

Multi-million pound Stokesley flood scheme is complete

Over £3.7million has been spent boosting defences in Stokesley with the aim of managing the impacts of climate change and the flow of the River Leven through and around the town.

Work on the new defences has included:

- The construction of a new upstream flow control structure. When water levels in the River Leven are high, the upstream structure will automatically divert flows down the flood diversion channel around Stokesley. The new structure will also provide significantly improved fish passage and allows greater flows down the Leven into Stokesley, under normal water conditions, improving the River Leven's health.
- A re-profiled flood diversion channel which is easier to maintain and has greater capacity to contain the flow of flood water, which is diverted from the Leven by the upstream flow control structure.
- The construction of a new downstream flow control structure. The new structure has side hung doors which close during high flows, stopping the Eller Beck flowing back up the Leven into Stokesley.
- River restoration on the Levenside, delivered in collaboration with the Tees Rivers Trust. The works here include the installation of a new fish pass and deflectors to create different flow speeds and a more naturalised river.

The Environment Agency appointed Mott MacDonald and BAM Nuttall in a joint venture to design and build the scheme with construction starting in autumn 2020 and work completing in August 2022. The scheme was officially opened on Friday 23rd September by Rishi Sunak, MP for Richmond alongside representatives from the Environment Agency and Tees Rivers Trust.

Stokesley Flood Alleviation Scheme

Residents 'will be reassured'

Rishi Sunak, MP for Richmond (North Yorkshire), said:

Many Stokesley residents and business will be reassured by this work which maintains and improves flood protection – saving many people from the heartache of dealing with the devastating impact flooding can have.

The environmental improvements are a welcome additional bonus. Levenside is a beautiful part of the town and this work only enhances its attraction. I'd also like to thank the many volunteers who helped with the river works.

Jamie Fletcher, the Environment Agency's Flood Risk Operations Manager for the North East, said:

The community of Stokesley have seen first-hand how devastating flooding can be. That's why I'm so pleased to see the completion of these vital defences ahead of winter.

This new £3.7 million investment will better protect 509 homes and businesses, giving peace of mind to residents for many years to come, while also bringing benefits for wildlife in the wider area. It is also a great example of how we work with partners to make communities more resilient to the escalating impacts of the climate emergency.

River 'is a great asset for the town'

Ben Lamb, CEO at the Tees Rivers Trust said:

The Trust have been working in and around the Leven Catchment for 12 years and have talked with Stokesley residents and interest groups about improving the river through the town on many occasions. Therefore, it has been a great opportunity to finally get in and give the river some TLC and make some improvements to flow, habitat and fish passage.

We had an enormous amount of help from volunteers who tirelessly shifted over 50 tons of gravel into the new meander area in town and enjoyed being treated to coffee and chips from neighbouring businesses in the heat! The river is a great asset for the town, and we are getting regular reports of wildlife in and around the river since we completed the work.

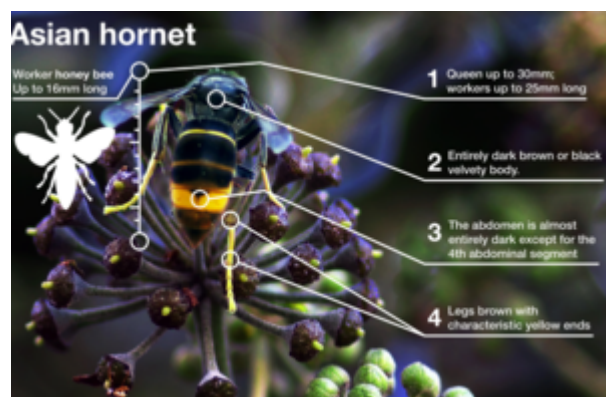
The Stokesley scheme is just one of many across the North East that better protects properties and businesses as part of a £132million six year investment programme to create or improve flood and coastal defences in the region.

Last year's record government investment announcement of £5.2 billion to better protect 336,000 properties across England by 2027 includes a further £193million investment in North East defences.

Asian hornets identified in Essex

Press release

Public asked to be vigilant after sightings of Asian hornets, an invasive species which are harmful to native wasps and hornets, are confirmed in Essex



Credit: Defra

Beekeepers and members of the public are today (Wednesday 28 September) being asked to remain vigilant after Asian hornets were spotted in the Rayleigh area of Essex.

The National Bee Unit has confirmed the sighting and monitoring is underway to detect further Asian hornets in the vicinity.

The Asian hornet is smaller than our native hornet and poses no greater risk to human health than our native wasps and hornets. However, they do pose a risk to honey bees and work is already underway to monitor for any hornet activity and to identify any nests nearby.

This is the first confirmed UK sighting since April 2022, when a single Asian hornet was captured in Felixstowe, Suffolk.

Defra's Chief Plant and Bee Health Officer Nicola Spence said:

By ensuring we are alerted to possible sightings as early as possible, we can take swift and effective action to stamp out the threat posed by Asian hornets. That's why we are working at speed to locate and investigate any nests in the area following this confirmed sighting.

While the Asian hornet poses no greater risk to human health than other wasps or hornets, we recognise the damage they can cause to honey bee colonies and other beneficial insects.

Please continue to look out for any Asian hornets and if you think

you've spotted one, report your sighting through the Asian hornet app or online.

It is important to take care not to approach or disturb a nest. Asian hornets are not generally aggressive towards people but an exception to this is when they perceive a threat to their nest.

If you suspect you have seen an Asian hornet you should report this using the iPhone and Android app 'Asian Hornet Watch' or by using our [online report form](#). Alternatively, e-mail alertnonnative@ceh.ac.uk.

Please include a photograph if you can safely obtain one.

[Identification guides and more information are available](#) and if you keep bees you should keep up to date with the latest situation on the [gov.uk sightings page](#) and on [BeeBase](#).

- The cost of eradication on private land will be met by APHA.
- The Great Britain Non-native Species Secretariat is a joint venture between Defra, the Scottish Government and the Welsh Government to tackle the threat of invasive species. More information can be found on their [website](#).
- For details on the appearance of an Asian hornet, please refer to the [BeeBase](#) guide or the [non-native species identification guide](#).
- Photographs of the Asian hornet are available on our [Flickr account](#).
- The Asian hornet (*Vespa velutina*) is not to be confused with the Asian giant hornet (*Vespa mandarinia*) which has been found in North America.

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[£1.3million funding shared with three winning companies as part of telexistence competition](#)

TNO, Sheffield University and Cyberselves Universal Ltd, will develop four projects over the next 10 months that will then be tested and demonstrated next year.

The telexistence technology being developed has the potential to give those working in hazardous environments the capability to undertake tasks without physically being present, which can decrease risk and reduce the logistical burden associated with dangerous operations.

The companies were tasked with evaluating their innovations against 'use

cases' in:

- Specialist Nuclear Decommissioning Tasks
- Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD)
- Defence and Security Medical applications

NDA group companies were involved in developing the Special Nuclear Decommissioning Tasks 'use case' drawing on the experience and previous work in glove box decommissioning, remote handling and waste repackaging.

Andrew Gray, the NDA's Innovation Delivery Manager, said:

"We're excited to be working with DASA and Dstl on this competition. Advancing technologies in the area of telexistence will help us deliver our decommissioning mission more safely, securely and efficiently in enabling us to move humans away from harm.

"It's our aim to reduce decommissioning activities carried out by humans in hazardous environments by 50% by 2030. We're really encouraged to see such fantastic solutions being put forward by the supply chain."

Mark Hodder, Project Manager at Dstl, added:

"The DASA Telexistence: Phase 2 competition has been a great success in finding the latest innovators to collaborate with Dstl and NDA to develop a complete system using science and technology to integrate and create a platform using telepresence, robotics and haptics together to achieve results."

The NDA's partnership with Dstl and DASA, is an example of cross-government diversification and collaboration which has allowed access to a wider talent pool and the opportunity to work with smaller organisations that are not already part of the nuclear supply chain.

[Phase 2](#) of the competition follows on from Phase 1, where £570K worth of contracts were awarded to nine organisations delivering 11 projects.

[Pre-recording of cross examination evidence in Leeds Youth Court](#)

News story

Eligible witnesses at Leeds Youth Court can pre-record their cross-examination evidence as part of a wider test.



Eligible witnesses at Leeds Youth Court are now able to pre-record their cross-examination evidence for the first time, as part of a wider test on using this special measure within the youth court.

This means advocates can now apply for witnesses and victims at Leeds Youth Court to pre-record evidence.

Pre-recording of evidence

[Pre-recording of evidence for vulnerable and intimidated witnesses is already available in every Crown Court.](#) We're running a test at Leeds Youth Court to review how the process works in the youth court jurisdiction.

The measure allows victims and witnesses of crimes to video-record their cross-examination to play later during trial. The recording takes place as close to the time of the offence as possible while memories remain fresh. We hope this will help victims avoid the stress of giving evidence in a courtroom setting, which many find traumatic.

Whether to pre-record evidence is decided on a case-by-case basis, subject to judicial discretion.

Next steps

Criminal justice partners have developed a protocol for managing cases using this special measure. The protocol will be regularly reviewed by the partners, as it's applied to live cases.

Our Local Implementation Team – which includes criminal justice partners – will closely monitor the test. We'll work together to understand what we need to do to successfully support vulnerable witnesses to use this measure.

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High-potential tech scale-up finalists announced in Tech Awards

- Six winners will go head-to-head at the upcoming Web Summit in November 2022
- New Diversity in Tech award to be announced
- Winners to access specially-tailored UK growth package, including mentoring and support

The government's tech scale-up programme, the Tech Rocketship Awards, has today announced its shortlisted finalists.

Seeking to identify the most innovative, fast-growing tech businesses, the awards drew entries from all corners of Europe, Israel and Turkey.

The awards identify the brightest and best tech companies and accelerates the global growth of its winners, through curated programmes connecting them with the UK's leading ecosystem of investors, incubators and High Potential Opportunity clusters.

Previous applicants who have set up operations in the UK include companies such as Inobat, Plan A, Swapcard, Docmatic and SeeTrue AI.

Finalists:

- 5G – Neutroon (Spain). Open-API cloud platform that makes private LTE/5G and Neutral Host simple and scalable for operators and end-users.
- Cyber Security – Facephi (Spain). Provides secure user digital identity verification and specialises in digital onboarding and biometric authentication solutions.
- Climate Tech – Monolithos (Greece). Manufactures direct-fit aftermarket automotive catalytic converters.
- Digital Health – Enbiosis (Turkey). Analyses the human gut microbiome using metadata and AI to provide personalised health and wellness solutions.
- Artificial Intelligence – Jungle AI (The Netherlands). Applies AI to increase the uptime and performance of electromechanical assets such as wind turbines, solar farms or industrial production lines.
- AgriTech – Blue White Robotics (Israel). The 'robots-as-a-service' platform provides solutions for building autonomous farms.

Full details about the competition, including terms and conditions are on the [Tech Rocketship Awards website.](#))

The six selected finalists will go to the Web Summit, taking place in Lisbon from 1-4 November 2022 to pitch live to a high profile judging panel to become the Gold, Silver and Bronze winners. Winners will be announced at the UK pavilion alongside a new Diversity in Tech award for underrepresented founders.

Chris Barton, Her Majesty's Trade Commissioner for Europe said:

There is no better place for ambitious tech companies to grow than the UK. This is the number one country in Europe for Unicorns, and UK tech VC investment is the third largest in the world. Our tech sector is the home of forward-thinking innovators, venture capital, R&D clusters and opportunities for growth across the whole of the UK.

Tech Rocketships will provide the lucky winners with a rocket-powered, fully-tailored direct route to the financiers, incubators, tech-savvy customers, and all the infrastructure needed to help them make that next great leap from ambitious scale-up to unicorn."

Kenan Poleo, Her Majesty's Trade Commissioner for EECAN (Eastern Europe Central Asian Network) said:

Turkish companies responded brilliantly to the Tech Rocketship Awards. I wish the finalists luck! The awards offer companies in the vibrant Turkish tech ecosystem a rocket-powered, fully-tailored direct route to the financiers, incubators, tech-savvy customers, and infrastructure needed to help them make that next great leap from ambitious scale-up to unicorn.

Ian Bowen-Morris, Head of International Marketing at the Department for International Trade said:

The GREAT Global Trade campaign is proud to support the Tech Rocketship Awards. It is a fantastic platform enabling international businesses to take advantage of the UK's position as a world-leading destination in which to set up and scale up innovative technology companies.

Notes to editors:

- The Tech Rocketship Awards Categories are: Artificial Intelligence (AI), 5G, Agri-Tech, Digital Health, Cybersecurity, Climate Tech, with a new Diversity in Tech Award for underrepresented founders.

- Official Awards Partners are EY, Goodwille, Tech UK and Tech Nation.