

# Work starts on Northumberland flood scheme

A North East MP has seen first-hand the start of vital work to improve flood defences in a Northumberland town.

The £2.7million Ponteland Flood Alleviation Scheme is the first project in the country to get off the ground out of the 22 flood defence projects to benefit from a £170million government funding boost.

The investment brings forward work on flood defence schemes across the country which will drive economic growth and better protect thousands of homes, business and jobs from the devastating effects of flooding.

Ponteland received a £450,000 cash injection used to fill a shortfall in funding, allowing the Environment Agency to start construction immediately.

On Friday (11 September) Hexham MP Guy Opperman visited the site to see first-hand the work being carried out to protect the town. He was joined by Ponteland Flood Warden Alan Maidwell on the tour. Mr Opperman said following his visit:

This additional investment from the Government for flood protection here in Ponteland is fantastic and I know will be hugely welcomed by the many residents and businesses who will benefit from this crucial work. It is great to see this extra investment transfer to shovels in the ground so quickly, bringing real peace of mind and confidence to the local community.

Hexham MP Guy Opperman is shown around Ponteland Flood Scheme

## **Built with climate change in mind**

In Ponteland existing flood defences on the south bank of the River Pont, between the Memorial Hall footbridge and Callerton Burn Pumping Station, will be replaced with one continuous sheet piled flood wall.

This flood wall will be built to complement the existing local environment, with a stone effect and colour, and will protect more than 250 properties in the town. The new flood defences will also be built with climate change in mind, with allowances in the foundations for the walls to be raised in future if needed.

Work started at the end of August and is expected to be completed next Spring.

Leila Huntington, Flood Risk Manager for the Environment Agency in the North East said:

The recent government funding boost that the scheme received shows just how vital the completion of this work is and we're pleased to get started on the ground.

We know there is a long history of flooding in Ponteland and we're committed to ensuring the town is protected. We understand just how devastating it is to be flooded and we have consulted with the community throughout to develop a scheme which meets their needs.

This project is built with climate change in mind and will hopefully bring some reassurance to residents that they will be better protected now and into the future.

### **'Flooding can devastate homes'**

Councillor Nick Oliver, Northumberland County Council's representative on the Northumbria Regional Flood and Coastal Committee, who attended the visit alongside Ponteland North County Councillor Richard Dodd, added:

As we've seen before in our county, flooding can devastate homes and destroy businesses, so we're delighted that the funding is now in place and work has been able to start on this vital scheme in Ponteland. This is very welcome news for residents and businesses in the town, with the new flood wall designed to protect more than 250 properties.

The contractor, BAM Nuttall, will maintain a temporary flood defence throughout construction. Almost all of the people employed by BAM to work on the project are local.

There are also some environmental enhancements, with a re-profiling of the river bank from the current steep gradient to a more natural stepped terrace which will be planted with native river corridor plants.

The £170million government funding boost is on top of the record £5.2 billion government investment to create around 2,000 new flood and coastal defences to better protect 336,000 properties across England by 2027. The Environment Agency has also set out its vision for a nation ready for, and resilient to, flooding in its National Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Strategy.

The Hexham Industrial Estate Flood Alleviation Scheme also received a £1million boost towards the £4.1million estimated cost from the £170million government funding boost, while a flood alleviation scheme costing an estimated £12.7million in early development for Team Valley Industrial Estate received a significant £6million funding boost.

More information about Ponteland Flood Scheme can be found by visiting the Environment Agency's [Citizen Space page](#).

Flood Wardens play a vital role in ensuring communities are prepared for flooding – they help develop flood plans and are the Environment Agency's eyes and ears on the ground during a flood.

If you'd like to volunteer as a Flood Warden, to help protect your community from the impacts of flooding, or find out more about how you can improve your community's resilience to flooding, please contact [engagement\\_northeast@environment-agency.gov.uk](mailto:engagement_northeast@environment-agency.gov.uk)