

# Official opening for Romsey Flood Alleviation Scheme

Romsey Flood Alleviation Scheme, which will better protect 127 properties, was officially unveiled today (Friday 8 July) by Caroline Nokes MP for Romsey and Southampton North.

The scheme that became operational in autumn 2021, reduces flooding from the River Test and surface water. Costing approximately £9.5 million to build, of which the Environment Agency contributed approximately £6.4 million through government grant in aid.

Romsey has a history of flooding in the 1960s, 1995, 2000 and 2001. In the winter of 2013/2014, water overtopped Fishlake Stream and the Barge Canal, badly flooding 36 homes and 44 commercial properties with devastating consequences for families and businesses.

Simon Moody, Area Director, Environment Agency, said:

The climate emergency is bringing greater risks. We're seeing more extreme weather, with an increase in flooding. Our response must be to protect our communities as best we can, make them more resilient, and to tackle both the causes and consequences of climate change. We can make a difference if we all work together, like we have done on this scheme.

The flood alleviation scheme includes a tilting weir structure used to control the flows of Fishlake Stream and earth embankments to contain the excess water within a flood plain. At the Causeway, more earth embankments have been built to manage flood water as well as a new bridge and a spillway to enable the flood plain to drain into the River Test.

The risk of surface water flooding has been reduced by improvements to the existing drainage system including ditches, pipes and road drainage at Mainstone junction and Middlebridge Street.

As well as reducing flooding, there are additional ecological benefits from the scheme. Some 150 metres of new water vole habitat have been created and 150 metres of river environment have been enhanced by managing vegetation and improving the structure that controls water flow in the Barge Canal. The London plane trees, some of the oldest in the country, were also carefully preserved during construction.

Members of the local community were consulted throughout the scheme's development to ensure they were happy with the design. As a result, the new bridge on the Causeway is a Dutch, carbon-friendly design made of glass-reinforced plastic and is covered in timber to blend in with the picturesque surroundings.

The scheme, which took 3.5 years to build, has been developed through partnership working with Hampshire County Council and Test Valley Borough Council.

Councillor Edward Heron, Executive Lead Member for Transport and Environment Strategy at Hampshire County Council, said:

This is an important scheme and we have been delighted to play our part in helping protect residents in Romsey. We contributed £1.5 million towards the total cost and worked in partnership with the Environment Agency, the Borough Council and other local stakeholders on the planning, design and construction of the scheme.

While there will always be a risk of flooding, thanks to the work that has been completed, residents' properties, businesses, roads and other infrastructure are now much better protected and more resilient.

In addition to building and maintaining flood defences the Environment Agency also runs a free flood warning service. You can sign up for free flood warnings in minutes on gov.uk at [Check for flooding – GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/check-for-flooding) or call Floodline free on 0345 988 1188.

The scheme was funded from flood and coastal erosion risk management grant in aid (£6.4 million), local levy from the Southern Regional Flood and Coastal Committee (£1.2 million), Hampshire County Council contribution (£1.5 million), Test Valley Borough Council contribution (£0.3 million) and EU funding (£0.1 million).

Photos of the flooding, the scheme and its opening are available on request.

In the 2020 Budget the Government doubled its investment in flood and coastal erosion risk management in England by committing a record £5.2bn in 2021-27. This long-term commitment will better protect hundreds of thousands of properties, including homes, businesses, schools and hospitals from the risk of flooding.

---

## [Northern Ireland Secretary meets young people in Belfast](#)

Press release

Northern Ireland Secretary of State Shailesh Vara MP met with young people

during his first visit to Belfast since his appointment.



Mr Vara visited The Prince's Trust centre in the city to learn more about the charity's work with disadvantaged young people building skills and employability.

Earlier on Friday, the Secretary of State met with staff at Erskine House, the Northern Ireland Office's headquarters in the city centre.

**Speaking afterwards, the Secretary of State said:**

"It was fantastic to visit the Prince's Trust on my first visit to Northern Ireland as Secretary of State today and learn more about how the charity supports young people by developing their confidence and the skills needed to succeed through education, training and employment.

"As we build a fairer, more equal, and tolerant society in Northern Ireland, the Government remains committed to increasing respect, understanding and reconciliation between communities in Northern Ireland, and helping to build a better environment for future generations."

**Chair of The Prince's Trust in Northern Ireland, Lord Caledon, said:**

"We were very pleased to welcome the Secretary of State to our Belfast headquarters on his first day in Northern Ireland. The Prince's Trust does valuable work with our young people, and it was fantastic for the Secretary of State to hear about their experience, and the impact The Trust has had on them."

Mr Vara added:

"I was also delighted to meet with civil servants at the department's new headquarters in the city centre, ensuring the Northern Ireland Office is more accessible than ever to the wider community. Our new hub represents part of our mission to make Northern Ireland a better place to live, work and invest.

"I look forward to meeting with more people from across Northern Ireland in the days and weeks ahead."

## [We've overexploited the planet, now we need to change if we're to survive](#)

The relationship between humans and nature is under intense and increasing strain. The report released today by IPBES, the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (akin to the [IPCC reports on climate change](#)), provides compelling evidence that humans are overexploiting wild species and habitats. Harmful activities, including habitat destruction, poor farming practices and pollution, have altered ecosystems significantly, driving many species past the point of recovery. In Great Britain alone, of the 8,431 species assessed in the [2019 State of Nature report](#), 1,188 are threatened with extinction. Globally, there are an estimated [1 million at risk](#), with [biodiversity declining at a faster rate than at any time in human history](#).

We cannot ignore biodiversity loss. Biodiversity is the variability that exists among all living organisms, between different species, within species including genetic makeup, and in wider ecosystems. Billions of people rely on wild species for food, clean water, energy, income and health and wellbeing. Annually, crops worth up to [£480 billion](#) are pollinated by a variety of wild animals, and an estimated [4 billion people depend on natural medicines](#) for their healthcare. These vital ecosystem services are fundamentally based on a healthy environment, and this requires biodiversity. Losing biodiversity leaves species and ecosystems less resilient to challenges such as invasive species or pests, meaning there is an increased risk of whole populations being wiped out and destabilising the entire ecological network. Nature is a finite resource, and human self-interest alone should determine that biodiversity must be protected.

Alongside overexploitation, humans are driving biodiversity loss by destroying, polluting and fragmenting habitats across the globe. Many of the UK's important peatlands, which provide a home for rare species such as the hen harrier, have been drained for agricultural use. The Amazon rainforest is being cleared to such an extent that [it may be near a tipping point](#) beyond which it cannot recover.

The climate crisis is exacerbating the issue. Many species simply cannot adapt to the scale and pace of changing temperatures. For example, warming seas and ocean acidification are devastating coral reefs around the world. This year, the [Great Barrier Reef suffered its sixth mass bleaching event](#) since 1998 with more than 90% of reefs affected. In many cases, when an ecosystem loses biodiversity, it becomes less able to store carbon, contributing to further climate change. We have a vicious cycle: climate

change leads to biodiversity losses, which in turn leads to further climate change. As governments around the world develop plans to reduce carbon emissions and conserve biodiversity, the message is simple: we must solve both problems together.

What can be done? Just as science has diagnosed the problem, it can provide solutions. Using strong evidence, such as this IPBES report, governments can develop effective policy. Integrated and collaborative planning can deliver sustainable solutions which [address climate change and biodiversity loss simultaneously](#), protecting and enriching human lives.

In southern India, scientists, Indigenous communities and local government have worked collaboratively to [protect and restore mangrove forests](#). The trees' interconnecting large-root systems offer protection against rising sea levels, provide habitats for fish and crustaceans, and clean surrounding water. The trees also draw and store carbon from the atmosphere and encourage carbon-rich sediment deposits. The increase in wildlife has benefited small scale fisheries and tourism. Innovative and effective nature-based initiatives such as these could be implemented throughout different landscapes across the planet.

There are also simple day-to-day things we can do to benefit our environment; for instance, reducing food waste. Currently [about 30% of all food produced globally goes uneaten](#), meaning a significant proportion of the resources, and importantly the land used to grow, process, pack and transport it, is wasted and less able to support biodiversity.

Political will and leadership are needed, and the 15th UN Convention on Biological Diversity conference in December, CBD COP15, provides the next critical opportunity for governments to commit to real ambitious change.

CBD COP15 could deliver landmark action and be as important for biodiversity as the Paris Agreement is proving for reducing greenhouse gas emissions. It will set the direction for the next decade of international action and beyond. Governments should agree to halt and reverse biodiversity loss by 2030, and develop evidence-based, actionable plans to do so. An important challenge is to define a reliable and simple integrated metric, like carbon emissions have been used for climate goals. At the end of June, negotiators met in Nairobi for their latest attempt to agree the [Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework](#), and while progress was made, it did not go far enough.

The last decade's targets were not met; the next decade's must be. Credible delivery plans will be required, and we need a robust mechanism for monitoring progress and holding ourselves to account. CBD COP15 is the time to finalise the framework, and countries must come to the table prepared to make and support ambitious commitments. This is our chance to secure long-lasting agreements to protect our planet.

This piece was originally published in [The Guardian](#) on 8 July 2022.

---

# New Solicitor General appointed

Press release

Edward Timpson CBE MP has been appointed as Solicitor General for England and Wales



Solicitor General, Edward Timpson CBE MP

The Prime Minister has appointed Edward Timpson CBE MP as Solicitor General for England and Wales.

With the Attorney General, the Solicitor General oversees the work of the Law Officers' Departments, which include the Crown Prosecution Service, the Serious Fraud Office, the Government Legal Department and HM Crown Prosecution Service Inspectorate.

The Solicitor General also carries out a number of functions in the public interest—such as considering whether to refer unduly lenient sentences to the Court of Appeal—and taking action when there has been a contempt of court. These functions are carried out independently of the Solicitor's role as a Government minister.

Commenting on his appointment, the Solicitor General, Edward Timpson CBE MP, said:

I am honoured to have been appointed as Solicitor General for England and Wales.

One of my first priorities is to continue the Government's work in rebuilding confidence in our criminal justice system—particularly for victims.

I look forward to working with the Attorney General, Government lawyers and the Civil Service to play my part in making the law and

politics work together at the heart of the UK constitution.

## Notes

1. Edward Timpson CBE was appointed as Solicitor General on 7 July 2022 by the Prime Minister.
2. Edward was elected as MP for Eddisbury in 2019, having previously served as MP for Crewe & Nantwich from 2008 to 2017.

He has also served as:

- Minister of State for Vulnerable Children & Families at the Department for Education (2016 to 2017)
- Minister of State for Children & Families (2015 to 2016)
- Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Children & Families (2012 to 2015)
- Parliamentary Private Secretary to the Home Secretary (2010 to 2012)
- Chair of CAFCASS (2018 to 2019)
- Chair of the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel (2018 to 2020)

And was also:

- A member of the Children, Schools & Families Select Committee
- A member of the Joint Committee on Human Rights
- Chairman of the All-Party Parliamentary Groups on Adoption & Fostering and Looked-after Children & Care Leavers
- Vice Chairman of the Runaway & Missing Children Group

Published 8 July 2022

---

## **Derelict sites to be transformed into new homes as new brownfield fund opens**

- Over 17,000 new homes will be created with £180 million new brownfield fund
- Councils will be able to bid for first £40 million from today, further £140 million allocated over next 2 years
- Builds on success of previous £77 million fund to support the regeneration of unused brownfield sites

Derelict and underused brownfield sites across England will be transformed into thousands of new homes, creating thriving communities and levelling up the country – the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities announced today (8 July 2022).

From today, councils will be able to apply for a share of the new £180 million Brownfield Land Release Fund 2, which will help to transform disused urban areas into 17,600 new homes and create around 54,000 jobs over the next 4 years.

An initial £40 million is available to support local regeneration projects, releasing council land for around 4,000 new homes (and creating 12,400 jobs). The move will boost local economies and help thousands of young people and families into homeownership. The remaining £140 million of the Brownfield Land Release Fund 2 will be made available to councils over the next 2 years.

The scheme forms part of the government's plan to level up communities across the country and turn unloved areas into new places for people to live and work

Minister for Government Efficiency Jacob Rees-Mogg said:

Opening up this land is a fantastic opportunity for regeneration, improving government efficiency and playing a vital role in tackling the housing shortage while increasing home ownership. I am pleased to see this work is being delivered, after many attempts over the decades.

This will provide a boost to the economy, foster the creation of thousands of jobs, and it is also the opportunity to convert derelict and unloved land into beautiful new hamlets or villages, which will give many young families their first step on the housing ladder.

The fund aims to support the transformation of small council-owned sites that have been previously developed, by funding small scale infrastructure and remediation work to enable the release of the land for new homes.

This builds on the success of the first Brownfield Land Release Fund which saw £77 million go to councils across the country to release brownfield sites for around 7,750 new homes, examples include:

- As part of this, the Lancashire One Public Estate partnership £670,000 to support the remediation of land at Griffin Housing Regeneration site in Blackburn. This enabled the phase 1 development of the site to progress and deliver 140 new homes for affordable rent or shared ownership.
- In Blackpool, £400,000 provided a new traffic system for a development



at Ryscar Way. The improved road access opened up land for 51 new homes.

- In Rotherham, £300,000 unlocked the sites of 2 former adult care residential facilities to provide 44 new homes for first-time buyers and older people in the local area.

As with the previous scheme, the new fund will be delivered through the One Public Estate partnership between the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, the Office of Government Property and the Local Government Association.

Councils will be able to draw on their understanding of local needs in determining the type, tenure and delivery approach for the new homes. They have until 19 August 2022 to submit applications via the designated accountable body of their local OPE Partnership.

Bids will be assessed on a number of gateway criteria including: market failure; deliverability; and value for money.

The prioritisation of bids will comprise an assessment of the strategic case, innovation and consideration of the bid's ability to meet the council's Public Sector Equality Duty, combined with a place-based metric.

To support the development of new Local Plans, councils will receive additional points where they can demonstrate that they are supporting the plan making process.

The capital grant funding is available to all English councils. Mayoral Combined Authorities (MCAs) and the Greater London Authority (GLA) are eligible, as are their constituent councils.

Further information about [applications to the second round of the Brownfield Land Release Fund](#) is available on the Local Government Association website.