted)

Research and analysis: Benchmarking the efficiency of flood risk management asset maintenance costs

The Environment Agency spends £214 million each year (2016 to 2017 figures) to maintain flood risk management assets.

This project explored methods to identify potential efficiency improvements by comparing local maintenance costs. The project identified an effective method for doing this but also concluded that data quality is not yet good enough to apply the method. This report is helping the Environment Agency to focus its efforts to improve data quality.

Press release: Government to support development of next-generation nuclear

technology

- UK to become world-leader in developing next-generation advanced reactor programme
- boost to nuclear fusion research at Culham in Oxfordshire
- launch of next phase of Nuclear Innovation Programme, to include ambitious plans for safety, security and advanced fuels

The government announced today significant support to help exploit the potential for the UK to become a world-leader in developing the next generation of nuclear technologies.

A core objective of the government's [Industrial Strategy](#) is to ensure the UK is developing the technologies of the future and preparing to seize the opportunities they bring and build on its strengths.

The government is announcing today that funding is being made available over the next 3 years to help support research and development into innovative advanced and small modular reactors as well as assess their feasibility and accelerate the development of promising designs.

The government will also be supporting early access to regulators to build the capability and capacity needed to assess and licence small reactor designs and will establish an expert finance group to advise how small reactor projects could raise private investment in the UK.

In addition, the government plans to shortly launch the second phase of its Nuclear Innovation Programme, including up to £8 million for work on modern safety and security methodologies and studies in advanced fuels.

These announcements demonstrate the government's commitment to the nuclear innovations of the future, which build on the UK's considerable strength in the sector and its continued partnership working with the sector, including ongoing advanced discussions toward a nuclear sector deal.

Business Secretary Greg Clark said:

New industry figures show that the UK's civil nuclear sector contributed £6.4 billion to the UK economy last year. Today's announcements recognise the importance of industry driving innovation, supported by government, so the sector continues to compete at the very highest level, not just in the UK but globally.

Helping to put the UK at the forefront of future technologies which have the potential to create value and jobs across the whole UK are core objectives of our Industrial Strategy.

A further £86 million was announced today for fusion research to set up a national fusion technology platform at the Culham Centre for Fusion Energy in

Oxfordshire.

The new investment will reinforce the UK's world-leading fusion research and development capability, and allow UK firms to compete for up to a further £1 billion of international contracts for fusion technologies, including for the International Thermonuclear Experimental Reactor (ITER).

Science Minister Jo Johnson said:

Our new Industrial Strategy clearly detailed our ambition to build on the UK's existing scientific strengths and ensure UK expertise remains at the forefront of pioneering research that has global impact.

This new funding for nuclear fusion research will establish a unique set of research and innovation capabilities that will safeguard the exceptional work already taking place in Culham by scientists and engineers from across the world, and emphasises the UK's commitment to international collaboration.

ITER, the successor project to the EU's Joint European Torus (JET) reactor in Culham, is currently under construction in France and will continue efforts to develop a clean, safe and virtually limitless energy source.

Speaking at today's Nuclear Industry Association's annual conference, Energy Minister Richard Harrington also set out the next steps to allow large new nuclear projects to apply for planning consent after 2025.

He also signalled that the government would bring forward consultations in the New Year on the UK's long-term nuclear waste management strategy, also known as a geological disposal facility. This will enable the development of a multi-billion-pound infrastructure project, creating thousands of jobs and opportunities for UK companies in the supply chain.

Energy Minister Richard Harrington said:

As we set out in our Industrial Strategy, the nuclear sector has a key role to play in increasing productivity and driving clean growth across the country. Nuclear is a vital part of our energy mix, providing low carbon power now and into the future so today's package of new measures will help to boost innovation and provide greater clarity on our future plans.

Today's announcements follow the recent launch of the Industrial Strategy white paper which set out the government's vision for an economy that can drive growth across the country, boost national productivity and provide UK business with certainty.

The government support comes as the Nuclear Industry Council published

proposals today as part of its ongoing work to drive down the cost of nuclear energy for consumers while maintaining the UK's world-leading expertise in the field.

Industry, with government backing, will focus on bringing on line future technologies, target cost reductions in new build and decommissioning activities, and in creating a highly-skilled and diverse workforce.

Notes to editors

Advanced modular reactors

The government is providing up to £56 million research and development (R&D) funding for new technologies through a 2-stage Advanced Modular Reactor (AMR) R&D project over 3 years. Stage 1 comprises up to £4 million for feasibility studies and up to £7 million to further develop the capability of nuclear regulators who support and assess advanced nuclear technologies. Subject to Stage 1 demonstrating clear value for money through a formal re-approval process with the Treasury, up to £40 million will be available for AMR R&D projects and up to a further £5 million for regulators.

Fusion

The government has awarded the UK Atomic Energy Authority (UKAEA) £86 million to establish a centre to support innovation and expertise in nuclear fusion technologies. This move reinforces the UK's world-leading fusion R&D capability and creates a fusion innovation centre of global significance.

The funding will establish a National Fusion Technology Platform (NaFTeP) at UKAEA's Culham Centre for Fusion Energy in Oxfordshire.

NaFTeP will bring together organisations from across the supply chain to provide a unique, world-leading set of nuclear research and innovation facilities in tritium and fusion technology. NaFTeP will support UK industry in targeting major scientific and engineering contracts in nuclear fusion and safeguard the future of the Culham site and the world-class scientists and engineers that work there.

Nuclear Industry Council

The [Industrial Strategy green paper](#) cited nuclear as suitable for a potential Sector Deal.

Since then Lord John Hutton, in his capacity as Chair of the Nuclear Industry Council, has led the sector in the development of a range of proposals across key areas including new build, waste and decommissioning, R&D and skills.

The industry has today published [its proposals](#), including ideas that target significant cost reductions in new build and decommissioning.

New Nuclear National Policy Statement (NPS)

Government is considering the planning framework for nuclear power generation over 1 gigawatt for the long term. The current National Policy Statement (NPS) for nuclear will remain in place for as long as it is required. Government is consulting on the arrangements for the siting of nuclear power stations for the period beyond 2025.

This [consultation](#) sets out the process and the updated high level criteria used to assess potentially suitable sites. There will be a further consultation on a new NPS during late 2018, which will build on the outcome.

Government's intention is to carry forward existing sites into the new NPS, subject to them meeting the updated siting criteria and environmental assessments.

Government continues to give those sites, and projects, strong support.

This consultation and the subsequent NPS being developed under this process will not apply to SMRs. The government will consider planning issues related to smaller reactors of less than 1GW separately.

Geological Disposal Facility (GDF)

The government intends to launch 2 public consultations in the New Year on working with communities in an intended consent-based siting process; and on a National Policy Statement (NPS) for GDF infrastructure.

Nuclear Innovation Programme

The second phase of the Nuclear Innovation Programme consists of:

- £3.7 million of funding for work on reactor design and safety engineering. This work will aim to:
 - develop better tools for developing and evaluating safety and security cases
 - improve the evaluation of nuclear safety and security performance
 - increase understanding of how nuclear safety, nuclear security and safeguards requirements can be delivered throughout the design process
- £4.3 million of funding for work on advanced nuclear fuels. This work will aim to:
 - develop world leading laboratories able to develop accident tolerant fuels and to
 - develop improved computer modelling and simulation of how advanced nuclear fuels behave in operation
 - support the deployment of advanced nuclear reactors, such as generation IV technologies

As part of the first phase of the Nuclear Innovation Programme launched last year the government has also awarded £5 million of contracts for work on nuclear advanced materials and manufacturing. This funding is for Stage 2 of

a small business research initiative and includes work on:

- developing a single manufacturing platform environment
- intelligent fixtures for optimised and radical manufacture
- material / manufacturing technology evaluation for advanced reactors
- nano-structured steels to extend operational performance for nuclear reactors
- improved understanding and modelling of thin section weldments