

Councils to pilot innovative ways of working with £5 million funding boost

- 13 councils in England selected to deliver Partnerships for People and Place programme
- Programme will empower local leaders to better solve issues affecting their communities, supported by cross-government collaboration
- Locally-led projects will tackle issues such as unemployment, health disparities, poverty and crime

Councils are being empowered to better tackle issues affecting their communities, including youth unemployment, health disparities and crime, through an innovative programme backed by £5 million of government funding.

The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities has today (8 November 2021) announced 13 councils in England that have been selected for its Partnerships for People and Place initiative. The programme will trial new ways of working across local and central government and deliver innovative, locally-led solutions to key challenges that communities face.

Councils will be provided with funding and specialist support for projects targeting specific issues in their areas. The projects will be spread across urban, rural and coastal communities and will tackle a broad range of issues including increasing apprenticeship opportunities, tackling crime, health disparities, youth unemployment and poverty. Each pilot will be looking to test whether closer working between different parts of central government and local places can bring measurable benefits to local communities and people.

The projects will support the government as it delivers on its mission to level up all parts of the country.

The selected pilots are:

- Birmingham City Council
- City of Bradford Metropolitan District
- Cornwall Council
- Durham County Council
- East Sussex County Council
- London Borough of Hackney
- Liverpool City Council
- Luton Borough Council
- Newcastle City Council
- Northumberland County Council
- Southwark Council
- Sunderland City Council
- Wakefield Council

Minister for Levelling Up and Communities Kemi Badenoch MP said:

This is an innovative programme with the potential to make a real difference to people's lives.

From skills shortages and unemployment to tackling poverty and reducing crime, local people are best placed to solve challenges in their own areas.

That is why we are empowering communities as we level up every corner of our country.

Each project will receive between £150,000 and £350,000 over a 2-year period from the HM Treasury's Shared Outcomes Fund. Councils and their local partners will also be offered a range of support, including contact with senior officials across central government to solve problems identified at a local level and external expertise and resources to map existing funding and outcomes and evaluate their projects.

Partnerships for People and Place will also look at whether improved government structures, more flexible funding models and greater collaboration across the public sector could be effective in addressing specific issues in local areas.

The exact amount of funding each project will receive will depend on the delivery plans local councils work up and submit over the next few months. It is therefore likely that each of the pilots will receive a different amount, depending on the outcomes and interventions they propose to deliver. All 13 pilots will get a portion of the programme funding in November 2021 to support them to develop these more detailed resourcing plans.

The exact detail of each project will be clarified in the coming months as councils work with central government and partners to create delivery plans.

See more information on the [Partnerships for People and Place pilot](#)

If you have any comments or questions about the programme, please contact the Partnerships for People and Place team by email at: partnershipsforpeopleandplace@communities.gov.uk

Boston Barrier to close against high tides for the first time

Press release

The Boston Barrier is scheduled to close on 7 November in response to forecast high tides, the Environment Agency has announced.



The £100 million Boston Barrier is to be closed to protect against tidal flooding for the first time.

It is the first time the [£100 million flood defence](#) has been closed to defend against the threat of rising waters.

Raising the 300 tonne barrier gate should take just 20 minutes, and will be done at 4.45am – to protect Boston from tidal flooding.

Reducing risk to 13,000 homes

The closure will reduce the risk of flooding to more than 13,000 homes and 800 businesses in the area. It will also help record data that can be used to further improve its use in the future.

While test closures have taken place every month since the barrier became fully operational in December last year. This is the first time it has been closed for defensive purposes.

Adam Robinson, Boston Barrier project director for the [Environment Agency](#), said:

For the first time, the barrier – and the team operating it – will be brought into action against the real threat of flooding. We are prepared and ready.

Of course, it's impossible to completely eliminate the risk of flooding, but we can manage that risk, as the barrier will do here in Boston.

People should always make sure they plan for the worst and sign up to receive warnings.

The Environment Agency urges people to plan ahead for flooding by finding out if their property is in an at-risk area; signing up for free flood warnings; and knowing in advance what to do. Further information is available on all these steps – and more – at [GOV.UK/Flood](#) and by calling Floodline on 0345 988 1188.

Ready to act

Boston Barrier's closure is in response to stormy conditions forecast, resulting in large waves moving down the east coast of England on Sunday morning. People are advised to avoid using low lying coastal footpaths near beaches or promenades and plan driving routes to avoid low lying roads, as sea spray and waves could be dangerous.

The Environment Agency adds that the forecast water level is "currently not expected to reach the upper extremes that can occur when there is a combination of high tides and low pressure" but that they are "prepared, vigilant and ready to act".

Note to editors:

- The Boston Barrier is part of the government's long-term investment in flood and coastal defences. This programme of defences resulted in better protection to 314,000 homes across the country between 2015 and 2021. We are now working to reduce risk for a further 336,000 by 2027 with a record £5.2 billion investment.
- Boston lies entirely within a floodplain. The town is at risk of flooding from tidal surges and has a history of tidal flooding. It was flooded in 1953, 1978 and during the tidal surge of 5 December 2013, when more than 800 properties across 55 streets were flooded.
- The £100 million Boston Barrier scheme has already significantly reduced the risk of tidal flooding in the town. Once the scheme is fully completed, more than 14,000 homes and 800 businesses will be better protected. This gives the town 1 of the best standards of defence outside of London and generating an estimated £1 billion of economic benefits.
- The Port of Boston has notified mariners of the closure.

Published 8 November 2021

[Taking a natural approach to flood management on the road network](#)

National Highways has awarded more than £420,000 to 13 Natural Flood

Management projects in the first round of the project covering parts of the Little Don, River Etherow and River Irwell catchments.

It comes as the international community at the UN climate change conference COP26 on Saturday (6 November) celebrated Nature Day, devoted to ensuring the importance of nature and sustainable land use are part of global action on climate change and a clean, green recovery.

Natural Flood Management (NFM) is an emerging approach to addressing flood risk. NFM measures slow or store water in the landscape by emulating or enhancing natural processes.

Examples include changing the way land is managed so soil can absorb more water, creating storage ponds, planting woodlands and hedgerows, as well as constructing “leaky dams” which are natural barriers that regulate the flow of surface water run off.

The fund is being delivered in partnership with the Don Catchment Rivers Trust and the Mersey Rivers Trust. Routes on the strategic road network due to benefit from the pilot measures include the M60, M62, M66, A58, A616, A628 and the B6194.

Head of Environment at National Highways Ivan Le Fevre said:

This pilot will explore how we can work with farmers and landowners to reduce flood risk on sections of the strategic road network known to be particularly vulnerable to flooding.

It’s an innovative catchment-based approach to an issue that poses safety risks to road users and one that we normally tackle through engineering. By developing flood alleviation schemes throughout the catchment areas of these three rivers we are tackling the issue at source.

We’ve been staggered by the phenomenal response to the scheme. We had so many applications, which shows there’s a real appetite for natural solutions and our successful bidders are now playing an important role in reducing flooding in downstream areas.

One of those bidders is Adrian Tantrum, who owns 46 acres of land above the A616 Stocksbridge Bypass at Penistone on the edge of the Peak District in South Yorkshire.

He’s implementing a number of measures which as well as reducing the extent of flooding on the road will also boost biodiversity and lock up carbon.

Most of his land, which is in the River Don catchment, is used for grazing sheep but there’s also 14 acres of irreplaceable ancient woodland as well as a large area of rare ancient hay meadow, which is a designated Site of Special Scientific Interest due to the presence of many rare species including orchids.

Mr Tantrum will be creating some leaky barriers in the Hollins Brook stream that runs through his woods. Further upstream he'll be restoring three ponds. One will be used for permanent water storage at a fixed level while the other two will be "leaky ponds" with a variable water level, used to store water during periods of heavy rainfall and then release it slowly over several hours.

Adrian Tantrum (foreground, with Ian Morrissey, Associate Director at Atkins, and National Highways Senior Environmental Adviser Tamlyn Embley) will be installing leaky dams in the brook that runs through his ancient woodland.

He's also going to aerate the soil to reduce compaction and allow the land to store more water as it has never been farmed intensively and has rarely been ploughed.

Finally, Mr Tantrum will be creating new woodland by planting between five and six thousand saplings, mostly native broadleaf species such as hawthorn, rowan, oak and damson. These will enable the land to store more water while at the same time providing valuable biodiversity benefits and carbon sequestration.

Mr Tantrum said:

I've always had a keen interest in conservation. I've studied zoology and used to be a gamekeeper so I know the importance of managing the land for the benefit of wildlife and the wider environment. I was already planting trees and hedgerows as shelter belts for a new riding arena I'm building so the opportunity to do more to bring greater benefits was too good to miss.

It all tied in very nicely. I use the A616 a lot and know what it's like when it floods because the rainwater comes off the hills so fast. Being able to implement all these measures to help alleviate that while also restoring or creating new wildlife habitat is a win-win.

L-R: Ian Morrissey, Associate Director at Atkins, Miriam Cates MP, landowner Adrian Tantrum, National Highways Senior Environmental Adviser Tamlyn Embley, Jenny Palmer, catchment officer at the Don Catchment Rivers Trust and the Trust's Operations Director Rachel Walker.

Speaking during a visit to Mr Tantrum's scheme, MP for Penistone and Stocksbridge Miriam Cates said:

It's so encouraging to see a different, nature-based approach to an issue that has wide-reaching consequences on the strategic road

network and local communities. This National Highways pilot has the potential to deliver real benefits, not just for public safety, but also for our environment. It will be interesting to see the results.

Six other projects in the River Don catchment include cross-slope tree planting, hedgerow restoration, soil aeration, the creation of leaky dams and storage ponds and fencing off watercourses to prevent contamination by livestock, providing animals with water troughs instead.

In the River Irwell catchment, Bleakholt Animal Sanctuary will be installing leaky dams, planting trees and hedgerows and aerating compacted soils at its 55-acre site near Edenfield, Lancashire.

Manager Karen Weed said:

The sanctuary is right in the valley so when it rains, it pours through our site to the properties and roads below us. Last year the water came through with such force it demolished a building further down the valley. The water makes the land so boggy that it's just not practical to use it. We can't turn the animals out in those fields at all.

We heard about the National Highways project and thought it would provide a solution not just for us but the wider community.

We're going to aerate the compacted soil and plant thousands of hawthorn saplings to create hedgerows in at least ten fields. They will be a real win win as not only will they slow the flow of water they'll also encourage more wildlife. We're building storage ponds, installing leaky barriers and planting willow which with the hawthorn will be a good food source for our goats.

I think that's why we found the scheme so attractive. Everything we do will bring multiple advantages. I think if we hadn't have heard of the project we wouldn't have known how else to solve the problem so it's been really good to bring about meaningful change. We can't wait to get started.

Elsewhere in the M66 corridor, landowners are planting new trees and hedgerows, setting grazing land aside to allow longer winter vegetation cover, which reduces run off, and installing leaky dams to hold back water during flood events.

Dr Ed Shaw, Managing Director of the Don Catchment Rivers Trust, said:

We've been really delighted by the landowner interest and enthusiasm. The scale of the NFM is also quite exciting, being bigger than anything we've been involved in previously. If the

project proves a success and NFM is adopted by National Highways as part of their toolkit for dealing with flooding then it will be a really positive step forward for society and the environment.

Mike Duddy, Senior Project Manager at the Mersey Rivers Trust said:

This is such a brilliant project with multiple benefits. Road users and local communities will see a reduction in the amount of flooding or standing water while the measures being introduced will also provide a boost for local wildlife, giving a wide range of species improved or new habitats in which to flourish. We are delighted to be part of it and look forward to seeing future bids.

A [second round of bidding](#) to increase the number of schemes in the pilot will open later this month when just under £250,000 will be available.

The cash has come from National Highways' Designated Funds programme. It manages four designated funds, allocated by the Government, to deliver benefits above and beyond building, maintaining and operating England's strategic roads.

From protecting the environment and enhancing the landscape around roads, to improving safety, reducing congestion, and supporting communities, the aim is to make a positive difference to people's lives.

Find out more information on [National Highways' designated funds](#)

General enquiries

Members of the public should contact the National Highways customer contact centre on 0300 123 5000.

Media enquiries

Journalists should contact the National Highways press office on 0844 693 1448 and use the menu to speak to the most appropriate press officer.

[SK Rapid Wien v West Ham United travel advice](#)

Published 8 November 2021

Last updated 22 November 2021 [+ show all updates](#)

1. 22 November 2021

Due to nationwide lockdown rules in Austria, the football match between Rapid Vienna and West Ham will be played behind closed doors. No fans will be able to attend the match. All non-essential businesses including hotels, bars, restaurants and nightclubs in Austria are now closed due to lockdown.

2. 17 November 2021

Due to UEFA sanctions, fans of West Ham United FC will not be allowed to attend the Europa League match against Rapid Vienna on 25 November 2021. Now that attendance at the match is no longer permitted, West Ham United strongly urges supporters not to travel to Vienna. Fans will not be granted access to the Allianz Stadion.

3. 16 November 2021

Added details of UEFA's sanctions on West Ham United, which mean supporters are unable to travel for this Europa League away fixture. Added details of PCR testing requirements at sporting events in Austria.

4. 8 November 2021

First published.

[39th Universal Periodic Review of human rights: UK statement on Eswatini](#)

World news story

The UK delivered the statement on Eswatini at the 39th Session of Universal Periodic Review (UPR), sharing recommendations to improve their human rights record.



UK Government

The United Kingdom recognises Eswatini's progress on certain human rights issues since its 2016 review, notably the adoption of the 2018 Sexual Offences and Domestic Violence Act. However, we are concerned by the limited progress on accessibility and safe reporting mechanisms for victims.

The UK is particularly concerned by evidence of excessive use of force by military police against protestors during the civil unrest seen in recent months. We urge the Government to ensure accountability for all human rights violations. We call on Eswatini to sign the Global Media Freedom pledge, and to allow media workers to do their work without fear of harassment.

We recommend that Eswatini:

- Amend legislation which restricts freedoms of expression, association and peaceful assembly, and take steps to guarantee space for civil society actors and journalists to operate without fear of reprisals;
- Decriminalise consensual same-sex sexual conduct and take measures to eliminate discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity;
- Fully fund and implement the anti-trafficking national action plan, and allow the anti-trafficking taskforce to lead these efforts.

Thank you.

Published 8 November 2021