

The £12 million Exmouth tidal defence scheme is complete

The Environment Agency and East Devon District Council have spent £12 million of Government funding, building new and improving existing defences at The Royal Avenue, Camperdown Creek and The Esplanade.

The flood risk to residents and 400 businesses in the area has been reduced from a 4% chance of flooding every year to a 0.5% chance. This accounts for climate change and rising sea levels, with the option of improving the defences in the future. Further improvements should not be needed before 2045 based on current predictions.

Floods Minister, Trudy Harrison, said:

Exmouth's new flood defences and further schemes across the country will be more important than ever to build a more resilient nation against greater weather extremes.

This is why we are pressing ahead with our record £5.2 billion investment in flood and coastal defences across England.

I hope Exmouth's added protection will bring much needed peace of mind to homeowners and give businesses the confidence to invest and grow.

Philip Rees of the South West Regional Flood and Coastal Committee said:

Exmouth was at significant risk of flooding before this project began.

These new defences have drastically reduced that risk of flooding as well as taking the future into account so people and businesses can continue living and working here.

Councillor Geoff Jung, East Devon District Council's portfolio holder for Coast, Country and Environment, said:

The protection of people's houses, shops and businesses from flooding is a key objective of East Devon District Council's initiative on combating the effects of climate change.

We are most grateful for the help and assistance of the Environment Agency and contractor Kier in providing this tidal defence scheme. Also, to the team of volunteers and staff who will be operating the flood gates for the years to come.

Flood embankments and walls were raised between the outfall of the Withycombe Brook and Imperial Recreation Ground and between the Imperial Recreation Ground and Camperdown Terrace.

But a large proportion of the work has been along the sea front, including the Esplanade from the Grove pub in the west, to just beyond the clock tower in the east. The Esplanade between these two points will be allowed to flood in extreme conditions, however, the new walls and flood gates will prevent this water from flowing into Exmouth. New drainage infrastructure will return flood water to the sea once the storm has passed.

The Exmouth tidal defence scheme has 28 flood gates

An extra 26 new flood gates have been installed, to accompany the 2 already in place at Mamhead Slipway. The gates that cross the road will be operated by East Devon District Council. Other gates will be operated by teams of community volunteers.

[Exmouth tidal defences were also one of the agency's first 'talking' flood defences to engage interested passersby in text conversation about its development as well as offering further advice to be flood aware.](#)

Exmouth tidal defence scheme reduces the chance of flooding from the sea but there is still a risk of flooding from rivers and surface water.

Background

- This scheme is part of the Government's current programme of investment in flood and coastal defences. The Government announced in 2020 that the amount invested in flood and coastal erosion schemes would be doubled in England to £5.2 billion investing in around 2,000 flood defences. This year, £700 million is being invested from that pot and will better protect over 30,000 properties, bringing the cumulative total for the first 2 years of the programme to more than 60,000.