

Multi-million pound Teesside flood scheme is complete

The Marton West Beck flood scheme reduces the risk of flooding from the beck, sea and surface water in central Middlesbrough.

During heavy rainfall the project's upstream storage areas on Newham Beck will hold water back, decreasing the amount and slowing the flow of water downstream.

The project also includes:

- an extended trash screen on Marton West Beck at Albert Park that will collect debris and rubbish that can cause flooding
- new stone-clad flood walls and a surface water storage area at the park.
- new concrete flood walls at Borough Road
- a new drainage system

Construction started on the project, which was led by the Environment Agency in partnership with Middlesbrough Council, in summer 2020 and was completed last month.

(L-R) Environment Agency Project Manager Stephen Frost and Coun. Barrie Cooper from Middlesbrough Council.

Project 'brings benefits to the wider area'

Jamie Fletcher, Environment Agency Flood Risk Manager in the North East, said:

This project protects around 500 homes and businesses in the centre of Middlesbrough and will bring benefits for wildlife in the wider area.

Schemes such as this are essential for helping the North East adapt to climate change, which is bringing with it more extreme weather conditions and an increased flood risk.

Councillor Barrie Cooper, Middlesbrough Council's Executive member for Environment, Finance & Governance, added:

I'm delighted to see this hugely important scheme completed, and I'm grateful to the Environment Agency for the fantastic work they've undertaken. For those affected by flooding, the impact can be catastrophic and life-changing, and such extreme weather events are becoming all too frequent.

These state-of-the-art defences are a great example of partnership working, and will give peace of mind to more than 500 families and many businesses for many years to come.

[Marton West Beck Flood Alleviation Scheme](#)

Amenity improvements include the creation of an allotment area at Environment City, the installation of a green roof on an existing composting area in Albert Park to create a bee pollinating area, along with the creation of bug houses, bat boxes and bird boxes around the park. Herbs have been planted and materials and equipment donated to help local refugees with their community garden.

The Environment Agency provided 300 trees and 3,000 hedge plants to Middlesbrough Municipal Golf Course after their land was used to create one of the upstream storage areas.

Middlesbrough and the wider economy will save an estimated £58million long term due to reduced flood-related damage.

The Marton West Beck scheme is just one of many across the North East that better protects properties and businesses as part of a £132million six year investment programme to create or improve flood and coastal defences in the region.

Last year's record government investment announcement of £5.2 billion to better protect 336,000 properties across England by 2027 includes a further £193million investment in North East defences.

Albert Park lake.

Important to be flood resilient

Jamie added:

We continue to invest in building and improving flood defences across the North East but unfortunately we cannot prevent all of the damage caused by flooding— climate change is only increasing that risk.

It's important the public go online and check if they are at risk, sign up for Environment Agency flood warnings, and know what to do if flooding hits.

People in flood risk areas should [know what to do in a flood](#) and they are encouraged to download the Environment Agency's 'Prepare. Act. Survive.' flood plan to help reduce their risk.

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'Golden opportunity' for Scotch whisky as UK launches India talks

The UK and India have today (Thursday 13 January) launched negotiations on an ambitious Free Trade Agreement at an event in New Delhi.

International Trade Secretary Anne-Marie Trevelyan met with her counterpart, Indian minister of Commerce and Industry Piyush Goyal, to formally start talks on a deal that could create huge benefits across the UK.

India is one of the world's biggest and fastest-growing economies and a bold new deal would put UK businesses at the front of the queue to supply India's growing middle class, with Scotch whisky set to benefit. The UK Government is striving to slash duties of up to 150% on whisky exports, offering a boost to distilleries and the whole spirits industry.

Mark Kent, Chief Executive of the Scotch Whisky Association, said:

The new year offers new hope for reducing the longstanding 150% tariff on Scotch Whisky in India.

Launching UK/India trade talks offers a golden opportunity to reach an ambitious tariff reduction in an early harvest deal that could grow Scotch Whisky exports to India by £1 billion over five years. Tackling the tariff and State level regulatory issues would open the market up to smaller producers who are effectively locked out by the substantial barriers to trade.

Improved market access for Scotch would enable an increasing number of Indian consumers to enjoy our premium product. It would also be good for our industry and Indian government tax revenues – a win-win for all.

UK Government Minister for Scotland Malcolm Offord said:

Home to 1.4 billion consumers and one of the world's fastest growing economies, India holds enormous potential for Scottish businesses as part of an ambitious new trade deal.

On a recent visit to Mumbai, I saw first-hand how Scotland's distilleries would benefit from the removal of tariffs as high as

150% on whisky. Our thriving services sector would also receive a welcome boost.

I look forward to talks with India progressing as we negotiate new global trading relationships for the benefit of people and businesses across the UK.

A deal has the potential to almost double UK exports to India, boost our total trade by as much as £28 billion a year by 2035, and increase wages across the UK by up to £3 billion. Investment from Indian companies already supports 95,000 jobs across the UK.

A deal with India would be a big step forward in the UK's strategy to refocus trade on the Indo-Pacific, home to half of the world's population and 50% of global economic growth. A new economic partnership with India, alongside UK membership of the massive Asia-Pacific trading bloc, CPTPP, will create a pillar in the region supporting free and fair trade.

Prime Minister Boris Johnson said:

A trade deal with India's booming economy offers huge benefits for British businesses, workers and consumers. As we take our historic partnership with India to the next level, the UK's independent trade policy is creating jobs, increasing wages and driving innovation across the country.

The UK has world-class businesses and expertise we can rightly be proud of, from Scotch whisky distillers to financial services and cutting-edge renewable technology. We are seizing the opportunities offered in growing economies of the Indo-Pacific to cement our place on the global stage and deliver jobs and growth at home.

International Trade Secretary Anne-Marie Trevelyan said:

A deal with India is a golden opportunity to put UK businesses at the front of the queue as the Indian economy continues to grow rapidly. By 2050 India will be the world's third largest economy with a middle class of almost 250 million shoppers. We want to unlock this huge new market for our great British producers and manufacturers across numerous industries from food and drink to services and automotive.

As an independent, deal-making nation the UK is broadening our economic horizons and forging stronger partnerships with the fastest-growing economies of the world. India marks the start of our ambitious 5-star year of UK trade and will show how the deals we negotiate will boost the economies across all nations and help level up all regions of the UK.

A UK-India FTA would bring multiple benefits including:

- Playing a key role in our ambition to double trade with India by 2030 – supercharging the growth of our trading relationship which totalled over £23bn in 2019.
- Levelling up the UK – DIT analysis shows a trade agreement with India could boost the economies of all nations and regions of the UK. Almost 30,000 people in the West Midlands for example were employed via Indian investment in 2019, and the region could see a massive boost of up to £300m with opportunities for manufacturers of motor vehicles and parts.
- Investment in UK jobs – International investment from Indian companies already supports 95,000 jobs across the UK and could grow with a new trade deal.
- Boost UK's green industries – The Indian government plans to install 175 GW of renewable energy capacity by 2022 and much more in the coming decades. UK's world-leading renewables industry looks set to benefit from a deal that slashes barriers – such as import tariffs as high as 15% on wind turbine parts from the UK.

The first round of negotiations is expected to start next week – making it the UK's quickest start of formal talks between negotiating teams following a launch.

During her visit to India the International Trade Secretary will also co-chair a meeting of the UK-India Joint Economic and Trade Committee to review how businesses in both countries are benefiting from existing market access commitments under the UK-India Enhanced Trade Partnership agreed last May by the Prime Minister Boris Johnson and Indian PM Narendra Modi.

She is also expected to meet with Indian Foreign Minister Subrahmanyam Jaishankar, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, and Environment Minister Bhupender Yadav to discuss wider bilateral cooperation.

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[PM call with Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez: 13 January 2022](#)

Press release

Prime Minister Boris Johnson spoke with Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez this afternoon.



The Prime Minister spoke to Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez this afternoon.

The leaders discussed the strong bilateral relationship between the UK and Spain, and agreed to further deepen Anglo-Spanish ties ahead of the NATO Summit in Madrid this summer.

They shared their deep concern over Russia's activities in and around Ukraine, and agreed any further Russian aggression would come at a high price. They added that an invasion risked a damaging, protracted conflict with serious political and economic consequences.

They also discussed wider international issues, including addressing instability in the Sahel region and illegal migration.

Both leaders agreed to continue to work towards a UK-EU treaty on Gibraltar

and the Prime Minister reiterated the importance of a resolution on the Northern Ireland Protocol.

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