

[Press release: £9.5 million Ulverston flood scheme officially opened by the Environment Agency](#)

More than 500 homes and businesses in Cumbria will be better protected from flooding thanks to a new £9.5 million scheme completed by the Environment Agency.

The Town Beck Flood Alleviation Scheme in Ulverston, Cumbria, will reduce flood risk to more than 400 homes and more than 100 businesses, as well as critical tourism infrastructure. A maze of underground water channels (culverts) under the houses, roads and carparks in the town centre have been repaired and/or replaced using innovative techniques and flood defences have been constructed.

Emma Howard Boyd, Chair of the Environment Agency, officially opened the scheme, and said:

Cumbrian communities know well the devastation that flooding can cause. The Town Beck flood defence will better protect 500 homes and businesses in Ulverston and support England's tourist economy by improving protection for the railway that leads to the Lake District.

To achieve this, the Environment Agency has worked closely with local residents, Network Rail, United Utilities and the Council. It's a brilliant example of how partnership working benefits people, the national economy and the natural environment.

Town Beck lies within a steep catchment and predominantly runs underground through the town centre. The new scheme consists of a number of sections throughout the town centre including raising existing flood defence walls, installing new floodgates, repairing and refurbishing the underground water channels (culverts), and building a swale in the natural flood plain to ensure that there is no increase to flood risk in South Ulverston. A new wildflower meadow has also been created as part of the scheme, boosting biodiversity and improving the local environment.

Much of the scheme is underground, so different construction techniques known as 'trenchless technologies' were used. In some cases Environment Agency contractors installed reinforced plastic sleeves to repair pipes – or worked underground wearing specialist breathing apparatus to spray concrete on the inside of the culvert for extra strength.

While this means some of the work isn't visible, it avoided diverting major services – such as gas, water and electric – and allowed construction without having to dig up the road, avoiding unnecessary disruption to residents while

the scheme was underway.

Alternative repair techniques were also used to speed up the completion of the project and to reduce disruption to the town. The potential option for the construction of a flood storage reservoir was replaced with an additional large pipe which runs through the railway embankment and a drainage channel to connect to the flood plain.

The scheme will provide a significant improvement in the standard of protection for the area, which has been affected by flooding several times in recent years – most recently in 2009 and in 2012.

Led by the Environment Agency, the project received strong support from partner organisations including Cumbria County Council, South Lakeland District Council, Network Rail and United Utilities, who provided more than £1 million of contributions towards the development.

Similarly, close links to Ulverston Town Council and local community groups have been vital to minimising the disruption to the Cumbrian town, which has many small to medium businesses and is heavily reliant on the tourist economy.

Adrian Lythgo, Chair of the North West Regional Flood and Coastal Committee said:

The Town Beck Flood Alleviation Scheme is a great example of how such important work can be completed with little disruption to a town so heavily reliant on the tourist trade.

Often people don't know a river is running beneath their feet or property and could cause such devastating results if flooded. This project has delivered a value for money, quality scheme which I am delighted that the North West Flood and Coastal Committee has supported.

The project was shortlisted for its innovative ways of working at the 2018 ICE North West Civil Engineers Awards.

Open consultation: Environment: developing environmental principles and accountability

We want to know what you think about plans to create a new independent environmental watchdog. What functions and powers should the watchdog have to

oversee environmental law and policy?

We're also seeking views on what environmental principles we should apply in England to guide and shape environmental law and policy making.

[News story: New environment law to deliver a Green Brexit](#)

A new Environmental Principles and Governance Bill will ensure environmental protections will not be weakened as we leave the EU, the government has confirmed.

A [consultation has started today](#) on the contents of the Environmental Principles and Governance Bill, which will establish a world-leading body to hold government to account for environmental outcomes.

The body will support our commitment to be the first generation to leave our environment in a better state than that in which we inherited it. It will provide scrutiny and advice as we protect and enhance our precious landscapes, wildlife and natural assets and would be able to hold government to account on environmental legislation.

Subject to consultation, the new body could specifically be responsible for:

- providing independent scrutiny and advice on existing and future government environmental law and policy;
- responding to complaints about government's delivery of environmental law; and
- holding government to account publicly over its delivery of environmental law and exercising enforcement powers where necessary.

The Government is also consulting on its intention to require ministers to produce – and then have regard to – a statutory and comprehensive policy statement setting out how they will apply core environmental principles as they develop policy and discharge their responsibilities. Currently environmental decisions made in the UK – from improving air and water quality to protecting endangered species – are overseen by the European Commission and underpinned by a number of these principles, such as the precautionary principle, sustainable development and the 'polluter pays' principle.

While these principles are already central to government environmental policy, they are not set out in one place besides the EU treaties. The new Environmental Principles and Governance Bill will ensure governments continue to have regard to important environmental principles through the policy statement, which would be scrutinised by Parliament. The consultation seeks views on whether or not the principles to be contained in the policy

statement should be listed in primary legislation.

Environment Secretary Michael Gove said:

As the Prime Minister has made clear, we will not weaken environmental protections when we leave the EU. A new Environmental Principles and Governance Bill will ensure core environmental principles remain central to government policy and decision-making. This will help us to deliver a Green Brexit and the vision set out in our 25 Year Environment Plan.

But we will only achieve our aims by also creating a strong and objective voice that champions and enforces environmental standards. That's why our Environmental Principles and Governance Bill will also create an independent and statutory watchdog. This will hold governments to account for delivering their commitments to the natural world.

The consultation, which will run for 12 weeks, seeks views on the most effective way for the new body to hold government to account, which would include, as a minimum, the power to issue advisory notices. The consultation asks what further enforcement mechanisms may be necessary.

The Environmental Principles and Governance Bill will be published in draft in the autumn. Public consultation on the environmental principles policy statement will follow in due course. The Bill will be introduced early in the second session of this Parliament, ensuring these measures are introduced in time for the end of the implementation period in December 2020. EU environmental governance structures will continue to apply during the implementation period.

The consultation is concerned with environmental governance in England and reserved matters throughout the UK, for which the UK government has responsibility. However, we are exploring with the devolved administrations whether they wish to take a similar approach. We would welcome the opportunity to co-design proposals with them to ensure they work across the whole UK, taking account of the different government and legal systems in the individual nations.

Background

1. You can respond to our consultation on the [Citizen Space website](#)
 2. Read [‘A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment’](#)
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Press release: Budget 2018 and Industrial Strategy priorities for Wales

Capitalising on the Industrial Strategy and Wales' key priorities for Budget 2018 will top the agenda at a meeting of Welsh business representatives and the UK Government in Wales in Cardiff today (10 May).

Secretary of State for Wales Alun Cairns will welcome members of his Economic Advisory Board to Caspian Point where they will explore how the positive impact of the Industrial Strategy can be maximised in Wales. Discussions will focus particularly on exploring Sector Deals, cross-border growth opportunities, removing barriers to innovation and developing new trade and investment deals to increase exports.

Welsh Secretary Alun Cairns said:

The Industrial Strategy is a vital part of the UK Government's plan to drive growth across the whole of the United Kingdom and create more high-skilled, high paid jobs and opportunities.

New Sector Deals, growth corridors and investment in research and development are set to support the industries of the future where the UK – and Wales in particular – has the potential to lead the world. I'm keen to hear how our key businesses leaders feel Wales can play to its strengths and capitalise on the benefits to be had from embedding the Strategy firmly into our growth plans.

The Economic Advisory Board provides the UK Government with a platform to hear first-hand how businesses in Wales are faring on the ground, to hear their views on how UK Government policy is benefiting them, and what more can be done to support their ambitions for growth.

Today's meeting will also provide the opportunity to share ideas on the measures the Welsh business community would like to see included in the Budget when it is announced by the Chancellor of the Exchequer in the Autumn.

The Secretary of State will share the proposals with the Treasury for consideration in the run up to the fiscal event later this year.

Alun Cairns added:

Since 2010, the UK Government has been implementing robust measures to help rebuild the Welsh economy.

From the commitment to abolish the Severn Crossing tolls to the

City and Growth Deals that span the country, these are firm statements of our intent to boost Wales' prosperity.

But there is still more work to be done. As we look ahead to the Chancellor's Budget, it is important for me to have the opportunity to hear the type of policy proposals business representatives in Wales would like the UK Government to consider to further stimulate our economy.

I will be particularly interested to hear their views on the main barriers to growth and what they feel key infrastructure priorities should be. I will be sharing the outcome of these discussions with the Chancellor of the Exchequer to ensure the voice of the Welsh business community is heard loud and clear in Westminster.

[News story: Finding explosives hidden in electrical items collaboration event](#)

This event will enable the winning suppliers from the competition to showcase their research proposals to end users, government and other organisations. The outcome of this event is to enable future collaboration between organisations to enable these innovative ideas to be developed and integrated into working products. We are interested to understand if you are a company working in this area or whether you would like to hear about exciting new developments in this field.

Finding explosives in electrical items programme

In March 2017, the UK introduced a ban on large electronic devices in the cabin of UK-bound aircraft from certain airports in the Middle East and North Africa. Restrictions like these are of great concern to the aviation industry, and equally to passengers. Stopping passengers from travelling with electrical items can have a huge impact on personal and business activity.

Background to the competition

The [competition](#) is seeking to help the UK Government, Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) and the aviation industry to improve aviation security processes, by staying ahead of evolving threats whilst reducing delays at checkpoint screening. The suppliers which have now been funded as part of the competition process, could provide an alternative to imposing bans on electrical items or implementing additional laborious screening measures.

To register

The event is taking place on Thursday 7 June 2018 in London. If you would like to register your expression of interest to attend, please reply to accelerator@dstl.gov.uk by Thursday 24 May 2018 at 1pm, with the subject title of 'FASS Collaboration day 7 June 2018' stating the following information:

- name of attendee
- organisation
- why you would like to attend

Successful applicants will then be sent a link to register for attendance. Please note that if the event is oversubscribed, we will have to limit the number attending from a single organisation. Joining instructions for the event, including the venue details and agenda will be distributed on Thursday 31 May 2018.