

# Press release: £50 million flood defence scheme opens in Leeds

A £50 million flood alleviation scheme in Leeds which uses moveable weir technology – a first for flood risk reduction in the UK – has opened today (4 October 2017).

The first phase of the award-winning Leeds Flood Alleviation Scheme not only uses state-of-the-art flood defence engineering techniques but is one of the largest river flood alleviation schemes in the country.

Led by Leeds City Council in partnership with the Environment Agency, the scheme will provide more than 3,000 homes, 500 businesses and 300 acres of development land with increased protection against flooding from the River Aire and Hol Beck.

More than 22,000 jobs will be safeguarded over the next 10 years due to the increased level of protection and through the scheme's development and construction, 150 jobs and apprenticeships have been created.

It comprises three main elements: state-of-the-art mechanical weirs, the merging of the river and canal and flood walls and embankments stretching 4.5km through the city centre.

The scheme, which sees work on the River Aire now substantially complete and work at Holbeck continuing into autumn, is being officially opened by the Leader of the Council, Councillor Judith Blake CBE and Chair of the Environment Agency, Emma Howard Boyd.

Multiple funding streams have contributed towards the cost of this £50 million scheme, including £35 million of government Grant in Aid funding alongside £10 million of local funding from Leeds City Council and partnership funding from Leeds City Region Enterprise Partnership and others. Government is spending £2.5 billion to protect a further 300,000 homes by 2021.

Leader of Leeds City Council Judith Blake CBE said:

We are delighted to see this much-needed first phase of the Leeds Flood Alleviation Scheme opened. As could be seen by the devastation at Christmas 2015, providing increased flood protection in Leeds is essential in terms of reassuring our residents and businesses, and this fantastic state-of-the-art scheme provides it for the city centre and downstream at Woodlesford. The clever use of the mechanical weirs is a brilliant idea, and they have also brought about environmental benefits with the improved river quality bringing salmon and otters, while the new bridge looks stunning offering great views of the river and beyond as part of the Trans Pennine Trail.

We'd like to thank everyone involved in this phase of the scheme and look forward to developing the plans for phase two and beyond, as only through an entire catchment and citywide approach can we protect all communities in Leeds from the threat of flooding.

Chair of the Environment Agency, Emma Howard Boyd said:

This ground-breaking scheme will not only benefit hundreds of homes and businesses in the city but it will also safeguard 22,000 jobs over the next 10 years due to the increased level of protection it provides. It's been great to see Leeds City Council and the Environment Agency working together in partnership to better protect the city – and it is one of many schemes in the Defra programme investing £430 million to reduce flood risk across Yorkshire before 2021.

We're always looking for new ways that we can use technology to reduce flood risk so it's exciting that this scheme is also a first for flood risk management in the UK thanks to the use of the moveable weirs which can be lowered when river levels are high. On a day-to-day basis, people won't even know they are being protected, and they can enjoy the river which is a key aspect of the city's South Bank regeneration plans.

Floods minister, Thérèse Coffey said:

No one can forget the devastating flooding residents and businesses in Leeds faced nearly two years ago. We know how distressing flooding is for all those affected and I'm delighted that through this new state-of-the art £50 million scheme thousands more people living and working in Leeds will be better protected.

Our commitment to strengthening flood defences across Yorkshire doesn't stop here – we are investing £430 million over six years up until 2021 to better protect the region using the best technology and engineering available.

It is the first time that moveable weirs have been used in the UK for flood alleviation purposes. The new weir gates are supported by giant inflatable neoprene bladders that can be lowered when high river flows are expected. It takes around two hours for the gates to lower, and thanks to the installation of these weir gates, it has been possible to keep flood defence wall heights to a minimum so as not to spoil views of the city centre waterfront.

The weirs have been installed at Crown Point in the city centre and further downstream at Knostrop, where a new locally manufactured bridge has been installed across the weir connecting the diverted Trans Pennine Trail with the north bank of the river.

Weighing approximately 150 tonnes and spanning approximately 70 metres, the bridge has been designed by Knight Architects, ARUP and BMMjv (a joint venture between BAM Nuttall and Mott MacDonald). It has been positioned to provide dramatic views of the weir gates. The very narrow piers and curving underside of the bridge deck are designed to give the bridge a slender appearance when viewed from up or downstream.

The new footbridge reconnects the much-used Trans Pennine Trail to the north bank of the river, providing users with a gateway into Leeds.

In addition to these measures, the removal of a manmade island, known locally at Knostrop Cut, which separated the canal and river has been removed to improve a bottleneck for flows. 180,000 tonnes of material excavated from the site has been reused on a local development site and also on diverting the Trans Pennine Trail which previously went across the manmade island. Reusing this material has saved the project in the region of £6 million.

The earlier stages of the scheme included work at Woodlesford further downstream, which were completed in 2015 and proved effective during the December 2015 floods.

Environmental enhancements have been integral within the scheme design with fish and eel passes installed at both weirs.

Weirs have previously been barriers, preventing species such as salmon migrating from the sea to the spawning grounds further up the river. Salmon have recently been spotted in the River Aire for the first time in 200 years, and now that fish passes have been installed on Knostrop and Crown Point weirs, as well as others on the River Aire, it is hoped that chances of a spawning population of salmon in the river in future will be increased.

Otter ramps and holts have also been installed and will support the local population and 700 trees will be planted along the Trans Pennine Trail later this autumn.

Roger Marsh OBE, Chair of the Leeds City Region Enterprise Partnership (LEP), said:

The LEP, alongside Leeds City Council, the Environment Agency and other funding partners, moved quickly to improve flood protection in Leeds following the Boxing Day floods of 2015.

Local Growth Deal funding into the flood alleviation scheme helped to improve the standard of protection for the city while our £5m Business Flood Recovery Fund, launched just weeks after floods hit, supported businesses to reopen and local SMEs to get back on their feet.

Safeguarding businesses and residents from issues such as flooding is integral to growing an economy and the opening of the Leeds Flood Alleviation Scheme Phase One today is a huge step forward in helping businesses flourish in what is fast becoming one the

busiest economic areas of the City Region.

December 2015 saw Leeds experience significant and widespread flooding with some of the highest river levels ever recorded. The flooding affected nearly 3,000 residential properties (including indirect impacts to high-rise accommodation) and 700 commercial properties.

A consultation on the second phase of the Leeds Flood Alleviation Scheme is now open until 16 November, to provide increased flood protection to communities upstream of the city centre. proposals include measures further upstream including the Kirkstall corridor which was badly hit by the floods as well as Stourton, an industrial area that was badly affected on Boxing Day 2015.

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## **Press release: Jealous ex has sentence increased after causing GBH**

Graham Gawley has had his prison sentence increased after Solicitor General Robert Buckland QC MP referred it to the Court of Appeal

A 53 year old man, Graham Gawley, has had his sentence increased to 4 years 8 months after Solicitor General Robert Buckland QC MP referred the sentence to the Court of Appeal for reconsideration.

Graham Gawley went to the home of his ex's new partner late one evening and repeatedly stabbed him with a kitchen knife, shouting "I'm going to kill you". The victim suffered multiple cuts and slashes to his arms and body, but despite his injuries managed to push Gawley outside and with the help of a neighbour they restrained him.

Gawley pleaded guilty at Chelmsford Crown Court and was originally sentenced to 3 years in prison.

The Solicitor General said:

This was a sustained attack on the victim and he was very fortunate not have been caused more severe injury. I hope that the increased sentence brings him some comfort.

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# Press release: National Park Authorities, Broads Authority and AONB Conservation Boards appointments

Environment Secretary Michael Gove makes appointments to the National Park Authorities, the Broads Authority and an AONB Conservation Board.

Appointments to England's National Park Authorities, the Broads Authority and the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Conservation Board have been made by Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, Michael Gove.

National Park Authority members have a primary responsibility to ensure that the Authority furthers the statutory purposes of the Park. Ten members have recently been appointed for four-year terms (ending June 2021) on the following National Park Authorities and Broads Authority:

- Broads Authority: Bruce Keith
- Dartmoor: Peter Harper and Mark Simpson
- Lake District: Michael Carter
- New Forest: Gavin Parker, Patrick Heneghan and David Bence
- Northumberland: Chris Mullin and Pippa Ross
- Peak District: James Berresford

Additional information regarding the members listed will be made available on the individual Authority websites found [here](#).

Secretary of State Members on AONB Conservation Boards have a primary responsibility to ensure that the Conservation Board furthers the statutory AONB purposes as set out in the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000.

Three members have recently been appointed for three-year terms (ending June 2020) to the Cotswolds AONB Conservation Board:

- Simon King
- Daniel Szor
- Brendan McCarthy

Additional information regarding the Cotswold AONB Conservation Board members is available on the [Cotswolds AONB website](#).

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# [News story: Disclosure and Barring Service \(DBS\) launches new online services](#)

We've introduced new digital services for you to use. We know that you'd like more online services, which will improve our processing times and help you manage your information quickly and easily.

## **Barring**

Our new online barring system is now available.

Employers and organisations can submit barring referrals [online](#) by registering to create an [online account](#) with DBS. A DBS account will also enable you to manage your barring referrals online and share information with DBS through our secure government platform.

In addition, anyone who has been referred to DBS can now [set up an account](#) to communicate confidentially with us about their case.

## **Basic criminal record checks**

If you need a basic criminal record check for a job in England and Wales or for personal reasons and you live in England and Wales you'll be able to apply direct to DBS for a basic check from January 2018. As part of the online application you'll need to prove your identity through GOV.UK Verify. You can also apply now for a check through a [Responsible Organisation](#), which is a third party registered with DBS.

If you need a basic criminal record check for a job in Scotland or for personal reasons and you live in Scotland you'll be able to apply direct to [Disclosure Scotland](#), who will continue to process basic criminal record checks for Scotland.

A basic criminal record check shows unspent convictions. Anyone can apply for a basic criminal record checks. Many employers also use them as part of the recruitment processes. If you're self-employed you can also apply for a basic check.

## **Standard and enhanced criminal record checks**

Also in 2018 we'll be introducing online standard and enhanced checks for employers and organisations. The system will allow you to:

- register to create an online account with DBS
- manage DBS check applications online
- track the progress of DBS applications online and do status checks

These checks are needed for [certain roles](#), especially when working with children and vulnerable adults.

We'll continue to keep you updated about DBS online services over the coming months.

Use our [eligibility tool](#) to find out which criminal record check is right for you.

## GOV.UK email alerts

You can sign up for GOV.UK alerts, which will notify you of any updates to our web content. Go to the [DBS homepage](#) and click on the email icon under the 'Latest' box.

You'll be asked for an email address to create a subscription, and can choose how often you'd like to be alerted when DBS publishes web updates.

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## [Press release: New PHE figures show decline in HIV diagnosis rates](#)

The decrease in HIV diagnoses in gay and bisexual men represents the most exciting development in the UK HIV epidemic in the last 20 years, when effective treatment became widely available.

Commenting on the figures, Dr Valerie Delpech, Head of HIV Surveillance at Public Health England, said:

This is very good news. It is the first time since the beginning of the HIV epidemic in the 1980s that we have observed a decline in new HIV diagnoses among gay and bisexual men, and is clear evidence that HIV prevention efforts are working in the United Kingdom.

Our success in reducing transmission is due to high levels of condom use among gay men, and a sharp rise in the number of men testing for HIV each year, with those at greatest risk testing more frequently. Early diagnosis is also key to making sure that people benefit from HIV treatments so they can live long and healthy lives and are protected from passing on the virus to others.

With continued investment in testing and diagnosis, the decline in HIV infection which has taken place for gay and bisexual men in London can be replicated in other parts of the country and in all those at higher risk of HIV. HIV testing enables diagnosis and the opportunity for treatment which

not only means people can live long, healthy lives but also provides reassurance that the virus cannot be passed on.

It is easy to get tested for HIV. Testing is freely available through GP surgeries, local hospitals and sexual health clinics as well as on self-sampling and self-testing (see NHS Choices for further information). As well as getting tested, using a condom with new or casual partners protects against HIV and other STIs.

1. The [HIV in the UK health protection report and annual HIV data tables](#) comprise the number of HIV diagnoses, late HIV diagnoses and numbers accessing HIV care. Data can be interrogated and analysed at [local authority level](#) via an online tool allowing a range of outputs to be generated.
2. The December 2016 edition of Health Matters, PHE's resource for local authorities and health professionals focuses on [increasing HIV testing](#).
3. The HIV home sampling service offers an alternative to traditional testing offered by GPs and sexual health clinic. Visit [www.freetesting.hiv](http://www.freetesting.hiv) to find out more about the HIV home-sampling test kit.
4. PrEP Pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP), has been a contributory factor in the downturn in new diagnoses in gay and bisexual men. Previous trials such as the PROUD trial have shown that HIV PrEP is clinically effective, dependent on drug adherence, and that risk behaviours and other STI infection rates did not increase. PHE is supporting NHS England in the 3 year [PrEP Impact Trial](#) beginning in October 2017. PHE helped finalise the trial design, governance, recruitment and drug procurement processes of the Impact Trial and will continue to be an active and committed partner during its running.