

# [Press release: Flood committee sets out £22million of spending for coming year](#)

A flood and coastal group will oversee spending of almost £22million to protect hundreds of homes across the north east as it sets out its objectives for the next year.

The Northumbria Regional Flood and Coastal Committee (NRFCC) has launched its business plan for 2017/18, which will include continued work at Greatham in Hartlepool, Killingworth in North Tyneside, Hartlepool Headland Coastal Protection Scheme, improvements to the Central Promenade at Whitley Bay, and Monkton Village Flood Alleviation Study in South Tyneside.

It will better protect around 743 properties from flood risk and another 100 from coastal erosion.

It also announced in its 2016/17 annual report that it's overseen 110 projects costing £24.5million over the past year, reducing the risk of flooding and coastal erosion to 1,291 properties.

Projects include Lustrum Beck flood alleviation scheme in partnership with Stockton Borough Council which better protects over 150 properties, and the Brunton Park scheme in partnership with Northumbrian Water and Newcastle City Council, which addressed sewer flooding issues and reduces the risk of flooding from the Ouseburn.

And a dam on the Cotting Burn, the final part of the significant £28million Morpeth flood alleviation scheme which protects 1,000 homes and business in the town, was completed.

The dam has been renamed 'The Hargreaves Dam' in memory of Jon Hargreaves, NRFCC Chairman who sadly passed away last October.

Lustrum Beck: Raised embankment (L) and new flood wall (R)

## **Third year of six-year programme**

The past year has also seen the completion of a £3million repair programme following the devastating floods during Storm Desmond in December 2015.

The annual report and business plan together summarise the past year and look forward to the year ahead.

It is the third year of a six-year programme of work which was agreed in January 2015. The business plan will be updated each year to take into account any adjustments to the £108million, six-year programme, which will better protect a total of 5,300 properties once complete.

Leila Huntington, Flood and Coastal Risk Manager with the Environment Agency in the North East, said:

On completion of our £22million programme of work for the coming year, we will see a reduction in flood and coastal risk to around 843 homes and businesses in the region, as well as creating 30 hectares of new water dependent wildlife habitat.

The committee is a great example of true partnership working, with all local councils, the Environment Agency and Northumbrian Water pulling together on behalf of communities in the north east.

It has an essential role to play in developing and completing flood risk management projects which reflect local priorities and understand the needs of communities.

This is the third year of our six-year programme – so far we have already better protected 2,045 properties, bringing significant benefits to communities, properties, businesses and the environment, and this work will continue.

Brunton Park: Northumbrian Water's Paul Davison (L) and the Environment Agency's Phil Welton (R) at the new River Ouseburn channel.

## **Partnership working**

Most projects in the plan are carried out by the Environment Agency and local authorities, with some carried out by, or in partnership with Northumbrian Water.

Councillor Nick Oliver, Northumberland County Council's NRFCC member, said:

The Morpeth scheme is a great example of agencies working together on a hugely ambitious engineering project and the fact it has already been used more than proves its worth.

One of the cornerstones of the scheme has been the help and support of the local community, and their input and engagement has been absolutely invaluable throughout.

In Northumberland we are only too aware of the devastating effects of flooding and we welcome this latest plan which details continuing investment in schemes to protect communities across the region.

The Brunton Park scheme, which was completed last year, involved creating a new river channel to divert the River Ouseburn and, by using the old channel as a new storage basin, creating a valuable habitat for wildlife. It also involved the construction of flood defences, the installation of two

kilometres of new sewer pipe and a new storage tank.

Richard Warneford, Northumbrian Water Group's Wastewater Director, said:

Tackling flooding and improving the resilience of our sewer network are key priorities for us. We know that being flooded is a truly awful experience for our customers and we work tirelessly to reduce the risk of this happening. By working in partnership with the Environment Agency and local authorities we can tackle flooding from all sources.

The Brunton Park scheme is an excellent example of partnership work. By drawing upon the experience and expertise of all our partners, an innovative and creative solution was agreed that enabled us to manage surface water in the natural environment.

I am extremely proud of our partnership approach which resulted in reducing the risk of flooding to our customers and the community. We will certainly be able to build on the experience of delivering this project for future schemes.

The NRFCC receives funding from a variety of sources, including from Government Grant-in-Aid, public and private contributions and a levy raised through local authorities.

The committee consists of elected and independent members and plays an important part in deciding local priorities for the flood and coastal risk management programme in North East England.

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## [Press release: Happy Dace for north east fish surveys](#)

The Environment Agency has joined forces with expert anglers to carry out an important survey to assess the numbers of a highly prized fish in Northumberland.

Surveys for Dace, the main species of coarse fish in the River Tyne, much valued by anglers, took place downstream of Kielder reservoir as part of a wider programme to monitor any impact of the current trial of changes in the release of water from the reservoir.

Environment Agency specialists teamed up with 15 expert anglers from the Tyne Anglers Alliance and other fishing clubs to fish around a dozen locations on the North Tyne between Kielder and Watersmeet.

The aim was to both update and enhance our existing information on Dace populations.



One of the Dace surveyed during the event

## **Successful survey**

Environment Agency Fisheries Officer Niall Cook, who organised the survey, said:

Angling was used in the survey in preference to other survey methods like electric fishing and netting because dace are highly mobile and difficult to catch, especially in wide rivers like the North Tyne.

The angling survey itself was really successful in that it showed dace to be present throughout the river system and in areas where they had not been recorded for many years, such as Falstone. We are hoping to repeat the exercise over several years or more to build up a more detailed picture.

The Environment Agency, Northumbrian Water and the hydropower operator, Innogy Renewables UK Ltd have been working together to make changes to the operating arrangements for the release of water from Kielder reservoir.

The trial started in November last year and is intended to maintain the future of water supply to the North East, better reflect the natural changes

in river flows, provide increased flood storage in the reservoir and increase the generation of clean, renewable energy.

The rainfall over the winter trial period was low and large flood alleviation releases were not required, so the initial results were inconclusive.

As a result the trial has been extended through the summer and will be continually reviewed.



An angler taking part in the Dace survey

## **More natural flow variation**

Hydrologist Rachel Merrix, who is leading on the trial for the Environment Agency, said:

We were keen to use this opportunity to change the releases from Kielder to try to make them reflect a more natural flow variation. While the changes are relatively minor we believe that monitoring is essential to ensure the environment is protected.

We have worked hard with our partners to listen to the views of both reservoir and river users, including holding a public drop-in last October ahead of the trial, and producing a freely available interim report.

We welcome feedback from anyone who uses the river or reservoir and are keen to hear how others feel the trial is going. We

continuously monitor river levels, flows and water temperatures at several locations in the Tyne catchment and all of this data is available on request.

Other activities to monitor the impact of the new Kielder release regime include temperature monitoring at 11 new sites as well as fishing surveys and freshwater pearl mussel assessments.

For more information and updates on the trial visit [the dedicated Kielder release website](#) or email [Kielder.reservoir@environment-agency.gov.uk](mailto:Kielder.reservoir@environment-agency.gov.uk) with any queries or observations.

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## Press release: Driver advice as clubbers head for Creamfields

Highways England is advising drivers traffic is likely to be busy around the M56 and M6 over the forthcoming late summer bank holiday weekend with up to 60,000 dance music lovers heading to the annual Creamfields festival in Cheshire.

Creamfields 2017 features 4 days of events – running between 2pm on Thursday 24 August through to 11pm on Sunday 27 August.

Chris Chadwick, Highways England's Events Planning Manager, said:

We will be doing all we can to manage traffic around the event and keep drivers on the move – festival goers and other drivers can help themselves by planning their journeys and keeping themselves up to date with traffic information.

We would like to remind everyone that the motorway is no place for pedestrians. It is dangerous and illegal to walk along the motorway, and having pedestrians on the network can cause delays for legitimate motorway users.

Drivers wanting to pick people up should use the dedicated collection points off the motorway network which will be clearly signed.

Anyone thinking of driving to the annual bank holiday festival is advised to plan their journey and leave plenty of time to get to the festival site on Daresbury Estate near Runcorn, just off junction 11 of the M56.

Extra police and Highways England traffic officers will be deployed around junction 11 of the M56 at Daresbury to deter festival goers from walking on the motorway – an issue in previous festivals particularly at the end of the event.

Car parks to the site will open at noon on the Thursday and close at 2pm on Bank Holiday Monday (29 August).

This year, with Mersey Gateway continuing, drivers are being advised not to use the M62 to get to the event. Event-goers will be directed to use junction 11 of the M56.

Highways England traffic officers at the North West regional control centre at Newton-le-Willows will use their electronic motorway signs across the local network to guide festival goers to the site and give information on any

incidents or congestion.

Meanwhile, other road users are being advised that the M56 around junctions 10, 11 and 12 around Runcorn is likely to be busy at key times of the weekend. The M56 interchange with the M6 is also likely to experience higher volumes of traffic. Electronic signs along the M6, M56 and M62 are being used to give advance warning about the event.

Highways England is advising motorway users to check the latest travel information before setting out as well as listening for radio traffic alerts and heeding electronic signs once they are on the move.

Drivers can get up-to-the-minute traffic information by calling Highways England's customer contact centre on 0300 123 5000 or by checking the Highways England website.

Live information on incidents or congestion will also be available from dedicated feeds from Twitter with the M56 and M6 routes covered by @HighwaysNWEST.

Dedicated travel information for those attending the event is available [at the Creamfields website](#).

### **General enquiries**

Members of the public should contact the Highways England customer contact centre on 0300 123 5000.

### **Media enquiries**

Journalists should contact the Highways England press office on 0844 693 1448 and use the menu to speak to the most appropriate press officer.

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## **[Press release: Highways England appoints interim Major Projects Director](#)**

Highways England has today (Monday 21 August) announced the appointment of Peter Mumford as Exec Director to lead major projects until a permanent successor is appointed.

Peter is a senior director with a breadth of experience across all aspects of professional technical and management services, including the leadership of significant programme management teams and major project teams across global locations.

He joins the Highways England Executive team from HKA (formally Hill International) where he was Vice President. Prior to that Peter held senior positions within a number of construction industry related organisations including, Aecom, EC Harris LLP and Turner & Townsend.

The appointment of Peter will allow for a seamless transition of the major projects directorate without any impact on our ability to deliver the government's £15bn road investment strategy.

Highways England Chief Executive Jim O'Sullivan said:

I am really pleased to have Peter join the executive team. It is important that we continue to have the right mix of individuals to lead the company as we deliver the challenging target we have been set by government.

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