

Work completed on Ouse Washes protects thousands of homes

Press release

Cambridgeshire property and land retain flood protection.



Environment Agency staff train with Jackson Civil Engineering to put the demountable flood barrier up

A multi-million pound project to raise the Middle Level Barrier Bank of the Ouse Washes Flood Storage Reservoir has been completed.

Following 6 years of construction, the project maintains the standard of flood protection to more than 2,000 properties and 67,000ha of agricultural land. The raising of the bank on the vitally-important reservoir was carried out between 2017 and this year.

As the Washes are an internationally-important habitat, construction work was carried out during summer and early autumn each year to avoid disturbing breeding and over-wintering birds. New bird hides were installed during the project to help visitors continue to enjoy this important landscape.

This summer, work was carried out to enable the installation of a demountable flood barrier outside the village of Welney. The barrier will be used to prevent water spilling from the reservoir into Welney village. It will replace the use of large sandbags to create a temporary barrier across Welney Wash Road, the A1101. The barrier will be installed when the water level in the reservoir reaches a predetermined level and the road has been closed by Norfolk County Council.

The works ensure compliance with recommendations made by the reservoir inspecting engineer under the Reservoirs Act 1975.

There will now be a further two years of maintenance at the site to establish grass cover. This is needed to ensure the stability of the newly-raised bank.

Nicola Oldfield, a project executive for the Environment Agency, said:

This has been a vital long-term investment and refurbishment programme.

We know the impact that flooding can have, which is why protecting people and communities is our priority.

The results of this work will help to protect thousands of homes and businesses in the area for years to come.

Everyone should know their flood risk and sign up for free flood warnings by going to <https://www.gov.uk/check-flood-risk> or calling Floodline on 0345 988 1188. You can also follow @EnvAgency on Twitter for the latest flood updates.

- The total cost for this project was around £40 million.
- Between 2015 and 2020, we invested more than £1 billion on maintaining flood and coastal defences nationally. This included investing in developing technology and direct maintenance work such as dredging, inspecting assets, and carrying out repairs.

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[Supporting resilient and sustainable development in Least Developed Countries: UK statement at UN Second Committee](#)

Madame Chair,

Let me begin by congratulating you and the Bureau for your able stewardship of the Second Committee's work this year.

The United Kingdom would like to thank Mr. Abdulrahman Abdulaziz Al-Thani from the Permanent Mission of Qatar, for his excellent facilitation of the 'Follow-up to the Fifth UN Conference on the Least Developed Countries.' We would also like to thank the G77+ representative, Mr. Nirupam Dev Nath, from the Permanent Mission of Bangladesh, and the LDCs Chair representative, Ms.

Dorcas Mwangi, from the Permanent Mission of Malawi for their constructive engagement.

The UK is pleased with the outcomes of this year's text, as it advocates for international solidarity in support of the Doha Programme of Action. We need renewed global partnership and targeted focus, with full mobilization of the UN system, for sustainable and resilient development in LDCs. This resolution is a step in the right direction.

The UK is committed to working with LDCs, development partners, and multilateral institutions to progress the six priority areas in the Doha Programme of Action. We look forward to participating in the Fifth UN Conference on the LDCs in March at a high-level, to advance this critical agenda.

The United Kingdom will continue to support the global goal of providing at least 0.2% of our gross national income to LDCs. However, we know we must go further than this. Partnership between public and private sectors will be essential to meet the SDG financing gap, which is why we will also mobilise up to £8 billion of UK-backed financing per year by 2025 through British Investment Partnerships.

The UK is also committed to addressing food insecurity in LDCs, which was a key area of discussion in this negotiation. We are working alongside partners – such as the UN-led Global Crisis Response Group on Food, Energy and Finance, the G7 Global Alliance for Food Security, the Roadmap – Call to Action and the EU-led Solidarity Lanes – to meet humanitarian needs. We are keeping food and fertilisers moving, providing emergency funding, improving resilience, and accelerating transition to sustainable food systems that will withstand future challenges in places experiencing food crises.

As we approach 2030, we must accelerate action and ambition to deliver the Doha Programme of Action and respond to the needs of the most vulnerable first. You can count on the UK's support.

Thank you.

UK secures £1.84 billion investment for ESA programmes with support for Earth Observation sector

- UK government commits £1.84 billion for important space programmes at this year's European Space Agency Council of Ministers meeting, held in Paris
- the investment will cover a range of programmes from space

- sustainability to supporting the UK-built Rosalind Franklin Mars Rover
- up to £200 million has also been committed to support the Earth observation sector as the EU continues to delay association to the Copernicus programme

Science, Research & Innovation Minister George Freeman, who led the successful negotiations in Paris with the UK Space Agency, has secured record commitments to grow the UK space sector and deliver on National Space Strategy ambitions, an increase on previous investments made in 2019.

The landmark deal includes:

- important UK investment of £315 million in Earth observation and climate programmes: a 45% increase, deploying funds set aside for Copernicus participation to support the sector while EU programme association continues to face delays
- ESA commitment to the UK-built Rosalind Franklin Mars Rover, which is set to launch to Mars in 2028, with UK industry set to play a leading role in developing a new landing platform
- UK leadership in space sustainability via satellite management, maintenance and retrieval to support UK ambitions to lead in global space sustainability regulation and innovation
- leading UK involvement in commercially focused programmes, including communications and navigation, driving further innovation in the satellite industry
- UK leadership in the Vigil space weather mission, which will travel to a point in deep space known as L5 and give advance warning of dangerous solar storms, enhancing and securing observational capabilities, while supporting expertise such as that delivered by the UK Met Office's Space Weather Operations Centre
- enabling the UK to set the standards for satellite climate measurements, with funding secured for further development of the TRUTHS mission, which was first proposed by scientists at the National Physical Laboratory to deliver a 10x increase in the accuracy of climate measurements

As a founding member of ESA, which is independent of the EU, the UK's space and commercial satellite sector will play a leading role in future international missions and innovative commercial programmes. There are over 47,000 jobs in the UK space sector, which generates an estimated £16.5 billion every year.

Satellites provide vital insight into the climate and our environment, and the UK committed in the National Space Strategy to remaining at the forefront of Earth observation technology. New investments will allow the UK to work with ESA to use space to fight climate change and deliver programmes that support our national interest.

UK Science, Research & Innovation Minister George Freeman said:

The rapidly growing global commercial space sector is driving a new

space race for geopolitical and commercial soft-power. This is the frontline of our science superpower mission.

Space is a fundamentally collaborative endeavour, so the European Space Agency Council of Ministers was an important opportunity to deepen our international relationships with the goal of advancing space technology for the benefit of all.

I'm delighted to return from the meeting with such a strong package of commitments, as well as being able to provide support for our outstanding Earth observation sector, to protect it from the uncertainty caused as a result of the EU's delays, as we continue seeking Copernicus association.

These new investments will support the ongoing growth of the UK space and commercial satellite sector – creating new jobs around the UK from Cornwall to the North of Scotland – and securing UK leadership in space sustainability. They will put our scientists and engineers at the forefront of some of the world's most important missions and programmes which drive transformational innovation.

The UK committed £615 million to ESA's core space science budget, securing opportunities for UK companies to bid for high-value contracts and establishing new scientific leadership roles for UK universities. Upcoming ESA science missions range from hunting for rocky Earth-like planets outside our solar system (Plato) to sending the first gravitational wave observatory into space (LISA).

The UK space sector will benefit from the following commitments:

- £217 million towards the global exploration programme, supporting robotic missions to Mars and contributing to the Artemis Moon programme, including the Argonaut (European Large Logistics Lander), Gateway space station and commercial lunar communications systems
- £206 million for telecommunications programmes, building on the success of the European Centre for Space Applications and Telecommunications in Harwell, to enable faster 5G and future 6G connectivity, develop new optical and quantum communications systems, and support constellations of Low Earth Orbit satellites
- £111 million to bolster space safety and security, improving forecasting and building resilience to dangerous space weather, protecting critical national infrastructure, tackling the growing challenge of space debris and catalysing growth and further investment in high-potential areas including in-orbit satellite servicing and manufacturing
- £71 million to back new technologies, helping smaller businesses develop new ideas and products, reducing reliance on non-European nations for important electrical and electronic components, supporting emerging areas such as space-based solar power, and creating radioisotope heat and power systems derived from nuclear waste, to fuel a new generation of missions

Through our investments in ESA, we are taking part in a range of ambitious programmes that will help keep the UK at the forefront of Earth observation technology and knowhow. This includes investment in Aeolus-2, ESA Digital Twin Earth and InCubed-2, as well as additional, targeted funding in TRUTHS and the FutureEO programme. The package of measures delivered through ESA, as part of a wider programme of support for the UK's Earth Observation sector totals £122 million.

Additional investments include over £30 million on satellite navigation innovations and £13 million to support commercial spaceflight, as we countdown to the first satellite launches from UK soil.

Dr Paul Bate, CEO of the UK Space Agency, said:

From protecting our own planet to exploring new worlds, we invest in these programmes because they benefit humanity and deliver a strong return to the UK economy.

Our membership of ESA adds significant firepower to our national space ambitions, complementing the UK Space Agency's work to catalyse investment, deliver new missions and capabilities, and champion the power of space for businesses and people across the country.

Taken together, this represents the most ambitious and comprehensive package of investments with ESA ever. This also comes following last week's fiscal statement last week, in which the Chancellor pledged to maintain the UK's commitment to increasing R&D investment to £20 billion per year in 2024 to 2025.

Copernicus and Earth Observation

These investments come in the context of continued delays from the EU in agreeing the UK's association to the EU research programmes, including the Copernicus Earth Observation programme.

The Earth observation sector has suffered instability as a result of this uncertainty, which is why the government has announced a package of up to £200 million in support today, deployed as part of the funding initially allocated to EU programme association, and which has not been utilised for this purpose for 2 years given the ongoing delays.

A £122 million segment of the package has been committed to 5 of ESA's outstanding programmes, with a further £66 million being allocated to 12 UK-led projects.

The package covers a robust range of national and international projects across all facets of the sector, from gathering and processing, to the application of, Earth observation data. There is a strong focus on climate and meteorological science, building on the UK's significant strengths in

this area, while delivering direct benefit to the UK economy and supporting our shared global ambition to combat climate change.

See [more information on the Copernicus mitigation package](#).

Notes to editors

1. All subscriptions to ESA programmes are made in euros so GBP figures are subject to foreign exchange rates.
2. The total investment figure includes £378 million to manage inflationary impacts and volatility in foreign exchange rates.

Royal Navy ships to be fitted with advanced new missile system

Royal Navy frigates and destroyers will get a significant boost to their long-range precision strike capabilities following a new partnership between the UK and key NATO and Joint Expeditionary Force (JEF) ally, Norway.

Strengthening defence ties between the UK and Norway, the Royal Navy will receive the Naval Strike Missile (NSM), outfitted on a total of eleven Type 23 frigates and Type 45 destroyers, in a collaboration with the Norwegian government.

Measuring nearly 4 metres long, the NSMs are a fifth-generation missile using integrated sensors and autonomous target recognition to precisely strike enemy ships and targets on land at distances of more than 100 nautical miles (115 miles) at high subsonic speeds. It can elude enemy radar and defence systems by flying at sea-skimming altitude and using evasive manoeuvres.

Announcing the maritime capability upgrade, the Defence Secretary also met with Northern Group Defence Ministers on board the Royal Navy's flagship, HMS Queen Elizabeth, alongside in Oslo.

Defence Secretary Ben Wallace said:

We have a long history of defence cooperation with Norway. This new agreement cements our partnership with one of our closest allies, whilst strengthening our Royal Navy with a new surface to surface strike capability.

Replacing the Harpoon surface-to-surface weapon, due to go out of service in 2023, the world-class anti-ship missile will be fitted to three vessels at

pace and will be ready for operations onboard the first Royal Navy vessel in a little over 12 months. The collaboration will result in more ships equipped with the highly sophisticated naval strike missiles which in turn will contribute in enhancing the security in our common areas of interest.

The missile system will be integrated in UK Dockyards through Babcock and BAE with Norwegian support, the missile system is manufactured by Kongsberg Defence Aerospace.

NSM will enhance collaboration and interoperability with several of our key strategic partners. In the North Atlantic and Baltic Sea Region users, and soon to be users, include Norway, the US, Poland, Germany, and Canada. Both the US and Australia will operate NSM in the Pacific region.

Norwegian Minister of Defence Bjørn Arild Gram, said:

This is a significant task with an ambitious timeline. Both nations have established a designated team with a strong mandate to ensure the success of this common effort. The Norwegian company Kongsberg Defence & Aerospace is supporting the joint team with their expertise and the planned integration on the UK vessels.

The meeting of Northern Group Defence Ministers on HMS Queen Elizabeth, will see discussions on the implications of Russia's illegal invasion of Ukraine, security developments in Northern Europe, and Sweden and Finland's NATO membership applications.

The Northern Group is a UK initiative which aims to promote more coherent, efficient and effective defence and security co-operation in northern Europe. It comprises 12 nations; Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Sweden and the UK.

[TRA launches review of cast iron articles \(street gratings and drain access covers\)](#)

News story

On Wed 23 November, the Trade Remedies Authority launched a transition review into anti-dumping measures on imports of certain cast iron articles from China.



These [measures](#) are among those inherited from the EU system and the TRA is reviewing them to establish whether they are still suitable for the UK's needs. The [review](#) will establish whether the measures are needed to protect the UK industry for these products).

These products are the cast-iron covers and gratings commonly seen on road surfaces and pavements to cover access to ground or sub-surface systems. These access covers have been around since 3500BC, with the Ancient Romans as early adopters. Modern drainage system access covers were developed during the 19th century and along with their vital functional role, act as historic markers for streets and can reveal a lot about the history of an area.

The TRA's review

The TRA's investigation begins on Wed 23 November and will review the UK production of these products and levels of imports. The TRA will look at a period of investigation from 1 October 2021 until 30 September 2022, while the injury period will be 1 October 2018 until 30 September 2022. You can find out more about the product types in scope of the TRA's review on the [TRA's public file](#).

Imports to the UK market from China were valued at around £3.3 million in 2021. China is however only the third-largest importer of this product to the UK over recent years, with Turkey as the largest. Businesses that may be affected by this review (such as importers or exporters of the products or UK producers of similar products) can contribute to the review process by registering their interest in the case on the [TRA's online case platform](#) by 8 December 2022. All new developments in the case will be posted on the TRA's public file. [View further information on the TRA's current investigations](#), including transition reviews like this one.

Background information

- The Trade Remedies Authority is the UK body that investigates whether new trade remedy measures are needed to counter unfair import practices and unforeseen surges of imports.
- Dumping occurs when goods are imported into a country and sold at a price that is below their normal value in their country of export.
- [Transition reviews into former EU measures](#) determine if a transitioned measure should be varied or revoked according to whether the continuing application of an anti-dumping or countervailing duty is necessary

or sufficient to offset the dumping of imports of subsidised goods into the UK; and whether there would be injury to the UK producers of those goods if an anti-dumping duty or countervailing duty were no longer to apply to those goods.

- Trade remedy investigations were carried out by the EU Commission on the UK's behalf until the UK left the EU. 44 EU trade remedy measures of interest to UK producers were carried across into UK law when the UK left the EU and the TRA is currently reviewing each one to establish whether it is suitable for UK needs.
- Period of Investigation – when we are investigating dumping and subsidy cases, we will use a period of investigation of around a year. We will aim for the end point to be as close as possible to the date of initiation. However, we will decide this on a case-by-case basis.
- Period of injury – the injury period will usually cover the period of investigation and normally the 36 months immediately before this (i.e., 48 months in total). TRA investigators look at evidence of injury over a longer period than the general period of investigation so that they can assess trends and other factors in more detail than if they looked at a single year.

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