

Press release: Environment Agency begins work on £5million Isle of Wight Flood Scheme

On 1 March Environment Agency contractors are starting construction of a new £5 million flood scheme to better protect more than 300 properties in Ryde. In partnership with the Isle of Wight Council and the Southern Regional Flood and Coastal Committee, the completed scheme will significantly reduce flood risk in the area.

Environment Agency Manager John O'Flynn said:

We are delighted to be launching this multi-million pound scheme on the island, which includes over £1 million of partner contributions that will benefit so many local homes and businesses. A sensible approach to funding and a good relationship with our partners has allowed us to begin the work in early spring. We'll now be able to minimise disruption to the beach in the summer, avoid environmental constraints (including overwintering birds) and deliver a completed scheme that will reduce the flood risk by the autumn.

Environment Minister Thérèse Coffey said:

We are investing £2.6 billion to better protect the country from flooding, including over 1,500 flood defence schemes which will better protect 300,000 homes by 2021. The Isle of Wight scheme is an important step in building our resilience, protecting more than 300 homes and businesses locally and giving people all important peace of mind.

Cabinet member for environment and heritage Councillor John Hobart, said:

Together with our partners, we are making great progress on flood prevention measures for Ryde and we are working alongside the Environment Agency and the Southern Regional Flood and Coastal Committee to reduce the risk of floods in the long term. We are excited to see this work beginning early spring to further strengthen flood measures for the residents of Ryde and surrounding habitat.

The first stage of the project is to build a new outfall pipe from the sea wall in front of the existing pump station across Ryde sands to the marina. This will mean a clear outfall is maintained allowing more water to be

discharged to the sea in heavy rainfall events and a significant reduction in the frequency of river flows overtopping the bank and flooding land and properties in Ryde.

This work will result in the closure of the section of beach from the existing outfall to Ryde Marina. The Environment Agency expects these essential works to be completed in July 2018, allowing it to reopen for the summer holidays. Although the children's play area next to the public toilets will be used as a works compound, it will be replaced at the end of the project.

The second and final stage is the construction of a flood wall around Simeon Street Recreation Ground, Marymead Close and the river boundary of the BT depot. These works are planned to start in June 2018 and be completed by October 2018.

Anyone who would like to find out more about the scheme or ask questions, is welcome to come along to the next Ryde Flood Action Group Meeting which will be held at the Simeon Arms on 13 March at 5:00pm. There will also be an open day later in the spring where the Environment Agency will present a detailed design of the flood wall that constitutes the second stage of the project.

NOTES TO EDITORS

The Monktonmead Brook drains a catchment of approximately 10km² and flows north into the sea via an outfall at Ryde, Isle of Wight. A culvert carries flows the last 170m to the sea wall and a pumping station, after which a 60m long culvert (an underground pipe) carries water to an outfall on the beach. Flows usually drain through gravity. A tidal flap at the sea wall closes against high tides leading to tide locking. High water levels in the Brook trigger operation of the pumps, which lift water over the seawall and into the last 60m of outfall.

As a result of tidal processes, sand has accumulated on the beach surrounding the end of the outfall leading to its regular burial. This sand migrates up the culvert towards the sea wall restricting flow through the outfall. Despite an automatic increase in pumping, the restriction of flows causes water to back up in the Brook, leading to an increase in flood risk to Ryde.

All media enquiries: 0800 141 2743

Please ask for the duty press officer.

[Press release: Environment Agency](#)

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[News story: Threat from Northern Ireland-related terrorism to Great](#)

Britain

The Security Service reduced the threat level to Great Britain from Northern Ireland-related terrorism from substantial to moderate. This means that a terrorist attack is possible, but not likely.

In a written statement to Parliament, the Home Secretary Amber Rudd said:

Despite the change which has been made today, there remains a real and serious threat against the United Kingdom from terrorism and I would ask the public to remain vigilant and to report any suspicious activity to the police regardless of the threat level.

The decision to change this threat level is taken by the Security Service independently of ministers and is based on the very latest intelligence, considering factors such as capability, intent and timescale. Threat levels are kept under constant review.

The threat level to the UK from international terrorism remains at SEVERE, and the threat level to Northern Ireland from Northern Ireland-related terrorism also remains at SEVERE, meaning that an attack is highly likely.

Threat levels are designed to give a broad indication of the likelihood of a terrorist attack. They are a tool for security practitioners working across different sectors and the police to use in determining what protective security response may be required.

They also keep the public informed and give context to the protective security measures encountered every day.

There is more information about terrorism threat levels in the UK on the [MI5 website](#).

Press release: Bereaved families and community will help determine the future of the Grenfell Tower site

The government has today (1 March 2018) reaffirmed its commitment to putting bereaved families and the community at the heart of deciding what happens to the future of the Grenfell Tower site.

A set of [written principles](#), agreed with the community and signed by

government and Kensington and Chelsea council, will guide the way future decisions are made.

The common assumption is that the decision-making process on the future of the site will lead towards agreement on a fitting memorial to remember those who lost their lives.

Kensington and Chelsea council will ensure that work on the future of the site is taken forward alongside work on the improvements to the Lancaster West estate, so that the area becomes a place where the tragedy can be remembered and the local community thrives.

Shahin Sadafi, Chair of Grenfell United, said:

The future of Grenfell Tower site has been a major source of anxiety for the bereaved, survivors and local community not least because it is the final resting place of the loved ones we lost in the fire.

We are pleased that 8 months on from the fire we finally have agreement that the bereaved, survivors and community will be at the heart of deciding the legacy of the site. We hope working together to create a fitting memorial will be part of a healing process for everyone affected.

The government and Kensington and Chelsea council have treated this issue with dignity and respect. We can only hope the government applies the same seriousness to our need for truth and justice at the Inquiry, this includes listening to our requests for changes to ensure a thorough Inquiry.

Our door will always be open for genuine cooperation on substantive issues.

Secretary of State for Housing, Sajid Javid said:

I am pleased that after hearing the concerns raised by the community, the government and Kensington and Chelsea council have confirmed there are no existing plans for the site on which the Tower stands.

I have always been clear that only by first listening to the community can we begin to rebuild their trust. This public commitment is a demonstration of us being true to that word and I am pleased we have been able to agree a way forward.

Councillor Elizabeth Campbell, Leader of Kensington and Chelsea council, said:

Since day one of my leadership I have been clear – the council will listen every step of the way to the survivors, the bereaved, and the wider community and assist in any way it can to ensure that a lasting memorial is put in place.

The principles can be found on [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk).

The principles have been agreed and signed by Sajid Javid MP; Elizabeth Campbell, Leader of Kensington and Chelsea council; Grenfell United on behalf of survivors and bereaved families; and Lancaster West Residents' Association on behalf of local residents and community.

News story: Secondary school places confirmed for thousands of pupils

Pupils across the country will find out today (Thursday 1 March) which secondary school has offered them a place for September, with nine out of ten schools now rated good or outstanding by Ofsted.

[Latest figures](#) show 83.5% of pupils were offered their first choice of secondary school and 94.6% of pupils were offered one of their top three secondary schools last year, which follows the creation of 735,000 new school places since 2010.

School Standards Minister Nick Gibb said:

This morning, thousands of pupils will find out which secondary school they will be going to this September and thanks to our reforms and the hard work of teachers, 1.9 million more children are now going to good or outstanding schools than in 2010.

We are raising standards across the country so that every child can go to a good school where they are taught the knowledge and skills they need for future success and we're investing £5.8 billion to create even more good school places. This builds on the 735,000 places we've created since 2010 – meaning 9 out of 10 pupils get one of their top three choices of schools.

Academic standards are rising following the introduction of more rigorous GCSE and A levels to bring our education system level with the best in the world. Latest performance data shows:

- The attainment gap between disadvantaged secondary school pupils and their peers has narrowed by 3.2% since last year and 10% since 2011;

- More pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds, Special Educational Needs (SEN) pupils and pupils on free school meals are being entered for English Baccalaureate (EBacc) subjects compared to last year, ensuring pupils have the knowledge and skills they need for future success; and
- The number of students entering at least four of the five EBacc subject areas have increased by 4.8% this year – up to 82% in 2017.

The data builds on the government's record of 1.9 million more children now in good or outstanding schools than in 2010, with 9 out of 10 schools awarded this rating at their last inspection. England's pupils are also now amongst the world's best readers.