Press release: Tidal flood barrier gate arrives in Ipswich

A 200 tonne tidal gate has arrived in Suffolk, ready to be installed at Ipswich's new flood barrier.

The delivery of the gate from its manufacturing site in Rotterdam, Holland, is a significant step towards the completion of the Environment Agency's £70 million project.

The work was carried out by Hollandia, a sub-contractor for Environment Agency contractor VBA – a joint venture between VolkerStevin, Boskalis Westminster and Atkins.

It took 2 years to design and build the gate and 24 hours for it to be transported across the North Sea, finally passing under the Orwell Bridge and entering Ipswich early on the morning of Friday 27 October.

The gate is 22 metres wide and will stand 9 metres tall when in its "closed position". It is finished with 5 tonnes of special paint that will help protect it, as it spends most of its life under water.

Special crane will be used to install 200 tonne gate

The gate is currently on a barge in the Port of Ipswich, while a crane big enough to lift it into place is delivered to site and constructed.

The 1,000 tonne crane will be assembled on the construction site on the middle island of the Port of Ipswich.

Once the crane is complete, the gate will be installed into the barrier structure in the upright position, which is its "maintenance position".

The main hydraulic rams and control systems can then be installed and there will be a testing period of a further 8 weeks.

Andrew Usborne, Project Manager, said:

> This is a key milestone for the project and sees the final elements of the barrier arriving on site.
>
> The construction of the crane will take several days, and this is a very busy period for what has been a long-running project.
>
> It's another step closer to significantly improving the flood protection for Ipswich.

The Ipswich Flood Defence Management Strategy (IFDMS) will increase the

standard of protection to 0.33% (greater than 1 in 200) and takes into account current climate change predictions. The 0.33% relates to the probability of a combined fluvial and tidal flood event happening in any one year.

The final element of the scheme involves building a tidal barrier across the New Cut River in Ipswich, with associated works to tie it into the new east and west bank walls and gates. The barrier is expected to be operational in the spring of 2018.

The flood defence scheme, which will reduce the risk of flooding to 1,608 homes and 422 businesses and support key infrastructure, has been partnership funded by: the Environment Agency, Ipswich Borough Council, Department for Communities and Local Government, the Haven Gateway Partnership, and the New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership.

News story: Multi-Agency Flood Plan (MAFP) Review: Terms of Reference

The Environment Secretary, Michael Gove, has made a Written Ministerial Statement in parliament announcing that Defra and the Environment Agency (EA) will be undertaking a review of multi-agency flood plans produced by local resilience forums (LRFs).

These plans are used by local responders (including the emergency services, local authorities, local NHS and others) to coordinate their response to flood incidents.

The MAFP Review is part of the government's ongoing work to address flood risk. We are investing £2.5 billion to better protect the country from flooding: this includes over 1,500 flood defence schemes, which will better protect more than 300,000 properties by 2021. As we approach winter, we have improved our capability to deploy military assistance and invested in our ability to respond to flooding: the Environment Agency now has 25 miles of temporary barriers and we have 1,200 military troops trained to assist in flood response.

Terms of Reference – Multi-Agency Flood Plan (MAFP) Review

The MAFP Review is a Defra and Environment Agency review initiated by the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs.

The review will be led and overseen by an independent external reviewer, Major General Tim Cross CBE (retired). General Cross will be supported by a

steering group of external experts in resilience and emergency planning, including from LRFs.

The review will address the question, 'Do LRFs have robust plans in place to respond to flooding incidents in their respective areas?' It will have three workstreams:

- Workstream 1: Assessment of current MAFPs. This will be taken forward by the EA. It will involve the assessment of around 30 strategic flood plans and over 600 tactical flood plans related to specific districts and communities.

- Workstream 2: A qualitative review led by the external reviewer, supported by Defra and the EA. This will involve visiting LRFs, identifying good practice, identifying issues and obstacles, and forming views and recommendations on the way forward including criteria for new guidance.

- Workstream 3: Revision of Defra guidance to LRFs on how to produce good MAFPs, taking into account lessons learnt and experience since 2011 when the guidance was last reviewed. This will be undertaken by Defra and the EA, overseen by the external reviewer.

The review is due to be completed by the end of May 2018, culminating in the publication of revised guidance and a report of findings.

The external reviewer will be supported throughout by Defra and Environment Agency staff. It is envisaged that the external reviewer's focus would be primarily on workstreams 2 and 3.

Press release: Calstock residents urged to have say on flood alleviation plan

The Environment Agency is holding a public drop-in session at Calstock next week to explain how potential works could reduce flood risk to local homes and businesses, and benefit the environment.

The Environment Agency is keen to learn from local people who are invited to attend to share their views to help shape our proposals.

Dan Boswell of the Environment Agency said:

> The existing flood defence embankment in Calstock protects property and community assets but is in poor condition and unsustainable in its current position. By moving it inland it can be maintained to a better standard to increase its effectiveness at reducing flood risk and allow the creation of inter-tidal habitat to help offset the impacts of rising sea levels on wildlife.
>
> Local knowledge and experience about the flood risk from the residents of Calstock is important to help us design a scheme that people who live and work in the community support to shape the future management of flood risk in their community.

The Environment Agency is seeking to work with local partners to ensure its work delivers as many benefits as possible to the community. This includes:

- managing flood risk to the community, and the impacts of climate change
- protecting the environment and visual landscape of Calstock and the Tamar Valley as an important recreational amenity
- enhancing the environment by attracting additional wildlife to the improved local habitat on land reconnected to the river

The drop-in session for people to learn more and share ideas will take place in the Kelly Room of Calstock Arts on Wednesday 8 November 2017, from 3pm to 8pm.

Press release: Plymouth fly-tipper banned from waste collection business

A fly-tipper who dumped household waste in the Devon countryside has been banned from working in the waste industry for 2 years. John McDonagh has also been ordered to carry out 100 hours unpaid work and pay £500 costs. The case was brought by the Environment Agency.

McDonagh, of Victoria Road, Plymouth, cold-called a householder offering to remove waste for cash. Instead of disposing of it properly, he fly-tipped it in the surrounding countryside.

The defendant was caught after he removed some old window frames and builders rubbish from a garden in Shaldon Crescent, Plymouth in November 2016. The owner agreed to pay him £50 upfront followed by another £50 when he returned from the tip with a receipt. McDonagh loaded the waste into his Ford Transit van and told the householder he would return for the rest of the waste.

However, he never returned and dumped the waste in Beara Lane near Marley Head, South Brent. It was later discovered by a man who found the access to

his field blocked by 2 one-tonne dumpy bags of builders' waste. One of the bags contained a delivery note from a bathroom company with a customer's name and address on it.

The man reported the fly-tipping to South Hams District Council and handed over the invoice to the council. The householder who had been duped by McDonagh said he felt 'disgusted' and 'ashamed' when told his waste had been fly-tipped.

Adrian Evans of the Environment Agency said:

> Householders have a responsibility to ensure their waste is disposed of correctly and doesn't end up fly-tipped. If anyone offers to dispose of your waste in return for payment, make sure they are a registered waste carrier and don't forget to ask for a receipt. If in doubt, don't hand over your waste.

Appearing before Plymouth magistrates, John McDonagh pleaded guilty to depositing controlled waste contrary to Section 33(1)(a) and 33(6) of the Environmental Protection Act 1990. He also admitted an offence under section 1 of the Fraud Act 2006 of dishonestly misleading a person into thinking their waste was being transported to a licenced tip for disposal.

In addition to being ordered to carry out unpaid work and pay £500 costs, McDonagh was made the subject of a 2-year Criminal Behaviour Order prohibiting him from being involved in any business involving the collection, transport or disposal of controlled waste. He is also banned for offering building or home maintenance services.

Press release: Natural flood management – part of the nation's flood resilience

The Environment Agency has today (31 October) published data, case studies and evidence about the role of natural flood management in reducing flood risk. Working with natural processes to reduce flood risk is not a new concept but this is the first time that all the evidence has been brought together, with the intention of enabling more uptake.

'The evidence behind natural flood management' contains more than 60 case studies from across England and explores how successful the approach is, how it could be used elsewhere and what research may still be needed.

Natural flood management is when natural processes are used to reduce the risk of flooding and coastal erosion. Examples include: restoring bends in rivers, changing the way land is managed so soil can absorb more water and creating saltmarshes on the coast to absorb wave energy.

At Hesketh, on the Lancashire coast, a ‘managed realignment’ scheme has created more than 300 hectares of saltmarsh which protects 143 residential properties, 3 commercial buildings and 300 hectares of farm land. Coastal schemes such as this not only dissipate wave and tidal energy but can also reduce impact on defences, reduce tidal surges and lead to slightly lower water levels at defences.

The study includes a project in Debenham, Suffolk, where modelling has shown that installing a range of natural flood management features along the River Deben could provide more than 30,000 m3 of water storage – thereby reducing annual average damages to properties and farmland by 31%.

On Lustrum Beck, in Stockton-on-Tees, modelling showed that providing 100,000 m3 of storage in the upstream catchment, using wetlands, features to reduce run-off and river restoration, could reduce flows by more than 10%.

John Curtin, Executive Director of Flood & Coastal Risk Management at the Environment Agency, said:

> I often think improving flood resilience is like a mosaic, many different pieces need to come together to complete the resilience picture. Natural flood management is an important part of that mosaic when used alongside more traditional engineering. These projects also provide fantastic opportunities for community involvement and leadership.
>
> Many of our flood schemes already feature a mixture of hard and soft engineering and natural flood management. It can be a cost-effective and sustainable way to manage flood risk alongside traditional engineering, while creating habitat for wildlife and helping regenerate rural and urban areas through tourism.

Natural flood management works best when a ‘catchment based approach’ is taken, where a plan is developed to manage the flow of water along the whole length of a river catchment from its source to sea. This way, natural processes can be used upstream and on the coast to compliment engineered flood defences – such as walls and weirs – in populated areas.

Natural flood management not only reduces flood risk it can also achieve multiple benefits for people and wildlife, helping restore habitats, improve water quality and helping make catchments more resilient to the impacts of climate change.

The Environment Agency hopes that the evidence directory will help flood risk managers, local authority engineers, non-governmental organisations and community flood action groups to incorporate natural approaches to flood risk

management in to their plans to reduce flood risk.

Earlier this year the government announced a further £15m for natural flood management schemes across England.

‘The evidence behind natural flood management’ was launched at the CIWEM (Chartered Institution of Water and Environmental Management) Conference in London.