

River Aire flood defences are winter ready as work continues on permanent repairs

Press release

Permanent repairs to flood embankments on the lower River Aire are underway after they were damaged during storms last winter.



Reinforcing the embankment at Poor Bank

The repairs form part of a £10M package of work that will reduce flood risk to communities across North Yorkshire and the East Riding of Yorkshire including Snaith and Gowdall.

Emergency temporary repairs were carried out in the immediate aftermath of the flooding, but now permanent works at locations across the Lower Aire Washlands will repair the damage caused and strengthen defences.

The latest repairs are being completed at Pick Hill embankment near Snaith and Poor Bank embankment near Gowdall where concrete blocks are being installed to make them more resilient to future scour damage if a similar flood was to happen again.

Poor bank and Pickhill embankments are part of reservoirs that help reduce the flood risk to the communities of Gowdall and Snaith.

Kimberley MacPherson, West Yorkshire Operations Manager at the Environment Agency said:

It was the wettest February on record for Yorkshire, with the River Aire catchment receiving three and a half times the average monthly rainfall.

The floods had a devastating impact on communities across North

Yorkshire, and our thoughts remain with those affected, especially families who still cannot return home.

After the flood water subsided, we inspected defences in the area and found damage at 40 locations. We secured £10 million of funding to make repairs and have been working hard to complete them ahead of winter. Where permanent fixes won't be complete by spring, we've installed temporary measures to ensure local communities are protected this winter.

We can never entirely eliminate the risk of flooding. We encourage people to prepare too, by signing up for Flood Warnings and preparing a flood plan. Further information can be found on GOV.UK.

- Repair work has already been completed at Little Airmyrn, West Holme, with West Haddlesey due for completion next week.
- Repairs at Pick Hill are complete, and final landscaping at Poor Bank is due to be completed by Christmas.
- Ground investigation works around areas such as Chapel Haddlesey, Birkin Barrier, Hensall Ings, Hensall Pumping Station, Carlton Bridge and Lock Lane, have now finished, so design work has now started to plan what work is needed for these areas.
- Work at two sites at Hirst Courtney will start early next year and will see repairs to flood embankments in the village and work to prevent river channel erosion near The Sloop Inn pub.
- A new flood defence wall is being proposed at Newlands, with work due to start next year. Temporary repairs are in place for the winter period until permanent works can start.
- At Heck Ings, work is being planned for scour damage and seepage repairs with work due to start in the new year.

Since the February floods, the Environment Agency has been working closely with North Yorkshire County Council, East Riding of Yorkshire Council and the Internal Drainage Board to learn from the floods and plan for the future.

Work has been done with communities to help them become better prepared for any risk of flooding, with improvements made to flood warning and informing, and the recruitment of community flood wardens.

UK Government provides £400m package for Northern Ireland in post Transition deal

Today £400 million of new money has been guaranteed by the UK Government in a 'New Deal for Northern Ireland'.

As part of the Northern Ireland Protocol, the UK Government committed to implement this 'New Deal' to help boost economic growth, increase Northern Ireland's competitiveness and invest in infrastructure.

This substantial financial package is aimed at supporting businesses to operate after the Transition Period, whilst also ensuring that Northern Ireland is ready to seize the trade and investment opportunities ahead.

This package comes on top of the £650 million of UK Government investment announced in August to deliver the Trader Support Service, investment in new technology, and our contribution to the PEACE Plus Programme. It is in addition to funding that has been provided to meet costs from the UK's obligations under the Northern Ireland Protocol. The UK Government also committed £2 billion to the NI Executive in January 2020 under the 'New Decade, New Approach' agreement.

Taken together, in a year which has also seen unprecedented increases in UK Government funding for the Northern Ireland Executive, this is the largest new investment the UK Government has committed to Northern Ireland and its trade, in any year, for decades.

Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, Brandon Lewis, said:

"The New Deal is wonderful news for Northern Ireland and underlines the UK Government's commitment to supporting and protecting the interests of the people and businesses in Northern Ireland.

"Fostering economic growth and social cohesion is key to building a stable and prosperous future for Northern Ireland and this additional £400 million will support Northern Ireland after the end of the Transition period enabling NI businesses and its people to innovate and invest.

"As announced at the Spending Review, Northern Ireland will also benefit from more than £100 billion of capital investment across the UK in 2021/22. This includes the Gigabit and Shared Rural Network programmes for better mobile coverage, investment in new green industries and access to a £14.6 billion UK-wide research and development fund.

"I look forward to working with the Executive to deliver all of this funding,

to continue to grow the economy, and support people and businesses across Northern Ireland.”

Chief Secretary to the Treasury Stephen Barclay said:

“This significant funding further reinforces the strength of UK action to support Northern Ireland. It builds on £900 million allocated at the Spending Review through the Barnett formula, which can be used to grow the economy, improve public services and support people and business across Northern Ireland. Protecting jobs and livelihoods in Northern Ireland remains a priority for the UK Government.”

Through this ‘New Deal’, we will:

- support initiatives to promote Northern Ireland’s goods and services to export markets from GB and Ireland to the rest of the world
- support the development of systems that will enable supermarkets and other small traders to manage the new trading arrangements and coordinate trade between Northern Ireland and Great Britain *ensure resilience in medicine supply chains
- promote Northern Ireland’s potential as a leader in innovative technology and invest in the skills of the people of Northern Ireland in key growth areas such as cybersecurity, fintech and green/clean technology
- invest in social development across Northern Ireland, strengthening social cohesion and building stronger, safer communities – including by supporting initiatives to enable children from different community backgrounds to be educated together
- improve the flow of goods and travel to and from Great Britain and across Northern Ireland, boosting access to opportunities
- enable Northern Ireland’s businesses to compete in the global market, driving forward future growth and prosperity

Notes to Editors:

- As part of the New Decade, New Approach deal, the UK Government committed to ensuring that there is a New Deal for Northern Ireland at the end of the Transition Period maximising trade opportunities & investment. The UK Government further committed to a New Deal for Northern Ireland as set out in the Command Paper for the NI Protocol in May.
- The UK Government has shown time and time again that they are committed to supporting Northern Ireland, levelling up across the UK and strengthening our Union.
- The £400m New Deal package comes on top of our significant recent investment in Northern Ireland: £2 billion committed in New Decade, New Approach; £650m in August for the Trader Support Scheme, investment in new technology and Peace Plus contribution;

- This is on top of the unprecedented upfront £2.8bn funding guarantee available to help the Executive respond to Covid-19 this year with a further £900m uplift provided at the Spending Review for next year.

More than 10,000 consent applications for financial remedy processed on MyHMCTS

News story

Most online applications submitted by legal professionals are processed and returned to applicants within one week.



The financial remedy consent order service was launched in 2018. It enables legal professionals to submit online an agreed order which sets out the finances of divorcing couples and is part of our work to make divorce simpler.

In 2019 there were over 28,000 consent applications for financial remedy orders. We understand that resolving finances after separating is one of the most challenging aspects of a couple's divorce. Our aim is to reduce unnecessary anxiety by providing their legal representatives with a service that is quick, available at all times and enables progress to be tracked without the need to contact us. This allows couples to move with their lives following their divorce.

Feedback from legal professionals using the service which was mandated in August 2020 has been positive.

Juliet Harvey, Legal Director at Birketts says of the service:

I have found the Financial Remedy service very simple to use. The

system guides you through what needs to happen. Being able to check answers before you press 'submit' is great – it's much the same as getting a paper version of the form back for checking and signature before lodging at court. I find the notifications that the application has been received, has been submitted to the Judge and that the order has been approved are a great addition.

I also love not having to chase the court by phone to find out what is happening to my application – either I've had notification from the system to tell me what has happened, or I can log into the portal to check progress.

For my clients, it is a simpler, quicker process. It enables them to move on with their lives more quickly.

Adam Lennon, Head of Family said:

Providing legal professionals with the ability to submit financial remedy consent applications online has been a key part of our plan to use technology to simplify and improve the divorce process.

We are pleased to have reached this milestone, the feedback we have received is a real testament to the way we have worked with the judiciary and legal professionals to develop a system that meets the needs of court users.

People acting for themselves do not have an online service to make their application. From early 2021 we will digitise the paper application at the point of receipt and use the same digital service to ensure that they are dealt with quickly and in line with those submitted online. Next year we will also provide respondent solicitors with access to the information and we will be enabling applications for variation orders.

MyHMCTS is the online case management service for legal professionals. [Create an account](#) to use the financial remedy online service if you are acting on behalf of an applicant.

Guidance for legal professionals on [how to use the financial remedy online service](#) is available on the MyHMCTS website.

Published 10 December 2020

Launch of £46 million 'Changing Futures' scheme to support vulnerable people

- New scheme to help adults across England facing multiple disadvantages like homelessness and mental health issues
- Local partnerships will provide joined-up support for better outcomes
- Lessons learned from 'Changing Futures' scheme will inform national policy

A £46 million scheme to provide more effective and coordinated support for some of the most vulnerable people in our communities was launched today (10 December 2020) by Minister for Rough Sleeping and Housing Kelly Tolhurst.

The government is inviting local organisations to form partnerships and bid for a share of the funding to better support those who experience multiple disadvantages including homelessness, substance misuse, mental health issues, domestic abuse, and contact with the criminal justice system.

These people are among the most vulnerable in our communities, facing entrenched disadvantage and trauma. They often experience difficulties in getting the coordinated support from local services that they need.

This can lead to increased reoffending, greater risk of rough sleeping and ill-health and can result in a higher demand and costs for local response services and the criminal justice system.

The 'Changing Futures' programme aims to establish new, innovative and co-ordinated ways to better support vulnerable adults. The prospectus, published today, invites expressions of interest from organisations such as councils, health bodies, police, probation services, voluntary and community sector organisations to form local partnerships.

Minister for Rough Sleeping and Housing, Kelly Tolhurst said:

This £46 million funding will help some of the most vulnerable people in our communities turn their lives around and build a brighter future.

The 'Changing Futures' programme gives local organisations the flexibility and resources they need to work in partnership to deliver effective support where it is needed most. I look forward to receiving really innovative bids for projects that will make a real difference to so many people's lives

The Programme, announced at the Budget, aims to deliver improvements at the

individual, service and system level:

- for individuals, to stabilise and then improve the life situation of adults who face multiple disadvantage
- for services, to better integrate local services to provide a person-centred approach and to reduce demand on reactive services
- for the local system, to test a different approach to funding, accountability and engagement between local commissioners and services, and central government and local areas

The programme will run alongside evaluation, applying learning from local areas to national policymaking, aiming to deliver better outcomes with taxpayers' money.

[New government-commissioned reports raise prospect of limited reopening of Hammersmith Bridge](#)

- government publishes expert reports on Hammersmith Bridge's safety
- reports state that London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham (LBHF) should look again at whether a limited reopening is possible
- Baroness Vere calls on LBHF, following the findings, to redouble efforts towards reinstating pedestrian, cycle and river traffic as soon as safely possible

New [reports commissioned by the government and published today](#) (Thursday 10 December 2020) raise the prospect of a limited reopening of the Hammersmith Bridge to pedestrians, cyclists and river traffic.

In September, the Department for Transport invited respected engineering consultants AECOM and Professor Norman Fleck of the University of Cambridge – an expert in fracture mechanics – to review engineering studies of the bridge's condition previously undertaken by consultants for the London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham (LBHF).

The reports, published today, looked in detail at the computer modelling and risk assessments undertaken to date by LBHF's consultants and of the bridge strengthening works proposed by Transport for London (TfL). They conclude that earlier risk assessments were conservative and, as there is now a better understanding of how the bridge might be behaving, suggest assumptions on its closure should be revisited.

The reports recommend LBHF and its consultants reconsider whether the bridge can be reopened, albeit with restrictions, in its current state to

pedestrians, cyclists and river traffic. Further mitigation measures will be needed. These include blast-cleaning the paint from the 2 remaining pedestals so that any hidden fractures can be identified, as well as potentially installing further monitoring equipment.

AECOM and Fleck's reports recognise that our understanding of the bridge's condition and behaviour has improved considerably since March of this year when the current risk assessment was prepared. The government is therefore calling on LBHF to review AECOM and Fleck's work and consider their rationale for a full closure of the bridge, with a focus on exploring all avenues for a partial reopening.

Transport Minister Baroness Vere said:

Today's reports set out that there is potentially a route to Hammersmith Bridge being partially reopened and without major works, which is something I know people in the area will welcome.

I'm therefore calling on Hammersmith & Fulham Council to seriously consider these reports so we can do right by people who have been impacted by this bridge's closure, and help people move around London easily again as soon as is safely possible.

We remain committed to finding a funding solution for the bridge's full repair and reopening to vehicular traffic.

The government has provided the funding for removing ornate cast-iron casings and blast cleaning 2 western pedestals via the extraordinary funding and financing deal agreed with TfL on 31 October 2020. This work is expected to be carried out by April 2021. The eastern pedestals have already been blast-cleaned.

Given any reopening before the stabilisation works have been completed will have to be restricted, we continue to work on delivering a ferry service across the river as a temporary measure. Also, as part of the extraordinary funding and financing package, TfL will establish and run this service using [active travel funding](#), alongside any local contributions. Public procurement activity for the ferry is underway, with service commencement targeted for spring 2021.