

# Improvements to Ironbridge flood defences reduce risk of flooding

[Ironbridge](#) in Shropshire has been made more resilient to flooding following a review of the issues faced in the February 2020 floods.

The review has led to improvements to the method of deploying the town's temporary flood defence scheme.

The new method was put to the test before Christmas when the [Environment Agency](#) erected the flood defence due to the high river level and the [flood warnings](#) that were in place. The barriers were taken down on 29 December, once it was safe to do so.

To further reduce the risk of flooding from the River Severn, work to the road surface by [Telford and Wrekin Council](#) will improve the ground conditions for the temporary flood barrier that is deployed in the event of flooding, and ensure it does not move.

The work by Telford and Wrekin Council is due to start on 18 January 2021 unless adverse weather dictates otherwise. [Road closures](#) will be in place until the work is due for completion on 7 February 2021.

In the floods of February 2020, Ironbridge experienced the highest river levels since the year 2000. Numerous flood warnings, including two severe flood warnings, were issued for the River Severn at the Wharfage, Ironbridge, and Environment Agency temporary barriers were deployed.

With river levels at the highest ever against the barriers, there was some slippage on the road surface which caused seepage behind the barrier due to the force of the water. Pumps were used to manage surface water and the seepage behind the flood defence.

Despite the prolonged high river levels, the barrier continued to hold back the river levels. Once the levels had peaked, Environment Agency staff completed repairs to the damaged barrier to ensure it provided protection over the following weeks.

Adam Lines, area environment manager at the Environment Agency, said:

While the temporary flood barriers at Ironbridge continued to be operational and properties were defended in the February floods, we have reviewed and improved their method of deployment, which we adopted in the erection of the barriers in December.

These measures include the way we put the barriers in place to allow for a wider waterproof membrane to the front of the barriers, which increases protection. We have also reviewed how we can make them even better secured, particularly around trees; and how the

road can be adapted to reduce the chance of movement of the barrier.

Changes have also been made to the deployment plan that the Environment Agency and Telford and Wrekin Council follow in putting the barrier in place and we will increase the time needed to fully install the barrier to allow for the additional work.

Councillor David Wright, Telford and Wrekin Council's cabinet member with responsibility for flood management, said:

Since the floods last winter, we have done a lot of work with the Environment Agency to produce this bespoke and innovative road design specifically for Ironbridge. Many surveys were done by both our organisations, leading to 3D designs and investigative work on how we can minimise the risk of the flood barriers being moved again by force of a flooded River Severn. It led to identifying new ways for the Environment Agency to put the barriers in place, especially around trees.

The Wharfage will be resurfaced by Telford and Wrekin Council's highways contractor Balfour Beatty with a new material to improve friction. When laid, the new road surface will be designed flatter and slightly sloping towards the river to further reduce the risk of any slippage by the barriers.

We are now turning those designs into reality as quickly as we can and that is why this work is being done during the winter. I would like to reassure residents and businesses in Ironbridge that there are contingency plans in place to deal with any increase in the river level; plans which we already put into practice last month. It is important to note that is impossible to completely eliminate flood risk, however we are doing everything we can to minimise that risk.

[Check online](#) if your property, business, or place of work is within a flood warning area or call Floodline on 0345 988 1188.

## **Background**

- The temporary flood defence barrier in Ironbridge was in use in December 2020 due to flood warnings being in place. It was fully functional despite the road surface works having not yet been carried out.
- In February 2020, Environment Secretary George Eustice visited Ironbridge to meet with residents and businesses. He thanked Environment Agency staff and emergency responders who were working 24/7 to reduce flood risk to communities.

- 2019 was the wettest autumn on record, and February 2020 was the wettest February on record, with some places receiving four times their average rainfall.
  - Over the course of last winter, Environment Agency flood defences protected almost 130,000 properties, with around 8,000 properties sadly being flooded.
  - Since 2015, the Environment Agency has been investing £2.6bn to better protect the country from flooding and coastal erosion. We are on course to have better protected 300,000 homes by March 2021.
  - In 2020, the government announced a record £5.2 billion investment in flood and coastal defences – double the previous investment – to protect 336,000 properties, and the Environment Agency's [Flood and Coast Erosion Risk Management Strategy](#), will prepare the country for more extreme weather and build a better prepared and more resilient nation.
  - In July 2020, [the government announced an additional £170m](#) to accelerate the construction of flood defence projects in 2020 and 2021, where they would drive growth and benefit local economies.
- 

## COVID-19 alert level: update from the UK Chief Medical Officers

### News story

A joint statement from the UK Chief Medical Officers (CMOs) recommending that the UK COVID-19 alert level move from level 4 to level 5.



Following advice from the Joint Biosecurity Centre and in the light of the most recent data, the 4 UK Chief Medical Officers and NHS England Medical Director recommend that the UK alert level should move from level 4 to level 5.

Many parts of the health systems in the 4 nations are already under immense pressure. There are currently very high rates of community

transmission, with substantial numbers of COVID patients in hospitals and in intensive care.

Cases are rising almost everywhere, in much of the country driven by the new more transmissible variant. We are not confident that the NHS can handle a further sustained rise in cases and without further action there is a material risk of the NHS in several areas being overwhelmed over the next 21 days.

Although the NHS is under immense pressure, significant changes have been made so people can still receive lifesaving treatment. It is absolutely critical that people still come forward for emergency care. If you require non-urgent medical attention, please contact your GP or call NHS 111.

Chief Medical Officer for England, Professor Chris Whitty

Chief Medical Officer for Wales, Dr Frank Atherton

Chief Medical Officer for Scotland, Dr Gregor Smith

Chief Medical Officer for Northern Ireland, Dr Michael McBride

NHS England, National Medical Director Professor Stephen Powis

Published 4 January 2021

---

## [Increasing the level of coordination in offshore electricity infrastructure: BEIS and Ofgem open letter](#)

This letter sets out the actions the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) and Ofgem are taking to increase the level of coordination in offshore transmission infrastructure, and calls for views to support the [Offshore transmission network review](#) which launched in July 2020.

We would particularly welcome views from those who are already pursuing some level of coordination or have identified an opportunity to do so, at a local, national or international level. This could include considering anticipatory investment in one project to enable a future project, or combining offshore wind and interconnector assets.

Ofgem and BEIS will use this information to:

- capitalise on early opportunities that will deliver benefits for consumers and the wider energy system
- inform future policy development relating to an enduring regime for connections post 2030

---

## Replying to requests for information

### News story

Customers will have more time to reply to requests for information (requisitions) from Monday 11 January.



We will be extending the period of time customers have to respond to requests for information (requisitions) for most applications. This will come into effect on Monday (11 January) where customers will have 40 days to reply to a requisition letter (C90), after which they will receive a reminder of cancellation (C90a) allowing a further 20 days in which to reply.

We know many requisitions are a result of waiting for third parties to provide information or consent. These issues can be resolved and transactions completed if given the appropriate time.

Giving customers more time to reply to resolve requisition points will reserve the priority of the original application for longer and reduce the administrative burden on all of us from requests being made for more time and the cancellations of applications.

Customers are asked not to wait for the reminder to reply to an outstanding requisition. They can use View My Applications to find any outstanding requisitions, or check the progress of an application.

In the spring our Digital Registration Service (DRS) will reduce the number of requisitions sent due to simple errors such as name discrepancy or fee

errors. This tool can be used to reduce the overall number of requisitions customers receive.

Requests can be made using reply to requisition, Application Enquiry, our [contact form](#) or by [phone](#).

Published 4 January 2021

---

## **Preferred candidate for Chief Inspector of HMCPsi announced**

The Attorney General, the Rt. Hon. Suella Braverman QC MP, has today announced that Andrew T. Cayley CMG QC is the government's preferred candidate for the role of Chief Inspector of the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS).

Mr Cayley has been selected following a fair and open assessment process conducted in accordance with the Governance Code on Public Appointments.

As part of the next stage in the recruitment process, Mr Cayley will be subject to a pre-appointment hearing with the Justice Select Committee, which is set to take place on Thursday 14 January.

### **Role of HM Chief Inspector of the Crown Prosecution Service**

Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of the Crown Prosecution Service, the head of HM Crown Prosecution Service Inspectorate (HMCPsi), is appointed by the Attorney General. This is a public appointment for a fixed term. The Chief Inspector acts independently of the Attorney General and of government.

HMCPsi has a statutory duty to inspect the operation of the CPS and SFO and report to the Attorney General, who superintends both those organisations. Its reports play an important role in effective superintendence.

The operational relationship between the Attorney General and the Chief Inspector is set out in a protocol agreed between the Law Officers (the Attorney General and Solicitor General) and the Chief Inspector.

### **Andrew T. Cayley CMG QC Biography**

Andrew T. Cayley was the Director of Service Prosecutions from 2013 to 2020. He led the Service Prosecuting Authority through major reforms and the Service Justice Review. From 2009 to 2013 he was the United Nations Chief International Co-Prosecutor of the Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia, the Khmer Rouge Tribunal. Here he was responsible for prosecuting the leadership of the Khmer Rouge for the genocide, extermination, and murder

of up to two million of their citizens between 1975 and 1979. From 1995 to 2007, he was Prosecuting Counsel and Senior Prosecuting Counsel at the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) and the International Criminal Court (ICC). At the ICTY he was co-counsel in a case that secured the court's first conviction for genocide regarding events at Srebrenica in Bosnia-Herzegovina in July 1995; he also led for the prosecution in several other high-profile cases involving various aspects of the Yugoslav conflict. At the ICC, he led the investigation and pre-trial proceedings regarding allegations of genocide, crimes against humanity, and war crimes committed since 1st July 2002, in Darfur in the Republic of Sudan.

From 2007 to 2009, he defended Charles Taylor before the Special Court for Sierra Leone and Ivan Cermak before the ICTY. He first qualified as a Solicitor of the Senior Courts in 1989, transferring to the English and Welsh Bar in 2007. He is a Governing Bencher of the Honourable Society of the Inner Temple. He was appointed Companion of the Order of Saint Michael and Saint George for services to human rights and international criminal law in 2014 and appointed Queens Counsel in 2012.