

# £67m Ipswich Tidal Flood Barrier wins top engineering award

The project, which better protects over 1,600 homes and 400 businesses from the risk of flooding, has won an Exceptional Merit Award from the Institution of Civil Engineers (ICE) East of England Merit Awards.

The Barrier was recognised in the Technical Excellence and Innovation category.

ICE is a professional membership body, supporting more than 90,000 engineers around the world.

Costing almost £70million, the Ipswich Flood Defence Management Strategy comprises a mix of new and refurbished flood walls and gates along 1,100 metres of the River Orwell.

The barrier's centrepiece is a 200-tonne rotating Radial Sector Gate, which can be raised in minutes in the event of a tidal surge. The barrier was officially unveiled by Floods Minister Dr Thérèse Coffey in February. The flood gate has a design similar to that of the Thames Barrier and is so large that it is coated with 6 tonnes of protective paint. The flood gate rotates upwards out of the sea floor into the closed position, holding back dangerous tidal surges that could flood the town.

The new defences provide a much higher level of protection from the type of tidal surge which threatened the town in 2007 and 2013, both of which were close to spilling over the existing defences.

Aside from the reduced flood risk benefits, the flood defence scheme has the added advantage of helping to boost the local economy through freeing up hectares of land for regeneration.

The Environment Agency project was approved by Defra in 2006 and has been delivered by contractor VBA – a joint venture between VolkerStevin, Boskalis Westminster and Atkins.

The barrier scheme has an exemplary health and safety record. Risk on the project was designed using 3D and physical modelling, along with VolkerStevin's behavioural safety programme.

This resulted in no reportable incidents throughout the three year construction process, which comprised more than 300,000 hours of work. As a result, the project is now being used as a case study for other Environment Agency works including the Boston Barrier.

Andrew Usborne, the lead officer on the scheme, said the award was welcome recognition for the Environment Agency and its partners.

**He said:**

This is fantastic news for everyone involved, including all the Environment Agency staff, our contractors VBA and sub-contractors.

It has been a hugely successful construction project, one which is being used as an example to other Environment Agency schemes across the country of safe and effective partnership working.

**Simon Hawkins, Environment Agency East Anglia Area Director said:**

I'm delighted that the barrier has received this award. It's a testament to years of hard work and dedication from my team at the Environment Agency and our contractors.

**Wendy Blundell, ICE Director of UK Regions, said:**

The newly completed flood barrier, which in itself is a remarkable technical achievement, integrates into the larger flood prevention schemes and means that Ipswich is better protected against the tidal surges from the North Sea.

As many as 1,500 homes and 400 commercial properties are now living with a significantly reduced risk of flooding thanks to the delivery of this project.

This is not the only recognition the project has received – it has picked up the Civils Project of the Year at the Constructing Excellence SECBE Awards 2019, presented by the South East Centre for the Built Environment. The scheme has also been shortlisted by the British Construction Industry Awards in the Climate Resilience Project of the Year category.

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## **Stephen Yaxley-Lennon held in contempt of court**

Stephen Yaxley-Lennon, AKA Tommy Robinson, has been found to be in contempt of court after filming outside Leeds Crown Court during a trial.

In May 2018, Yaxley-Lennon live-streamed a video outside Leeds Crown Court that contained information in breach of reporting restrictions. He also approached defendants and told his followers to "harass them".

He was originally found to be in contempt by the trial judge at Leeds Crown Court. However, Yaxley-Lennon successfully appealed this finding and the Court of Appeal ordered a rehearing. The judge at that rehearing referred the matter to the Attorney General's Office.

The Attorney General, Geoffrey Cox, reviewed the case and concluded that contempt proceedings should be instituted. This decision was made independently of government and was based on an assessment of the evidence and a review of whether it was in the wider public interest to institute proceedings.

Today, the High Court found Yaxley-Lennon to be in contempt of court. Sentencing will take place at a later date.

Speaking after the hearing, the Attorney General said:

Posting material online that breaches reporting restrictions or risks prejudicing legal proceedings is a very serious matter and this is reflected in the Court's decision today.

I would urge everyone to think carefully about whether their social media posts could amount to contempt of court.

## **Note to editors**

The Attorney General was granted permission to bring proceedings on the basis of:

1. Publishing information that was subject to a restriction prohibiting any reporting of the trial until a later, related trial had concluded
2. Publishing a video encouraging his followers to harass the defendants, creating a substantial risk that their rights would be seriously impeded
3. Illegally photographing and intimidating defendants as they entered court

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## **[UN Human Rights Council 41: Cambodia](#)**

Thank you, Madam Vice-President,

The UK welcomes Cambodia's engagement in the UPR process.

We recognise that some positive steps have been taken by the Cambodian Government including: the renewal of the Memorandum of Understanding with the Office of the High Commission for Human Rights; the removal of the requirement for NGOs to give the local authority three days' notification of activity; and the commitment to end human trafficking and forced labour.

We welcome Cambodia's support for our recommendation to improve and expand identification and protection procedures for victims of these crimes.

We are also encouraged by Cambodia's support of our recommendation to implement a coherent resettlement policy and simplified process for granting communal land titles. The UK notes Cambodia's acknowledgement that its land allocation system is flawed. We welcome policies on proper land use and registration and ask that these be transparent and equitable.

However, we remain gravely concerned by restrictions placed on freedoms of expression, association and peaceful assembly. The dissolution of the Cambodia National Rescue Party (CNRP), the forced closure of media outlets, and the provisions of the Criminal Code that criminalise defamation and restrict freedom of expression and peaceful assembly are troubling. We are disappointed that our recommendation on these critical issues was only noted.

We urge Cambodia to release Kem Sokha and to ensure that he, and the remaining 108 banned former CNRP politicians, can freely engage in political activity. While we welcome the amendment of the Political Party law in January 2019, we are concerned that the provisions require individuals to request permission to return to politics, leaving them open to arbitrary decision making.

Thank you, Madam Vice-President.

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## **Approved Document B 2019 edition: circular 02/2019**

The purpose of this Circular is to:

- announce the approval and publication of the updated [Approved Documents](#)
- draw attention to the transitional provisions for the above changes

The changes made to the Approved Documents apply only to buildings and building work in England.

The new approved documents will come into force on 30 August 2019.

Please see the Circular for full details of transition period.

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# Solicitor General welcomes modern slavery conviction

Three people have today been sentenced as part of the UK's largest ever modern slavery prosecution.

Ignacy Brzezinski, 53, Wojciech Nowakowski, 42, and Jan Sadowski, 29 were today convicted of charges relating to multiple counts of human trafficking into and within the UK, forced labour and money laundering at Birmingham Crown Court.

Brzezinski was sentenced to 11 years' imprisonment, Nowakowski to 6 and a half years, and Sadowski to 3 years.

The conviction comes following the second trial under Operation Fort, the largest case to go to prosecution under modern slavery legislation in the UK, and one of the largest ever labour exploitation prosecutions in Europe.

Under Operation Fort, 88 alleged victims provided statements, with many others identified as potential victims. Victims were largely vulnerable Polish nationals lured to the UK by an organised crime group with offers of work, free or subsidised accommodation, food and travel.

Upon arrival in the UK, victims were housed in very poor accommodation and given little, sometimes expired, food. They were made to claim benefits, which were siphoned by the group, and forced to work for as little as £10 a week. The group kept the victims' bank cards and Polish identity cards, or copies of them, to prevent them from leaving, and threatened or assaulted those who suggested it.

Following the sentencing, Solicitor General Lucy Frazer QC MP said:

"Eradicating modern slavery in the UK is a government priority and I welcome the conviction of this modern slavery ring which took advantage of vulnerable people for their own gain. The CPS and West Midlands Police must be commended for their commitment to eradicating modern slavery in the UK via the criminal justice system."

## **Notes to editors**

There are 3 trials under Operation Fort. Five defendants have already been convicted on multiple counts of trafficking, forced labour and money laundering following the first trial. The second trial is detailed in this press notice. The third depends on the extradition of 4 more individuals from Poland.