

Press release: £300,000 refurbishment for Branston Island flood reservoir

A reservoir that helps protect more than 7,000 homes and businesses in and around Lincoln from flooding has undergone a £300,000 refurbishment.

The work, completed by the Environment Agency over 11 weeks, involved repairing the banks and bank tops, plus concrete and mechanical repairs to sluices that control the flow in and out of the reservoir.

Branston Island flood reservoir is located 7 miles southeast of Lincoln and stores excess water from the River Witham. Together with the River Till and River Witham reservoirs, it helps reduce flood risk to the city of Lincoln and nearby villages.

Combined, the three reservoirs can hold over 11 million cubic metres of water – the same as 440 Olympic-sized swimming pools.

Built in the 1960s, it is part of a system of sluices and engineered channels managed by the Environment Agency which includes Sincil Dyke, Boultham catchwater and the Great Gowts Drain to better protect 7,200 properties.

The reservoir was last used to store water from the Witham during a period of wet weather in winter 2012.

Paul Dutchburn, Asset Performance team leader at the Environment Agency, said:

We carry out regular checks, tests and repairs that ensure our defences can continue to reduce flood risk to homes and businesses – and that includes carrying out maintenance like this on our reservoirs.

Across the country, we're investing over £200 million this year to maintain our flood defences so they continue to help protect our communities.

Environment Agency teams work around the clock to help protect people from flooding, but everyone still has a responsibility to take steps to reduce their own risk.

Check whether you're at risk of flooding, and sign up to receive our free flood warnings by calling 0345 988 1188 or visiting www.gov.uk/flood. By registering, you can choose how you'd prefer to be reached – by text, phone call to a mobile or landline, or even email – giving you vital notice to prepare if flooding is expected.

[Press release: Communities to benefit from schemes to ease traffic delays](#)

This funding boost comes from Highways England's Growth and Housing Fund budget and includes:

- nearly £4 million for junction improvement schemes around the A45 in Northamptonshire
- almost £3 million for junction improvement schemes around the M42 and M5 in Worcestershire
- nearly £620,000 at Moor Lane Roundabout in Exeter

Ian Parsons, Highways England's senior investment planning manager, said:

Our roads are vital for the country and its economic success; they connect businesses and communities and support employment and new homes. All of our improvements will ultimately ensure our roads continue to improve journeys and unlock the potential for new jobs and homes.

Northamptonshire

Northamptonshire will benefit from a Highways England contribution of around £4 million to deliver a comprehensive package of junction improvements at Queen Eleanor, Brackmills and Great Billing junctions along the A45.

This funding is aimed at helping local communities unlock plans for future housing, including a Homes England site at Hardingstone and to create better journey times and generate jobs.

Once delivered, the improvements will support a further 14,500 homes in the wider area and create some 3,000 jobs. The improvements will be delivered by Northamptonshire County Council.

Councillor Ian Morris, county council cabinet member for transport, highways and environment, said:

These are very important works for Northampton and the county as a whole as the infrastructure improvements to these busy parts of the road network will help accommodate housing development. This goes to show how good partnership working can be instrumental in bringing the improvements required that benefit the local economy.

Head of Public Sector Land (South East) for Homes England Charles Amies said:

Providing major infrastructure is key to unlocking the development of new and affordable homes, so we welcome Highways England's investment in improving the A45.

The development will support the ambitions we share with Northamptonshire County Council and Northampton Borough Council to create the communities, employment opportunities and transport links the county needs.

Regional Director for Kier Living Martin Bessant added:

We are committed to building houses in areas of the country with the greatest need. Our Hardingstone development will deliver 750 new homes as well as vital new and improved infrastructure, including roads, as we look to leave a lasting legacy for residents and the wider community.

The Northamptonshire improvements scheme is expected to start on site in June 2019 and be completed and open to traffic by March 2021.

Worcestershire

Worcestershire will benefit from a Highways England contribution of £2.68 million to support two schemes to improve journeys around junction 4 of the M5 and junction 1 of the M42 near Bromsgrove.

The improvements, which include widening the A38 at junction 1 of the M42 and at M5 junction 4 to Lydiate Ash Road, are expected to significantly reduce queuing at peak times in the area and improve journey times. They are part of the wider A38 Bromsgrove Corridor scheme which, when complete, is expected to unlock a total of 1,946 homes and allow new offices and warehouse space to be built, creating employment opportunities in the local area.

The scheme is being developed by Worcestershire County Council in partnership with Bromsgrove District Council and is being funded by Worcestershire Local Enterprise Partnership (WLEP), Greater Birmingham & Solihull Local Enterprise Partnership (GBSLEP) and Highways England with further funding from the private sector.

More details on the scheme will be shared by Worcestershire County Council over the coming months.

Exeter

Exeter and the surrounding area will benefit from a £619,000 Highways England contribution to the scheme which will deliver extra lanes on the southern approach to Moor Lane Roundabout and improve local road access from the A30.

The improvements will reduce queuing at peak times in the area, especially on the M5 junction 29 exit slip roads, and improve journey times.

The £2.23 million scheme is being delivered by Devon County Council and is also being supported by the Department for Transport's National Productivity Investment Fund (NPIF) which is providing £858,000 in funding, with a further £750,000 coming from the private sector. Work is expected to start the Autumn of 2019 and continue until the following Spring.

Highways England's contribution will enable the building of 370 of the planned 1,870 homes at Cranbrook in east Devon and Hill Barton in Exeter to be brought forward.

The scheme also complements the recently delivered Tithe Barn improvement scheme, which included a 60-metre span pedestrian and cycle bridge and was funded with over £4 million from Highways England's Growth and Housing Fund, as well as developers' contributions.

The pedestrian and cycle bridge, which runs alongside the existing bridge just north of Junction 29, opened in February – with the link road fully opened in April.

Councillor Andrea Davis, Devon County Council Cabinet Member with responsibility for Infrastructure and Development, said:

Increasing the capacity at Moor Lane roundabout is a positive investment in our local infrastructure which supports Devon's continuing economic growth. It will help citybound commuters on the A30 in the mornings and will ease congestion problems for people leaving Sowton Industrial Estate in the evenings.

Devon County Council is continuing its excellent track record of getting schemes shovel ready. Working with Highways England, the Growth and Housing Fund, has helped us deliver the Tithebarn Link Road and pedestrian and cycle bridge, while the National Productivity Investment Fund is helping support the next phase of the E4 cycle route, expansion of the Co-Bikes scheme, a new Park and Change near Exeter Science Park and the works at Moor Lane roundabout.

The eastern edge of the city will benefit from over £15 million of transport investment over the next three years. These improvements will upgrade transport links while providing access to planned new homes and employment land.

Steve Hindley, Chair of the Heart of the South West Local Enterprise Partnership, also welcomed the improvement to the Moor Lane junction, adding:

This scheme will help support the dynamic growth of both employment and housing East of Exeter, including the Science Park, Skypark and the new community of Cranbrook. Reducing congestion is crucial in continuing to attract investment in our businesses.

All the schemes are receiving support from the fund that has already provided over £77 million to communities across the country, improving junctions and creating access to commercial land and new homes.

To date the specialist fund has made huge improvements and benefits to local communities, unlocking homes and jobs in Swindon, Exeter, Weston-super-Mare, Darlington, Scunthorpe, Grantham, Warrington, Derby, Oldham, Taunton, Durham, Daventry, Leicester and Southampton.

General enquiries

Members of the public should contact the Highways England customer contact centre on 0300 123 5000.

Media enquiries

Journalists should contact the Highways England press office on 0844 693 1448 and use the menu to speak to the most appropriate press officer.

[Press release: Northern Powerhouse at the heart of Rugby League World Cup 2021](#)

- Rugby League World Cup 2021 has announced that nearly 90% of the tournament's games, including all three finals, will be held in the Northern Powerhouse
- Tournament backed by £25 million of government funding to maximise benefit to communities
- Northern host locations announced include Newcastle, Doncaster, Leeds, Sheffield, Liverpool, Trafford and Hull

Northern Powerhouse Minister Jake Berry MP has welcomed news that around 9 in 10 (87%) Rugby League World Cup 2021 tournament games will be held in the North, exceeding the organiser's original commitment to host 80% of the games in the North of England.

In 2016 the government committed £25 million towards the tournament and its legacy with up to £15 million pledged to support the staging of the event and up to £10 million for Rugby League's facilities through large community projects, such as refurbishing changing rooms and installing new artificial pitches, as well as smaller-scale initiatives including supplying new kit or equipment to clubs.

A total of 16 northern towns and cities – including Newcastle, St Helens,

Doncaster, Sheffield, Liverpool, Trafford and Hull – will play host to the tournament which will take place over five weeks in October and November 2021.

Leeds will host more games than any other city while Preston has been revealed as the tournament's first training base.

The tournament is anticipated to host a million spectators and is set to be one of the most inclusive and diverse events ever hosted in England. The men's, women's and wheelchair Rugby League World Cups are to be staged together for the first time with all three finals being played in the North.

Government funding for the tournament will focus on four key areas: creating welcoming environments, encouraging more players, building community engagement and cultivating further investment resulting in an innovation fund for the community game.

Northern Powerhouse Minister Jake Berry MP said:

The Rugby League World Cup 2021 will firmly put the Northern Powerhouse on the world stage and I am proud we are a partner in this landmark event.

Thousands of visitors will come from far and wide to enjoy the games and organisers predict the tournament will deliver £75 million of economic benefit to the UK through tourism and opportunities for local businesses, with a significant amount coming to cities and regions of the Northern Powerhouse.

The foundations of Rugby League were built in the North before becoming one of this country's greatest sporting exports. Now, thanks to £25 million of government investment, it is coming home to the Northern Powerhouse.

Minister for Sport and Civil Society Mims Davies MP said:

The UK is renowned for putting on some of the biggest and best sporting events in the world and the Rugby League World Cup 2021 will be no exception. This tournament will provide a stage for the world's best players in the men's, women's and wheelchair game to shine in cities and towns across the country.

It is an exceptional opportunity to grow the sport. We are investing £25 million to help put on a fantastic event, reach new fans and improve facilities, so the tournament leaves a real legacy.

Chief Executive of the Rugby League World Cup 2021 Jon Dutton said:

RLWC2021 will be the sport's biggest and best ever tournament and the Northern Powerhouse will play a pivotal role in helping to deliver this global event.

For the first time ever, the men's, women's and wheelchair tournaments will be played concurrently and the North will stage all of the marquee events including all 3 Rugby League World Cup finals and the respective opening ceremonies. The Northern Powerhouse is the perfect setting to host one of world sport's biggest and most inclusive tournaments.

The Rugby League World Cup 2021 and their governing body the Rugby Football League, are official members of the Northern Powerhouse Partners Programme. This network of businesses and organisations share our vision to for harnessing the economic potential of the North, and support the need for the government and business to work together to achieve it.

Full list of Northern Powerhouse game venues/hosts across men's, women's and wheelchair fixtures:

North-west

Bolton – The University of Bolton Stadium will host two men's games, including an England group game and quarter-final. Liverpool – Anfield will host the marquee quarter-final tie along with the women's opening ceremony and initial England game. M&S Bank Arena Liverpool will host the wheelchair Rugby League final. Preston – First training base to be revealed. St Helens – The Totally Wicked Stadium will host three men's group games. Trafford – Old Trafford will host both the men's and women's finals as a double-header event. Warrington – The Halliwell Jones Stadium will host three men's group games. Leigh – Leigh Sports Village will host three men's group games.

Yorkshire

Doncaster – The Keepmoat Stadium will host three men's group games. Kirklees – The John Smiths Stadium will host a men's quarter-final. Hull – The KCOM Stadium will host two men's games, including a quarter-final. Leeds – Hosting more games than any other city, Elland Road will host a men's semi-final and Emerald Headingley Stadium will host three men's games and two women's games. Sheffield – Bramall Lane will host an England men's group game. The EIS Sheffield will host a group and both semi-finals in the wheelchair tournament. York – The Community Stadium will host a women's group game and both women's semi-finals.

North East

Middlesbrough – The Riverside Stadium will host a significant men's group game. Newcastle – St James' Park will host the opening England men's group game including the men's opening ceremony

West Cumbria

Allerdale – The Workington Community Stadium will host three men's group games.

The Northern Powerhouse is our vision for a more prosperous North with well-paid jobs for working people, better transport with faster roads and more efficient trains, high-performing schools and world-beating universities.

The Northern Powerhouse Partners Programme is an essential part of creating the Northern Powerhouse. The government is looking to build a network of partners who all believe strongly in the economic potential of the North, and support the need for a combined effort by government and business to realise that potential. There are nearly 200 businesses and organisations signed up to the Partners Programme.

Prospective partners can email NorthernPowerhouse@communities.gov.uk for more information about the Partners Programme and how to apply.

For more information about the Rugby League World Cup 2021 tournament and locations of games visit www.rlwc2021.com or contact enquiries@rlwc2021.com

[Press release: Housing Minister tightens up rules on electrical safety to better protect renters](#)

- Tough new rules for electrical inspections in private rented accommodation, offering greater protection for tenants
- Change to ensure inspections are carried out by competent and qualified testers, keeping people safe in their homes
- Move part of the government's commitment to drive up standards in the private rented sector

Renters will receive better protection thanks to new measures designed to ensure mandatory electrical inspections are carried out by competent and qualified inspectors, Housing Minister Heather Wheeler MP has announced today (29 January 2019).

As part of the government's commitment to drive up standards in the private rented sector, landlords will be legally required to ensure that the inspectors they hire to carry out safety inspections have the necessary competence and qualifications to do so – with tough financial penalties for those who fail to comply.

Ministers will also publish new guidance which sets out the minimum level of

competence and qualifications necessary for those carrying out these important inspections, meaning both landlords and tenants can be assured their home is safe from electrical faults.

Minister for Housing and Homelessness Heather Wheeler MP said:

Everyone has the right to feel safe and secure in their own home. While measures are already in place to crack down on the small minority of landlords who rent out unsafe properties, we need to do more to protect tenants.

These new measures will reduce the risk of faulty electrical equipment, giving people peace of mind and helping to keep them safe in their homes.

It will also provide clear guidance to landlords on who they should be hiring to carry out these important electrical safety checks.

The new guidance will provide clear accountability at each stage of the inspection process – of what is required and whose responsibility it is – but without placing excessive cost and time burdens on landlords.

As well as making homes safer for tenants, improving electrical safety also benefits landlords by making a material improvement to their property and helping to prevent fires, which can cause costly and significant damage.

The measures announced today build on ongoing government action to drive up standards in the private rented sector and support people to feel safe and secure in their home – ensuring millions of hard-working tenants can live in the homes they deserve.

Ministers have also introduced tough new powers for councils to tackle the small minority of rogue landlords who rent out poor quality properties, including fines of up to £30,000 and banning orders for landlords who do not comply.

The [Tenant Fees Bill](#), which will be implemented from 1 June, will bring an end to unnecessary, costly fees imposed by landlords or property agents – stopping tenants being charged hundreds of pounds for minor fixes to their homes and putting cash back in their pockets.

Together, these measures will help to create a housing market that works for everyone by making renting fair and more transparent for all.

The consultation [Electrical safety in the private rented sector](#) ran from 17 February to 16 April 2018 and received 582 responses from a range of organisations, including landlord associations, housing charities and local authorities, as well as individuals including electricians, landlords, tenants and fire and rescue representatives.

Following the consultation, the government announced in July that regulations

would be introduced requiring private sector landlords to undertake 5 yearly safety checks of electrical installations in their properties. We intend to introduce new legislation on a phased basis, starting with new tenancies, as soon as Parliamentary time allows.

The new guidance will be broadly in line with existing regulations in Scotland, helping to ensure consistency and ease for landlords operating across the two nations.

A decision on penalties for non-compliance will be made before the secondary legislation is introduced. Penalties are likely to include a range of sanctions, with local authorities being given discretion to decide which is most appropriate in a particular case. Government will engage closely with local authorities in England when determining the penalties.

The measures announced today only cover the private rented sector. The forthcoming response to the social housing green paper consultation will cover a wide range of issues including the safety and quality of social housing.

[News story: Goodbye GSi: Insolvency Service email addresses are changing](#)

The [GSI](#) network is being phased out across [government](#).

As part of this change, the Insolvency Service will remove '.gsi' from our email addresses by 31 March 2019.

What you need to do

By 31 March 2019 if you use any existing Insolvency Service email addresses, you need to change these from:

to

The new addresses are now active, however, up until the cut-off, any replies to emails you send to non gsi addresses will come from our gsi addresses.

You should make sure you update any records you may have, such as directories, web applications or forms that use our email addresses.

What will happen if you don't make the change

Between now and 31 March 2019 the Insolvency Service will continue to receive any emails sent to a .gsi address in addition to non-gsi addresses.

It is expected that after 31 March 2019 any messages sent to a .gsi address will be redirected and continue to function for a limited period of time to assist with a smooth transition.

If you have any questions about this change or need more information, [contact us](#)