

# Ground-breaking natural flood risk management scheme in Leeds now complete

The project has been delivered through a collaboration between the Environment Agency, Leeds City Council and the University of Leeds.

A range of NFM measures have been used to reduce flood risk by slowing the flow of water during periods of heavy rain, increasing resilience to the 1,048 homes, 474 businesses and key infrastructure that will be better protected by the scheme, as well as other communities along the River Aire.

Bodington fields, where the triathlon centre is situated, now offers a 'living lab' for teaching and researching at the University of Leeds and is a centre of excellence for natural flood management measures.

Adrian Gill, Area Flood Risk Manager at the Environment Agency, said:

It's great to see the finished product of the Natural Flood Management Programme at the Brownlee Triathlon Centre, an important component of the Leeds Flood Alleviation Scheme.

As the country faces a national and global climate emergency, restoring our natural environment will also help us reach net zero emissions in the future.

Not only do natural flood management techniques help make Leeds more resilient to climate change and capture tonnes of carbon from the atmosphere, but they also enhance biodiversity and provide wider benefits for local wildlife.

We're excited for visitors to see the work that has taken place at this new centre of excellence, and to learn more about how different natural solutions can be used to help reduce the risk of flooding along the River Aire.

Councillor Helen Hayden, Leeds City Council's Executive Member for Infrastructure and Climate, said:

Many of us remember the devastating flooding on Boxing Day 2015, when the River Aire burst its banks and caused damage throughout Leeds. Flooding as recently as this February also serves as a stark reminder of why the Leeds Flood Alleviation Scheme Phase 2 is so vital to those who live and work in the area, now and in the future. The engineering works stretching from Leeds Train Station to Apperley Bridge are key to the resilience of the city, but just

as integral is the catchment wide Natural Flood Management Programme.

We all need to play our part in combating the climate emergency and the innovative NFM techniques trialled here will allow us to develop the gold standard of NFM and encourage wider use on both Leeds FAS2 and wider projects. The works will capture carbon, help us to reach our goals to combat the climate emergency, and create and preserve areas for wellbeing for our citizens and habitat for our wildlife.

Michael Howroyd, Sustainability Projects Officer at the University of Leeds, added:

The site at Bodington Fields will be invaluable to academics and students, providing hands on research opportunities and data, whilst also providing benefits for local residents, biodiversity and climate.

The project is a fantastic example of how collaboration across stakeholders can make use of University land as a living lab for world class research and teaching, which will have an impact across the wider city region and beyond.

#### A balancing pond

Woodland and tree planting make up a proportion of the NFM measures used, including the planting of 5,000 trees. The trees help to not only to act as a shield to stop and slow rainfall before it reaches the ground, but they also increase carbon capture and storage capacity and provide valuable habitats for local wildlife.

Among the other features installed are leaky wood dams and a balancing pond, which hold flood water during high rainfall to reduce the risk of flooding. Wetland scrapes and cross-track drains have also been created to store water away from more vulnerable areas, such as local drainage systems, that may otherwise overflow and cause flood damage.

#### Leaky wood debris dams and gabion walls

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News story

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We are pleased to announce the start of the negotiations for a Free Trade Agreement between the United Mexican States and the United Kingdom.

We reaffirm that Mexico and the United Kingdom will work together to take our trade and economic relationship to the next level. We share the goal of deepening our trade and investment for the benefit of a more prosperous future for both countries.

We are both committed to achieving an agreement which is better suited for the 21st Century. This is an opportunity to deliver an agreement which strengthens trade in goods and services, increases investment flows, and promotes digital and cross-border trade. We also want the new FTA to deliver on progressive issues such as trade and gender equality and innovation. Lastly, we recognise the importance of an agreement which supports businesses in both countries to access and make best use of existing and new global supply chains.

We have instructed our teams to hold the first official round of negotiations in Mexico City this July, and a second round in the autumn. This will allow us to make significant progress towards our ambition to conclude negotiations for a new Free Trade Agreement within two years, as agreed in the UK-Mexico Trade Continuity Agreement.

See [the UK's approach to negotiating a free trade agreement with Mexico](#).

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## [UK kicks off talks on modern trade deal with Mexico](#)

- Deal to boost trade relationship worth £4 billion, and open up one of the world's largest consumer markets – with a population projected to reach nearly 150 million by 2035
- Major boost for UK services industries, increasing trade in areas like financial services and digital driving economic growth and supporting UK jobs
- Modern, enhanced agreement aims to remove barriers and bureaucracy for small businesses, helping them grow through exports

The International Trade Secretary today (Friday 20 May) launches negotiations on a new UK-Mexico Free Trade Agreement (FTA) alongside her Mexican counterpart, Tatiana Clouthier, in London.

Negotiating a 'Mexico 2.0' deal would transform the UK's relationship with the world's 16th biggest economy and secure a brand new, enhanced FTA for a digital age, which supports hi-tech jobs, industries of the future and grows our economy.

Mexico is a major market for UK exporters. Its expanding population means demand for imports is set to grow by 35% by 2035. It is in a strategically situated part of the world, serving as a gateway to the Americas as well as to the dynamic trans-Pacific region.

UK negotiators will look to go further and deeper in areas like services and technology, boosting a trade relationship already worth over £4 billion. The agreement could increase trade flows across the financial, creative, digital and technology services sectors thanks to advanced services provisions, boosting the UK's already world-leading services industries.

It is the third major FTA negotiation launched by Trade Secretary Anne-Marie Trevelyan this year – following visits to kick off talks in India in January and Canada in March.

**Secretary of State for International Trade Anne-Marie Trevelyan said:**

This enhanced deal would transform our relationship with Mexico, making the most of the immense opportunities its dynamic business landscape and young, growing population offer.

From autonomous vehicle manufacturers in the West Midlands, to Wales' green tech businesses and Scotland's thriving food and drink sector, companies of all shapes and sizes across the UK stand to benefit.

Trade deals like this are vital to growing the economy to address the cost of living, as they support jobs, help businesses thrive and spur investment. We've already kickstarted negotiations with India and Canada and are close to joining the CPTPP free trade area, with a combined GDP of £9 trillion, of which Mexico is a key member.

The UK is aiming for a dedicated chapter on small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) that would knock down sector-specific barriers, cutting costs and paperwork for SMEs looking to export.

Through this FTA, the UK will seek to make buying and selling goods and services online and product standards recognition processes smoother, helping British businesses expand more quickly and supporting jobs.

We will also aim to lock in tariff reductions of £57 million per year secured under existing agreements, ensuring tariff-free trade on 97% of UK goods.

We will look to help workers move between the two countries more easily and enhance opportunities for UK firms to bid for contracts in Mexico, supporting major UK industries such as infrastructure and business services.

Our ambition is for an FTA which is forward looking and fit for the future, which supports innovation and women's economic empowerment.

This new FTA will also complement the UK's CPTPP negotiations, accession to which could see 99.9% of UK exports being eligible for tariff-free trade with this bloc, which includes some of the world's largest existing and future economies including Mexico.

**Diageo Chief Executive Ivan Menezes said:**

We welcome the launch of the UK-Mexico trade talks. The continuation of tariff-free trade between the UK and Mexico will support both the growth of Scotch exports and the important Tequila

category.

**CBI President Lord Bilimoria said:**

The Government did a remarkable job securing the continuity agreement with Mexico. There is now a phenomenal opportunity to strengthen our existing economic ties including in services, digital, and investment.

International trade is the foundation for economic growth. With exporters among the UK's most profitable and innovative businesses, firms up and down the country should be seizing on the huge untapped potential globally. Finding new opportunities in emerging markets such as Mexico will be key to that success.

**Amanda Tickel, Head of Tax & Trade Policy for Deloitte UK, said:**

We welcome negotiations on upgrading the UK's trade relationship with Mexico, a fast-growing economy home to over 130 million consumers that is expected to be among the world's largest over the next two decades.

The existing trade agreement has provided a strong platform for bilateral UK-Mexico trade but needs modernising to reflect today's commercial environment. New and ambitious provisions on data, digital and services trade represent an exciting opportunity for British business and can help cement the UK's position as a leader in professional advisory and financial services around the world.

**Background:**

- Our current trade agreement with Mexico is based on the EU-Mexico Global Agreement, negotiated over 20 years ago. Our new deal with Mexico will be better tailored to the UK. It's an opportunity to gain market access for a range of services sectors, access to Mexican government procurement contracts and also provide a trail-blazing opportunity to set new benchmarks in areas like digital trade, innovation, and trade and gender equality.
- The launch will take place at Diageo – one of the world's largest drinks companies, founded and headquartered in London and a top exporter to Mexico. Mexico is the leading destination in Latin America for UK food and drink products and the top market for whisky.
- It is estimated that, if modern and ambitious services commitments are agreed, trade flows in the insurance sector alone could increase by around £80 million. Exports of financial services could also increase by around £20 million.

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# Joint Expeditionary Force deploys to the Baltics

The Standing Joint Force Headquarters (SJFHQ) is usually based in Northwood, London and is now operating across a further two temporary locations in Lithuania and Latvia, with UK liaison officers in Denmark, Estonia, Finland and Sweden.

The deployment, which is at the invitation of the host nations, will see around 180 UK personnel working near Vilnius in Lithuania and in Riga, Latvia. It coordinates military activities from and between JEF nations in the Baltic Sea region at a time of heightened focus on regional security and cooperation. The deployment was agreed by all ten JEF nations at a meeting of JEF Defence Ministers at Belvoir Castle in Leicestershire in March.

## **Defence Secretary Ben Wallace said:**

This vital deployment demonstrates our defensive partnerships within the ten nation alliance of the Joint Expeditionary Force.

The JEF represents a shared commitment with like-minded countries for the security and stability of Europe at this pivotal time.

JEF nations have a common commitment to democracy, security and stability, with a geographical focus on the Baltic Sea region, the High North and the North Atlantic. The UK is the framework nation for the JEF, working alongside partners Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Norway and Sweden.

The partnership is designed to complement NATO, with the potential to deploy worldwide. The current deployment involves over 220 personnel, from the UK and other JEF nations, including specialists in cyber, space and information operations.

## **Commander of the Standing Joint Force Headquarters Major General Jim Morris said:**

The men and women from across our UK Armed Forces and our JEF partners are supported by experts from across government and academia and are well prepared for this deployment which comes at a critical time for European stability.

The security of the Baltic Sea region has never been more important and this deployment demonstrates our collective resolve to



maintaining that security.