

Press release: Flood risk reduced and wildlife brimming over on the Ribble

A new scheme that will improve flood protection, boost wildlife habitats and create 160 hectares of new saltmarsh, was opened today (Thursday 21st September).

The new reserve not only creates new saltmarsh habitat but strengthens sea defences. The £6 million scheme at Hesketh, in Lancashire, is a partnership project between the RSPB, Natural England and the Environment Agency.

The RSPB's Hesketh Out Marsh Reserve and Natural England's Ribble Estuary National Nature Reserve (NNR) are a real world demonstration of the newly-launched joint strategy for NNRs. The Environment Agency has breached the banks at Hesketh Out Marsh East. This important work has been made possible by:

- almost £2 million funding from Landfill Communities Fund monies from FCC Environment through [WREN](#)
- £3.7 million government funding to reduce flood risk

Environment Minister Thérèse Coffey said:

Hesketh is an inspiring project, creating fantastic new habitats for wildlife and providing increased flood protection for hundreds of people living around the Ribble Estuary.

This £6 million scheme shows how embracing new ideas and working with partners can create tremendous benefits for the environment.

Natural England's Chairman, Andrew Sells, said:

England's National Nature Reserves are the most special places for nature, which also help improve the wellbeing of people making more than 17 million visits every year. Uniting these two reserves on the Ribble will create wonderful new habitat, reduce the risk of flooding and enhance the area's appeal to wildlife.

It is also an extremely symbolic moment, demonstrating how conservation will work in the future. Bringing together a number of important organisations and the local community, with the aim of providing a far greater home for nature, is at the heart of the new Joint NNR strategy. It will enable us all to deliver more public benefits, such as improved health and wellbeing, and allow wildlife to spill over and enrich the surrounding countryside.

On completion, the full RSPB Hesketh Out Marsh Reserve will include 340 hectares of saltmarsh, making it the largest site of its kind in the north of England. Natural England will designate the reserve as part of the existing Ribble Estuary NNR later in 2017. The RSPB and Natural England will then jointly manage both sites as effectively one large reserve. Ribble Estuary NNR is already England's third largest National Nature Reserve.

Robin Horner, RSPB Area Manager said:

We're delighted to be celebrating this partnership work and all that has been achieved through this project. These improved coastal defences, fronted by saltmarsh, deliver much needed local climate change adaptation and provide invaluable new wildlife habitat close to Britain's most important single river estuary for birds.

Work at Hesketh Outmarsh East has involved strengthening and raising the height of 2km of flood banks. This has reduced the flood risk to more than 140 properties and 300 hectares of prime farmland nearby. This is known as 'managed realignment', and is one of the largest schemes of its kind in the UK.

Emma Howard Boyd, Chair of the Environment Agency, said:

Hesketh is a win, win scenario – a fantastic scheme which not only works with nature to reduce flood risk but also brings benefits to the wider environment and local communities. Through partnership working we can achieve more and Hesketh proves that.

National Statistics: Household Energy Efficiency National Statistics, headline release September 2017

This release includes measures installed under the Energy Company Obligation (ECO) and the Green Deal schemes. It also includes further analysis and geographical breakdowns of ECO measures, ECO delivery costs, estimated carbon and energy savings from measures installed and the supply chain. These statistics are provisional and are subject to future revisions.

News story: 200 people attend NDA's first stakeholder summit in west Cumbria

Updated: Added link to the YouTube playlist of videos from the 2-day event

It was the first opportunity for the NDA's recently appointed Chief Executive Officer David Peattie and Chairman Tom Smith to meet collectively with a wide range of individuals, including representatives from all communities hosting the 17 NDA sites.

David Peattie said:

Maintaining strong relationships with our stakeholders is vitally important to the NDA and to me personally.

I am committed to meeting and listening to as many people as possible from the communities around our sites, and those further afield who have a real and genuine interest in our mission to decommission and clean up the UK's nuclear sites.



David Peattie, NDA CEO

The event aimed at encouraging discussion about the NDA's work, including how it manages the radioactive waste held on its sites. In 'The Big Waste Debate', UK and international nuclear industry experts shared views alongside renowned academics, authors and critics of the industry.

An exhibition and workshops were set up for local community groups, including charities and small businesses, to share ideas and highlight the achievement of enterprises that had received funding from the NDA's socio-economic budget.

The second day was devoted to discussing support for socio-economic initiatives, which is part of the NDA's mission to decommission and clean up the UK's civil nuclear legacy. NDA representatives explained how it was committed to using all resources available, including financial support, to ensure a positive lasting impact in the communities where it operates.

The NDA's Head of Stakeholder Relations, Bill Hamilton, said:

I'm delighted about how well the event has gone and about the open, honest and constructive dialogue that's happened over the last 2 days.

Our stakeholders come from as far afield as the north of Scotland, Ireland, Austria, the Isle of Man and the south east of England. To get them all together in one place to discuss our decommissioning mission in this way is a first and has been extremely valuable for the NDA.

[Watch videos from the NDA Stakeholder Summit 2017: YouTube Playlist](#)

[View photos from the NDA Stakeholder Summit](#)

[Highlights from NDA Stakeholder Summit 18-19 September 2017](#)

Research and analysis: Improved spatial data on activity distribution and intensity

The MMO, as marine regulators and planners, must consider the location and intensity of many marine activities in decision making within the MMO's remit.

The MMO already has access to diverse activity data such as that presented in [Marine Information System](#) or generated through internal processes including

marine licensing, but would benefit from continued improvement of the best available evidence, including up to date, reliable and standardised spatial data on the distribution and intensity of activities that may impact the marine environment individually or in combination.

The diversity of marine activities are described in the [UK Marine Policy Statement](#). Of particular interest is information on the following sectors: tourism and recreation, cable routes and landfalls (particularly disused) and fishing activity from vessels less than 15m in length. The MMO is also interested in new or emerging activities.

Research and analysis: Acclimation of birds to disturbance from marine activities

Requirement R071

Requirement detail

Human use of the marine environment exerts a range of pressures on marine species including disturbance from noise or physical activity. Disturbance results include stress responses, flight, and changes in foraging for example. Such responses can directly or indirectly reduce the fitness of individuals and health of the population. To manage these potential negative impacts, disturbance impacts are considered in decision making.

However, there are increasing stakeholder observations and reports that bird species become, at least partially, acclimated to disturbance from some marine activities. If acclimatisation occurs, this may change the threshold at which disturbance impacts become significant and thus is of relevance to marine decision making.

The MMO seek evidence on whether, or to what extent, acclimatisation occurs, whether acclimation is species dependant and the conditions under which acclimation occurs such as in interaction with other pressures.