

Press release: Significant milestone reached on Newhaven flood defence project

These works will reduce flood risk to 244 homes, 88 commercial properties and vital infrastructure.

The Newhaven flood alleviation scheme has been developed in partnership with Lewes District Council, East Sussex County Council, the Coast to Capital Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) and South East LEP. Construction work started on 3 January 2017 following consultation with the local community.

JacksonHyder are designing and building the scheme. Construction has initially focussed on the west bank of the River Ouse, where defences will protect mainly residential properties. Work here has varied from minor measures to plug gaps in existing defences, to sizable sections of new concrete flood wall and earth embankment.

This has included:

- Building a 150-metre-long bund north of Cantell's Boatyard.
- Building a 130-metre wall built along the edge of the footpath either side of Denton Island Bridge.
- Realigning and raising the flood defence bund at the rear of Huggett's Green, plus constructing various concrete walls in this area for seating and to support a new floodgate.
- Building a 140-metre-long reinforced concrete wall which runs from near the Swing Bridge to just north of the Ark Pub with access to fishermen's jetties.
- Raising 20 metres of flood defence bund in West Quay.

With just a few finishing touches to be done on the west bank, focus now shifts to the east bank. Work here has recently started, and the whole scheme is expected to be completed by 2019. Once finished, it will reduce flood risk to approximately 430 homes and 390 commercial properties and vital infrastructure, as well as bringing significant economic benefits to the coastal East Sussex town.

The whole scheme will cost around £18 million, with the majority of funding coming from government in the form of Flood and Coastal Risk Management Grant in Aid (GIA). The 'Coast to Capital' and 'South East' Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs), are each contributing £1.5 million as part of their wider commitment to the regeneration of Newhaven. This partnership approach will both significantly reduce flood risk to the local community, and provide confidence for developers to contribute to the regeneration of Newhaven.

In December 2013 the south coast of England was hit by a storm surge coming down from the North Sea. The storm saw hurricane-force winds and the highest

tide in some places for almost 60 years. The tidal surge in the Newhaven area badly affected between 50 and 60 properties in the Railway Road area, as well as closing the railway line between Lewes and Seaford.

Gordon Wilson, Environment Agency Area Flood and Coastal Risk Manager, said:

I am delighted that works have been completed on the west bank at Newhaven, and that residents and businesses will now benefit from a significantly reduced flood risk. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Newhaven community for their support and encouragement throughout the construction period and ask for their continued forbearance, as there will inevitably be some disruption whilst this essential work is completed.

When the flood alleviation scheme is completed in 2019, it will reduce the tidal flood risk to hundreds of homes and a significant number of commercial properties in the area, as well as protecting important local infrastructure such as the road network, railway tracks and the train station. We believe that it will also contribute to the wider regeneration of Newhaven, helping to bring new investment, jobs and homes to the town, and the surrounding area.

Jonathan Sharrock, Chief Executive at Coast to Capital, said:

With the impact of adverse weather being felt across the world and the UK, improving flood defence resilience is of huge importance. We are thrilled to have contributed to a project which will not only protect the economic, social and environmental assets of Newhaven but will also have a direct impact on enhancing regional growth.

Councillor Isabelle Linington, Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Environmental Impact, said:

I am very pleased that work is now completed on the west bank which takes us one step further to completion of this scheme that is so vital for local residents, businesses and community.

Further information on the scheme is available by calling 03708 506506, by emailing newhavenfas@environment-agency.gov.uk or by writing to:

SSD Enquiries,
Environment Agency,
Guildbourne House,
Chatsworth Road,

Worthing,
BN11 1LD

[Check you are at risk of flooding](#) for information on how to prepare for flooding and the latest flood warnings in your area or ring Floodline on 0345 9881188.

For all media enquiries please contact 0800 141 2743 or email southeastpressoffice1@environment-agency.gov.uk.

News story: November 2017 labour market statistics for Scotland

Commenting on today's labour market statistics for Scotland, Scottish Secretary David Mundell said:

It is encouraging to see Scotland's employment remaining close to record highs seen earlier in the year.

However, the slight rise in unemployment is disappointing and shows there can be no complacency as we tackle Scotland's economic challenges.

With growth in Scotland continuing to lag behind the rest of the UK, I urge the Scottish Government to use their considerable economic levers more effectively.

The statistics can be accessed on the ONS website.

Further information

- Employment in Scotland increased by 2,000 over the quarter, and increased by 46,000 over the year to stand at 2,652,000.
- The Scots employment rate remained unchanged over the quarter to stand at 75.2 per cent. The rate remains at near record highs and is just above the UK average of 75.0 per cent.
- Unemployment in Scotland increased by 2,000 over the quarter and is down 20,000 over the year. The level now stands at 109,000.
- At 4.0 per cent, the Scots unemployment rate is below that for the UK as a whole.
- Economic Activity increased by 4,000 over the quarter and now stands at 2,761,000. The Economic Activity rate increased over the quarter to stand at 78.4 per cent.
- In October 2017, the number of people out of work and claiming out-of-

work benefit – Jobseeker’s Allowance (JSA) and Universal Credit (UC) – was 77,000, down 1,800 over the month. The claimant count level is now 900 higher compared to one year ago.

News story: Zimbabwe and the political situation in Harare: November 2017

Information for British nationals in Zimbabwe on where to find guidance following recent developments in Harare.

Due to the uncertain political situation in Harare, including reports of unusual military activity, the Foreign & Commonwealth Office recommend British nationals currently in Harare to remain safely at home or in their accommodation until the situation becomes clearer.

Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson said:

We are monitoring this situation very closely and our embassy is providing support and advice to UK nationals in Zimbabwe. At the moment it’s very fluid and it’s hard to say exactly how this will turn out. Everybody wants to see a stable and successful Zimbabwe. We are appealing for everyone to refrain from violence, that is the crucial thing.

We will also share information on the embassy social media accounts:

Simon Thomas, Deputy Head of the UK Mission in Harare, said:

The team at the British Embassy in Harare are obviously following the developments that are unfolding here in Zimbabwe very closely. You’ll have seen pictures overnight of military being deployed around the city, and I can confirm that military remain deployed at strategic locations around Harare this morning.

As an embassy, our prime concern is obviously for the safety and security of British nationals, and our advice to any British nationals who are here in Harare, either living, or working or visiting, is to stay at home, stay in your hotel room, wait until things settle down a little bit.

Follow the [travel advice](#) and the general advice that we’re putting out on the embassy’s social media channels [@UKandZimbabwe \(Twitter\)](#) and [@UKandZimbabwe \(Facebook\)](#). We’ll be updating them regularly

throughout the day.

[Deputy Head of Mission Simon Thomas update](#)

Press release: Provisional decision to remove Rough gas storage undertakings

In June this year the facility's operator, Centrica Storage Limited (CSL), [announced](#) that it intended to close the plant due to its age, physical deterioration and the associated safety risks, plus the high cost of refurbishing the facility to make it workable.

The facility's owners, Centrica plc (Centrica) and CSL, requested that the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) remove historic undertakings – designed to ensure competition in the sector – as part of the closure process.

These included the legal, financial and physical separation of CSL from Centrica, restrictions on Centrica's access to capacity and ensuring non-discriminatory access to capacity for Rough's customers.

Following a review, the CMA has provisionally decided to release CSL and Centrica from these undertakings. The companies will also need agreement from the Oil and Gas Authority to cease their storage operations.

Martin Cave, CMA chair, said:

CMA panel members made this provisional decision based on the age and degradation of the gas wells and other facilities at Rough, which mean that the assets are no longer capable of safe operation for gas storage without substantial refurbishment.

We also considered present and anticipated market conditions which meant that the level of investment required to meet the legal obligation to operate safely was not economically viable. This has led to our provisional finding that the undertakings are no longer required.

Further details, including the CMA's provisional decision to remove the undertakings, can be found on the [case page](#).

Notes for editors

1. The CMA is the UK's primary competition and consumer authority. It is an independent non-ministerial government department with responsibility for carrying out investigations into mergers, markets and the regulated industries and enforcing competition and consumer law. For CMA updates, follow us on Twitter [@CMAgovuk](#), [Facebook](#), [Flickr](#) and [LinkedIn](#).
2. The Rough undertakings were first given by Centrica Storage Ltd and Centrica plc following Centrica plc's acquisition in 2002 of the Rough gas storage facility and have been subsequently amended following Competition Commission reviews in 2006 and 2011, and a further review by the CMA in 2016.
3. The Rough undertakings were accepted by the Secretary of State under section 88 of the Fair Trading Act 1973. By virtue of paragraph 16 of Schedule 24 to the Enterprise Act 2002, and The Enterprise Act 2002 (Enforcement Undertakings and Orders) Order 2004 (SI 2004/2181), the CMA has the ability to supersede, vary or release certain undertakings accepted under the Fair Trading Act 1973; this includes the Rough undertakings. This power is exercisable in the same circumstances, and on the same terms and conditions as applied to the Secretary of State under the Fair Trading Act 1973; namely that by reason of any change of circumstances the undertakings are no longer appropriate and need to be varied, superseded or released.
4. The group of CMA panel members acting as decision-makers in the review are [Martin Cave](#)(Chair), [Anne Fletcher](#), [Jayne Scott](#) and [Jon Stern](#).
5. Media enquiries to the CMA should be directed to press@cma.gsi.gov.uk or 020 3738 6798.

News story: Government doubles exceptional talent visa offer

As part of its ongoing commitment to welcome talented people from across the globe, and in recognition of the importance of these innovative industries to the UK, the number of visas available through the Tier 1 (Exceptional Talent) route is increasing from 1,000 to 2,000 a year.

This will ensure that more highly skilled people who enhance the UK's economy can come to, and work in, this country. It is a further demonstration of the government's dedication to the global mobility of individuals who will help make sure that the UK remains at the forefront of these world-leading

industries.

The Home Secretary Amber Rudd said:

I am delighted that we are able to welcome more talented people from across the world to our country. Increasing the number of visas for these sectors will make sure that we continue to be at the heart of world culture and forefront of digital and scientific advances.

The UK's innovative industries, including the thriving digital technology sector, are at the centre of our industrial strategy and making sure that businesses in these fields have access to exceptional talent from across the world is vitally important.

That is why I will be meeting with technology experts to seek their input on making sure that our visa processes are as efficient as possible.

The 2,000 visas will be made available to individuals who are recognised as existing global leaders or promising future leaders in the digital technology, science, arts and creative sectors by 1 of 5 UK endorsing organisations:

- Tech City UK
- Arts Council England
- The British Academy
- The Royal Society
- The Royal Academy of Engineering

Matt Clifford MBE, Co-founder and CEO of Entrepreneur First said:

We commend the Home Office's decision to increase the number of Tier 1 Exceptional Talent visas.

We cannot ignore the fact that our digital and tech economy cannot survive on home-grown talent alone and is substantially boosted by exceptional foreign individuals who have chosen to build their businesses in the UK.

If London is to continue being the European hub for tech, and if it is to grow to rival other internationally significant tech centres, we must ensure the UK becomes an increasingly welcoming hub for EU and non-EU nationals alike.

The current allocations of the 1,000 visas – which are split between the 5 endorsing organisations – will remain and the additional places will be made available across all of the endorsing bodies dependent on need. The government is keen to ensure that all nations and regions of the UK benefit

from this change. The Home Office will look at how it can work with organisations across the UK to ensure wider take up of these visas outside London.

This announcement is part of the government's ongoing reforms to routes to the UK from outside the EU. Ahead of the UK leaving the EU, the Home Office has also commissioned the independent Migration Advisory Committee to advise on the impact of the UK's exit from the EU on the labour market. The results of the commission, which was published in July, will help shape the government's decisions on the future immigration system.