

News story: Environment Secretary backs release of Beavers in Forest of Dean

Beavers are set to be released in the Forest of Dean in plans confirmed by the Environment Secretary and the [Forestry Commission](#) today.

The project will see two adult beavers and two kits released into a 6.5 hectare secure enclosure to help improve biodiversity and build dams and ponds from next year.

This could be the first of many such schemes. [Government guidance](#) published today sets out a new [framework](#) for assessing applications for further trial releases across England.

Environment Secretary Michael Gove said:

The beaver has a special place in English heritage and the Forest of Dean proposal is a fantastic opportunity to help bring this iconic species back to the countryside 400 years after it was driven to extinction. The community of Lydbrook has shown tremendous support for this proposal and the beavers are widely believed to be a welcome addition to local wildlife.

The project is an example of the wider approach we are taking to enhance biodiversity, become the first generation to leave the environment in a better state for future generations and deliver on our plans for a Green Brexit.

Scientists believe the beavers may be able to hold back enough water to help with flood alleviation for Lydbrook by quickly constructing natural dam structures and creating new habitat.

The Environment Secretary will visit a similar scheme run by the Devon Wildlife Trust in December where he will see first-hand the new dams, pools and other dramatic changes that have resulted from releasing two beavers on a 200 metre stretch of waterway in North Devon.

Kevin Stannard, Forestry Commission Deputy Surveyor for the Forest of Dean, said:

Our proposal to introduce captive beaver in to the Forest of Dean has strong backing from the local community and we are developing the project with the fantastic support from Environment Secretary Michael Gove.

We will continue our detailed planning including designing a robust fence to keep the beaver enclosed; securing healthy, disease-free beaver and collecting data from the monitoring of the water flow in the brook. We will continue to give updates as the project develops.

The proposal put forward by the Forestry Commission and approved by ministers has been granted full licence approval by [Natural England \(NE\)](#). This assessment has been key to ensuring the enclosure will be secure and NE will consider further applications for possible trial releases on a case by case basis, in line with the new guidance published today.

All the beavers will be fully tested for disease before they are released and a management plan will be put in place to make sure the enclosure remains secure. The Forestry Commission will also closely monitor the ecology and hydrology of the scheme throughout the trial which will help to understand the longer-term impacts and benefits to the local environment.

The project is being financed by the Forestry Commission as part of its normal operation activities supported by Forest Holidays.

Timeline of events:

- Beavers were driven from England 400 years ago
- They were reintroduced in Devon in 2015 for trial
- The FC sought SoS approval for further trial in Forest of Dean, this was granted on 22nd September
- The FC submitted an application to Natural England on 23rd October
- The beavers will be released in spring 2018

Notice: HU15 2PG, Advantage Biogas Limited: environmental permit issued

The Environment Agency publish permits that they issue under the Industrial Emissions Directive (IED).

This decision includes the permit and decision document for:

- Operator name: Advantage Biogas Limited
 - Installation name: Brocklesby Biogas AD Facility
 - Permit number: EPR/JP3435DN/A001
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Press release: Environment Agency announces £1.4m Anglian Waterways investment

Boaters are to benefit from a £1.4m investment into [Anglian Waterways](#), as the [Environment Agency](#) launches its latest improvement programme.

The Capital Investment Programme sets out the repairs and upgrades being made across Anglian Waterways' 353-mile network.

Seven-figure investment

Eight locks across its most popular rivers are set for refurbishment. The seven-figure investment will ensure the structures remain in good working order for years to come.

The work covers locks at Wadenhoe, Woodford, Titchmarsh, Orton, Cotterstock, and Ashton on the [River Nene](#), and Eaton Socon and Brandon on the [River Great Ouse](#).

These are among the busiest locks on the Anglian Waterways network, giving access to around 7,000 boaters a year.

Work started in November and continues throughout the winter months, avoiding the peak boating season to minimise disruption for those on the river.

Sign up for latest updates

The locks will have to close during the work to be drained of water and allow full access to the chambers and the gates. Boaters can get the latest information by [signing up for email updates](#) or calling the Environment Agency on 03708 506 506 and asking for Anglian Waterways.

The investment programme will also include de-shoaling work on the rivers Great Ouse and Nene. This will remove underwater gravel that builds up naturally and can hamper navigation.

Also included are investigations into improving the Nene's landing stages, where boaters can disembark, and upgrading control panels at the locks to the same model, making them consistent and easier to use and maintain across the region.

Neil Pope, Anglian Waterways assets team leader at the Environment Agency, said:

Our precious waterways are an important part of our nation's rich heritage and beauty. They are a national treasure, valued for their

contribution to our environment, our health and wellbeing, and our economy. We're proud to play a part in caring for them, and we take that responsibility very seriously.

Maintaining them to a good, safe working standard is our number-one priority. We invest money very carefully to ensure the best value for every pound we spend. This means our waterways will continue to offer outstanding value to the many, many people who enjoy them every year.

The Environment Agency cares for more than 353 miles of navigable waterways in the Anglian region, as well as a vast network of associated facilities such as bridges, locks, moorings and toilets.

The two most popular rivers in this network – the Great Ouse and the Nene – attract more than 7,000 boaters and an estimated 1.1m other visitors every year.

Capital Investment Programme

The work in the agency's investment programme is subject to change. The current schedule (7 December 2017) is:

- Wadenhoe Lock, River Nene, Northamptonshire: 3 January 2018 to 12 February 2018. Complete refurbishment.
 - Woodford Lock, River Nene, Northamptonshire: 27 November 2017 to 22 December 2017 and 22 January 2018 to 23 February 2018. Complete refurbishment.
 - Titchmarsh Lock, River Nene, Northamptonshire: 3 January 2018 to 16 March 2018. Complete refurbishment.
 - Cotterstock Lock, River Nene, Northamptonshire: 22 January 2018 to 16 February 2018. Replacement of counterweight.
 - Ashton Lock, River Nene, Northamptonshire: 16 February 2018 to 28 March 2018. Refurbishment of guillotine gate.
 - Orton Lock, River Nene, Cambridgeshire: Dates to be confirmed. Re-painting.
 - Landing stages, River Nene: November 2017 to April 2018. Investigate the possibility of additional landing stages along the Nene and repair existing ones.
 - De-shoaling, River Nene: Dates to be confirmed. Remove gravel impacting navigation.
 - Eaton Socon, River Great Ouse, Cambridgeshire: February 2018. Replace sweep arms on the mitre gates.
 - Brandon Lock, River Great Ouse, Suffolk: March 2018. Repair footbridge walkway.
 - De-shoaling, River Great Ouse: Dates to be confirmed. Remove gravel impacting navigation.
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Collection: Non-domestic rating: challenges and changes

Updated: “Non-domestic rating: challenges and changes, 2017 and 2010 rating lists, June 2018 (experimental)” added to collection

Statistics on:

- number of checks and challenges made by taxpayers (or their representatives) against the 2017 local rating lists for England
- number of non-CCA challenges made by taxpayers (or their representatives) against the 2005 and 2010 local rating lists for England and Wales and the 2017 local rating lists for Wales
- number of reviews of rating assessments that have either been initiated by the VOA or a billing authority when new information becomes available

Ratepayers may appeal to the independent Valuation Tribunal for England (VTE) if they're not satisfied with VOA's decision. The VTE publish their own [statistics on appeals](#).

Previous releases

For information on statistics from 2009 to 2014, please see the [previous releases page](#).

Contact us

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Policy paper: Advanced Nuclear Technologies

Updated: Updated to reflect publication of the independent report by the Expert Finance Working Group on Small Reactors.

The advanced nuclear sector has the potential to play an important part in the [UK's Industrial Strategy](#) building on our existing economic strengths and

competitive advantages in nuclear whilst shaping new advanced nuclear markets and contributing to tackling the [Clean Growth Grand Challenge](#).