

Press release: New £63 million defence scheme is turning the tide against floods in Rossall

A multi-million pound coastal defence scheme to shore up Rossall's sea defences while reducing flood risk to 7,500 homes has been officially opened today (1st June 2018). It is one of the single biggest investments in a single coastal flood scheme to date.

Led by Wyre Council, in partnership with the Environment Agency and main contractor Balfour Beatty, the new scheme is made up of two kilometres of sea defences. It forms one of the three projects being delivered by the Fylde Peninsula Coastal Programme Partnership, alongside the recently completed Anchorsholme Coastal Protection Scheme in Blackpool and the Fairhaven to Church Scar Coastal Protection Scheme in Lytham.

Designed for the next 100 years to hold back the Irish Sea during major storms, the Rossall flood defences will provide better protection to the town's tramway, hospital and schools whilst reducing flood risk to 7,500 homes. The scheme comprises of 1.84km of sheet piles, more than 10,000 specially manufactured precast concrete units, 211,000 tonnes of stone, 46,000m³ of insitu concrete and 327,000 tonnes of locally sourced rock from 12 quarries across the north of the UK. The scheme is one of the single biggest investments the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra), has made in a coastal flood scheme to date.

The Environment Agency builds climate change projections into the design of all of its flood defences to make sure they are fit for the future. So, aside from being an impressive piece of infrastructure within its own right, the Rossall scheme is helping in the fight against climate change by taking into account changing circumstances in sea level rise and weather patterns over the next 100 years.

Construction of the scheme has also allowed for improvements to the local environment as part of the new defences. This has included the creation of a new ecology park on the landward side of the defences to enhance the area through its visual impact and environmental footprint.

Known as Larkholme Grasslands, the park has been designed by Lancashire County Council with bridges and artwork by Stephen Broadbent, a British sculptor who specialises in public art. This strip of grassland, from West Way to Fleetwood Golf Club, is already classed as a Biological Heritage Site because of the rarer species of flora and fauna that grow there.

The completion of the scheme delivers on a long-held vision to not only create a lagoon area behind the new defences – to act as an additional flood storage for spray coming over the seawall – but also to provide a home for local wildlife and a new green space for residents and tourists to enjoy.

The park will also feature specially created sculptures by Stephen Broadbent, and, in a nod to the folklore and myth surrounding the local coastline, the new seawall at Rossall continues the story of The Sea Swallow, cementing its place on the Mythic Coast.

Beginning at Cleveleys, visitors to the site can follow an artwork and poetry trail from the popular children's book until the story ends at Rossall Point Observation Tower. Characters from The Sea Swallow, including a giant stainless steel seashell and sea ogre carved from limestone, can also be spotted along the picturesque walk.

Councillor Roger Berry, Neighbourhood Services and Community Safety Portfolio Holder at Wyre Council said:

I'd like to thank all our partners for helping us to deliver the new sea defences. The completed scheme will not only protect our residents, their homes and our businesses and infrastructure, but also has provided us with a visually stunning promenade for walkers and cyclists. Locals and visitors alike will be able to enjoy the magnificent coastline, whilst the grasslands will give a contrasting green and natural landscape.

Sir James Bevan, Environment Agency chief executive, said:

This is one of the biggest investments ever in a coastal flood scheme. It will reduce flood risk to 7,500 homes, create new green space and benefit the local economy, including by using locally sourced materials. It's a great example of partnership: by working together the Environment Agency, Wyre Council, our other partners and the local community have helped create an even better place for people and wildlife.

Defra Minister David Rutley said:

Rossall's new coastal defence scheme has been made possible thanks not only to significant government funding, but also the huge support of local government and other partners. The result is positive news for the community – regenerating the area, creating an ecology park and providing better protection for 7,500 properties from the risk of flooding.

I also welcome the fact these vital defences have been constructed using local materials and expertise, supporting industry and the economy in the North West of England.

Dean Banks, Balfour Beatty Chief Executive Officer for UK Construction Services, said:

We are delighted that the local community and visitors to the Fylde coast can now fully experience the extensive benefits of the Rossall scheme, which will protect thousands of nearby properties from the risk of flooding and offer a captivating promenade for people of all ages to enjoy.

The project's success is a testament to the skills and collaborative working relationship between the fully integrated delivery team, with Wyre Council and the Environment Agency.

Notes to editors

327,000 tonnes of rock is the total of underlayer and main rock armour that make up the scheme. This is made of 86,342T of under layer placed and 241,000T of rock armour.

The Rossall Coastal Protection Scheme has been fully funded through DEFRA grant in aid totalling £63.2m (protecting 7,500 properties).

[Press release: Consultation seeks your views on Alkane Energy environmental permit application](#)

Alkane Energy UK Ltd has applied to the Environment Agency for an Environmental Permit under the Environmental Permitting (England and Wales) Regulations 2016 for a site at Rufford Hills Farm, Off Rufford Lane, Rufford, Nottinghamshire.

As part of this exploration the company plan to carry out the drilling of a borehole to extract gas from old mine shafts.

This is a well-established technique that the company use at several sites in the area, with the gas then converted into electricity.

The Environment Agency is seeking views from the local community and interested groups on the application. The consultation will run until Monday 6 June 2018. The application documents have been placed [online](#) for people to view and provide comments.

A spokesperson for the Environment Agency, said:

We insist that where a permit is required our standards are met and that we have evidence that the process can take place safely. We will thoroughly assess the application to ensure that people and

the environment are protected.

The consultation runs from 31 May 2018 until Midnight of 28 June 2018.

People now have the chance to comment on the proposals by emailing: You can email your response to pscpublicresponse@environment-agency.gov.uk or you can post you response to:

PSC
The Land Team
Quadrant 2
99 Parkway Avenue
Sheffield
S9 4WF

[Press release: Flood risk due to thundery downpours](#)

With further thundery downpours expected today (Thursday) and tomorrow (Friday), the Environment Agency is urging people to check their flood risk – especially if driving or staying in an unfamiliar location over the half term break. Communities in the South West of England are most at risk, including parts of Hampshire, Wiltshire and the West Midlands.

Locally significant surface water flooding impacts are likely from Thursday afternoon and into Friday due to these heavy and slow-moving thunderstorms. There is also risk of flooding from urban rivers and rivers that rise quickly.

The Environment Agency is again warning drivers not to drive through flood water. Driving through floodwater puts the lives of drivers and their passengers on the line, risks the safety of emergency responders, and often causes serious damage to the vehicle, with three-quarters of flood-damaged cars ultimately being written off. The AA rescued more than 14,500 drivers from floods between 2013 and 2017.

Kate Marks, Environment Agency flood duty manager, said:

Further heavy showers and scattered thunderstorms bring a risk of localised surface water and river flooding on Thursday and Friday. The main risk is for the Western counties of England, with urban areas are most likely to see the impacts of any flash flooding.

Throughout this period of unsettled stormy weather, our teams will continue to work 24/7 operating flood defences, clearing blockages

in rivers and streams to ensure they flow freely, and supporting partners responding to any incidents of surface water flooding.

With heavy rain forecast during rush hour, drivers should stay up to date with the latest weather forecast and travel information before making their journey. We remind people not to drive through flood water as just 30cm can move your car. The public can check our active alerts and warnings – which are updated every 15 minutes – online at www.gov.uk/check-flood-risk or by calling 0345 988 1188.

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Press release: Bank holiday blitz nets illegal anglers

A bank holiday weekend blitz to check anglers were fishing legally saw bailiffs net 14 people for offences on rivers and stillwaters across the North East.

A total of 14 anglers out of 389 checked were found to be in breach of rod licence and close season legislation and were reported for it.

Environment Agency Fisheries Enforcement Officers visited 80 waters across the North East from the Borders in the north down to North Yorkshire in the south.

It brings the total number of first time rod licence checks to 650 during May, with 37 offence reports issued.

Kevin Summerson, Environment Agency Fisheries Technical Specialist, said:

Our officers were out in force this weekend patrolling our rivers and stillwaters ensuring people were fishing legally and taking action against those flouting the law.

People who don't buy a licence are not only cheating other anglers and the future of the sport but they are running the risk of a criminal conviction and a fine. There is no excuse.

Intelligence-led patrols

The Environment Agency acts on information received to target their patrols to areas where its suspected illegal fishing is taking place. They work with partners at the police and local angling clubs, supported by the Angling Trust, to gather intelligence.

Just last week, Three men were ordered to pay fines and costs totalling more than £1,300 for poaching with illegal fishing nets in the River Derwent in Gateshead. Kevin added:

We track criminal activity on an intelligence led basis using information gathered by ourselves, partner organisations and reports from the public.

Anyone fishing illegally can expect to be prosecuted and face a fine. I'd urge people to report illegal fishing to us so we can investigate.

All income from rod licence sales is used to fund Environment Agency work to protect and improve fish stocks and fisheries, including improving habitats for fish and facilities for anglers, tackling illegal fishing and working with partners to encourage people to give fishing a go.

Buying a rod licence is quick and easy – they start from just £30 for the year and are free for 13-16 year olds. Under 13s do not need a licence. [You can buy them online](#)

The Environment Agency urges anyone to report illegal fishing by calling 0800 80 70 60