

# Government pledges £62m flood funding for communities in England

Environment Secretary Theresa Villiers has announced a new round of flood defence investment today (Tuesday, 10 September 2019) for communities across Yorkshire, Cumbria, the North East and the South East of England.

Thirteen projects across England will benefit from a share of over £62 million, which as well as helping develop existing flood defences, will boost economic regeneration and increase prosperity in those areas. Many of the projects are located in communities which suffered from flooding during winter 2015.

In total, more than 9,004 homes will be better protected against flooding through this round of funding. The extra funding is in addition to the government's commitment to invest a record £2.6 billion over six years up to 2021 to better protect 300,000 homes across the country.

Environment Secretary Theresa Villiers said:

I am delighted to announce over £60m of additional funding to better protect communities which are vulnerable to flooding, particularly across parts of northern England.

Events this summer have shown that investing in flood risk management is more important than ever, and this funding builds on our long-standing £2.6 billion commitment to better protect 300,000 homes from flooding and coastal erosion over six years.

Funding will support the development of 11 projects in the Northern Powerhouse, including seven in Yorkshire, four in Cumbria and Lancashire and two in the North East.

£19m is set to go to Calder Valley, where the Mytholmroyd, Hebden Bridge and Brighouse schemes will be developed. More than 3,000 properties flooded in the West Yorkshire valley during the 2015 floods, leaving communities in the area badly affected. With this new boost, the two projects at Hedden Bridge and Brighouse are now to be developed, with work due to begin next year. Communities in Yorkshire will also receive additional funding with more money for the Tadcaster Flood Alleviation Scheme and additional funding for defences at Sowerby Bridge.

Minister of State for the Northern Powerhouse, the Rt Hon Jake Berry MP said:

This new funding for flood defences in the North of England adds to the £5.4 billion already invested into the Northern Powerhouse to drive jobs and economic growth, and a record £13 billion to upgrade

transport infrastructure across the North.

We're investing in public infrastructure so that local communities have the support and backing they need to flourish and seize all of the opportunities that come with leaving the European Union on the 31st October.

Cumbria and Lancashire are due to receive the second largest amount of funding, with £22.8m now available to support four flood projects in Kendal, Egremont, Flimby and Preston and South Ribble. The proposed scheme for Kendal involves three phases, of which the first will provide a 1 in 50 level of protection for 1,480 homes and 1,151 businesses.

Exchequer Secretary to the Treasury Simon Clarke said:

Flooding can have a devastating impact on communities.

The government's injection of an additional £62.35m will help protect communities, and ensure they remain vibrant places for people to live, work, and visit.

This round of funding will also allocate £6.3m to projects outside of the Northern Powerhouse, in Essex and Lincolnshire. In Essex, the River Roding project at Shonks Mill will better protect 550 homes in Woodford and its surrounding areas, while in Lincolnshire, the Lincoln Defences project is set to reduce flood risk to 1,842 homes and 424 businesses.

Emma Howard Boyd, Chair of the Environment Agency and UK Commissioner on the Global Commission on Adaptation said:

This extra funding will help us to go even further in our mission to better protect communities up and down the country from the terrible effects of flooding. We will work closely with these communities to design and build projects which not only reduce flood risk but which also benefit wildlife and the local economy for decades to come.

This vital investment comes on the same day that the Global Commission on Adaptation has released a report which issues a rallying cry to the international community to invest more in climate resilience including better protection for flood risk.

The Environment Agency has completed construction of more than 500 new flood and coastal erosion schemes since April 2015, better protecting over 195,000 and thousands of businesses. By the end of this year, the government will set out its policies to better prepare the country for flood and coastal erosion in a government policy statement. Informed by this policy, the Environment

Agency will update its national strategy for flood and coastal erosion risk management, which sets out a long term plan for tackling, preparing for and adapting to the additional risks that climate change will bring.

## Further information

A table with details of the schemes is below.

Project	Location	Additional Funding (£m)	Potential leveraging of partnership funding contributions (£m)
Lincoln Defences	Lincolnshire	1.2	0.8
Stokesley Flood Alleviation Scheme	North Yorkshire	1.8	0.0
Marton West Beck – Middlesbrough	North Yorkshire	1.8	0.4
Shonks Mill Flood Storage Area (River Roding Project)	Essex	5.1	4.8
Preston and South Ribble	Lancashire	15.8	9.5
Sowerby Bridge	West Yorkshire	1.7	0.0
Tadcaster Flood Alleviation Scheme	North Yorkshire	9.0	1.0
Kendal	Cumbria	5.0	6.8
Egremont	Cumbria	1.6	5.0
Flimby	Cumbria	0.4	0.0
Mytholmroyd	West Yorkshire	3.0	4.5
Hebden Bridge	West Yorkshire	11.0	1.5
Brighouse	West Yorkshire	5.0	6.4

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## [UK gets international backing to host global climate summit](#)

The UK today received a huge boost for our work to tackle climate change as international allies formally gave their backing for Britain to host COP26 in 2020.

The event in Glasgow next year will be the UN's 26th climate change conference, and bring together over 30,000 delegates from around the world, including climate experts, business leaders and citizens to agree ambitious action to tackle climate change.

Today's announcement means the UK is now officially backed by the group of

countries responsible for nominating the 2020 host.

This follows the PM's commitment at the G7 Summit in Biarritz to ensure that the COP26 Summit addresses both climate change and biodiversity as two sides of the same coin.

We expect the UK's nomination to be formally accepted at December's COP25 summit in Chile and we will host COP26, in partnership with Italy, in Glasgow in 2020.

Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab welcomed the news:

The UK has just received a huge vote of confidence from our international partners. We're poised to host the next major global climate negotiations, in partnership with Italy. Over 30,000 delegates from around the world will come together to commit to ambitious action to tackle climate change.

We're ready to bring the world together to make sure we leave our precious environment in a better state for our children.

Claire Perry, UK nominated President for COP26 said:

In 2020, world leaders will come together to discuss how to tackle climate change on a global scale – and where better to do so than Glasgow, one of the UK's most sustainable cities with a great track record for hosting high-profile international events.

I welcome the nomination from our partners in the UN regional group to host COP26 in Glasgow in partnership with Italy. The UK is a world-leader in emissions reduction, and we have recently committed to reducing our net emissions to zero.

International Development Secretary Alok Sharma:

This nomination is testimony to the UK's leading role in the global fight against climate change. UK aid has helped millions of people in developing countries to access clean energy and prepare for the impact of climate change. This is protecting our planet for future generations.

**Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab welcomes our COP26 nomination**

[Video](#)

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## [Food allergy - jointly organised one day conference](#)

The Government Chemist is collaborating with IGFS in Queen's University Belfast, to run a one day conference, 'Food Allergy – Human, analytical and regulatory implications'.

With a special focus on helping SMEs understand more about food allergy, the conference in Belfast brings together well-known experts in the fields of food allergens, including specialists from the food industry, (both large and small companies, and caterers), researchers, enforcement officers and regulators. This special mix of scientific and practical input to the conference will provide a valuable opportunity to grow your knowledge base, learn from practical experiences, and exchange ideas with peers.

The enforcement perspective will represent both Northern Ireland views, as well as feedback from officers who have prosecuted a landmark manslaughter case in England. There will be a discussion on allergen analysis including new innovations, and reference materials and legal implications.

Find out more, including [speaker information and the full programme](#) and [how to register](#).

If you have any enquiries related to allergen testing or current research performed by the Government Chemist, contact:

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## [UK Government continues to support The Bahamas relief effort](#)

RFA Mounts Bay, working closely alongside disaster relief experts from the Department of International Development and a Foreign Office consular team in Nassau, has been providing life-saving aid and care to the people of The Bahamas since 1st September.

The UK has committed up to £1.5 million towards the immediate humanitarian response. This funding has enabled the delivery of critical aid supplies and supported the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency in its work to coordinate the international response.

With aid stores empty and the ship running low on fuel, RFA Mounts Bay will depart Great Abaco this evening to resupply. A Dutch task force is on its way

to the Bahamas to continue providing aid, with HMNLS Johan de Witt due to arrive tomorrow morning.

RFA Mounts Bay was the first ship to provide assistance from any nation, with her arrival in the Bahamas early last week proving crucial to the effective and swift delivery of aid to those most in need. She has now distributed all of her stores which included 3,000 ration packs, nearly 100 tonnes of water, over 900 emergency shelter kits, and 1,000 hygiene kits.

DFID humanitarian experts will remain in the Bahamas after RFA Mounts Bay departs. This is part of DFID's ongoing support to the local authorities to help get aid to those in need and support the co-ordination of the international response.

Defence Secretary Ben Wallace said:

I would like to thank RFA Mounts Bay and her crew for their tireless work. Their dedication to providing immediate and life-saving support to the Bahamian people has laid the vital ground work for other nations to join the relief effort.

International Development Secretary Alok Sharma said:

My thoughts are with all those people in desperate need following this devastating hurricane. DFID humanitarian experts will stay on the island and work with international partners to continue to support the people of Bahamas.

The crew of RFA Mounts Bay have set the important ground work for the Bahamian government, other nations such as United States, the Netherlands, Jamaica, Turks & Cacaos Islands, and international aid agencies to continue providing relief. The ship has played a vital role in enabling support to reach some of the worst hit areas by clearing roads and access routes to allow aid to flow.

After replenishing aid, RFA Mounts Bay's next task is to return to the Caribbean region in anticipation of subsequent weather systems. She will be on standby to support the over 200,000 British citizens resident in the Overseas Territories as well as other regional partners for the duration of the hurricane season.

RFA Mounts Bay has been stationed in the region since June to provide humanitarian assistance during the hurricane season.

Her crew have worked tirelessly to ensure the communities on Great Abaco Island have had access to the most basic needs such as food, water, and shelter in the immediate aftermath of the worst storm the islands have ever seen.

HMS Protector has also been used as part of the relief effort in the region and is en route to the region with 23 tonnes of Bermudan aid for further distribution around the Bahamas.

The UK is continuing to assist British Nationals in The Bahamas, and their families in the UK. A consular team have been deployed to help British who are facing difficulties in the wake of the hurricane.

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## Automated facial recognition

The High Court in Cardiff has now found that South Wales Police's use to date of automated facial recognition (AFR) has been consistent with the requirements of the Human Rights Act and data protection legislation. It also found that the current legal regime is adequate to ensure the appropriate and non-arbitrary use of the AFR system that has been used in trials by South Wales Police. It should be noted that this is a judgment in the first instance and that the claimant now intends to appeal. This is not surprising given the fundamental rights at stake and that, as is stated in the judgment, this is the first time that any court in the world has considered AFR.

The judgment itself considers solely the use of AFR by the police rather than any other public or indeed private bodies. Moreover, the judgment is specific to the particular circumstances in which South Wales Police used their AFR system. Whilst South Wales Police should be commended for the thoughtful, considered way in which they have carried out their trials to date there remains a wider issue, which is not limited to whether there is a legal basis for the police to carry out trials of AFR. The bigger question going forward is whether there should be a specific legal framework for the police (and others) to routinely deploy new biometrics including AFR but also voice recognition, gait analysis, iris analysis or other new biometric technologies as they emerge. The judgment in this case does not provide the answer to this, which is, in my view, for Ministers and Parliament to decide.

My role as Biometrics Commissioner was created under the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012. The act's title reflected the fact that it aimed to ensure that the police use of DNA and fingerprints delivered public benefits for law enforcement and national security whilst the intrusion into the individual's liberty and freedom to have a private life without state interference was limited and regulated by law.

Since that Act was passed the use of new biometrics, such as facial image matching is rapidly being adopted by both law enforcement agencies and private sector companies. This is not simply the use of CCTV or other camera systems that have existed for some time but the linking of cameras with a biometric technology that enables the identification and matching of individuals and is also claimed to identify a person's emotional reactions to stimuli such as advertising or to predict future action and threats. This is

happening because three technologies – biometric matching, artificial intelligence and big data analytics – are reinforcing each other and producing technical improvements very rapidly. Facial matching is just one example, but an important one because our faces are always on display and so can easily be captured.

Just like DNA and fingerprints, all such systems are an intrusion into an individual's privacy and potentially into their liberty and therefore it is not surprising that groups such as Liberty and Big Brother Watch have challenged its legality or called for its banning.

Given that these new technologies have multiple and widespread uses the question of whether we allow such systems to be used, and for what purposes and within what legal control will shape the nature of our social and political world well into the future. For that reason the choices that are now before us about the use of biometric systems are strategic decisions about the future world we want to live in.

China has already made such a strategic choice and is trialling biometric systems that are designed to allow the state to constantly monitor the behaviour of its citizens and control their future actions and thinking. China is also aiming to be the leading country in the development of these new technologies and to export its technology to other countries.

I am not suggesting that the UK will want to make the same strategic choice as China but simply that we also have to decide how we do wish to see the new technologies used and what kind of future world we want to thereby to create.

Up until now, insofar as there has been a public debate, it has been about the police trialling of facial image matching in public places and whether this is lawful or whether in future it ought to be lawful. As Biometrics Commissioner I have reported on these police trials and the legal and policy question they have raised to the Home Secretary and to Parliament. However, the debate has now expanded as it has emerged that private sector organisations are also using the technology for a variety of different purposes. Public debate is still muted but that does not mean that the strategic choices can therefore be avoided, because if we do so our future world will be shaped in unknown ways by a variety of public and private interests: the very antithesis of strategic decision making in the collective interest that is the proper business of government and Parliament.

The use of biometrics and artificial intelligence analysis is not the only strategic question the country presently faces. However, that is no reason not to have an informed public debate to help guide our lawmakers. I hope that ministers will take an active role in leading such a debate in order to examine how the technologies can serve the public interest whilst protecting the rights of individuals citizens to a private life without the unnecessary interference of either the state or private corporations. As in 2012 this again is about the 'protection of freedoms'.