

Press release: New £1 million flood competition to protect more communities

A new ground-breaking competition will allow flood defence projects around the country to apply for a share of £1 million to help protect even more homes and businesses, Environment Secretary Andrea Leadsom announced today.

This government funded competition is the first of its kind and will be open to innovative projects that plan to use landscape features such as ponds, banks, meanders, channels, and trees to store, drain or slow flood water.

Natural flood management already forms an important part of the government's flood strategy and funding these new projects builds on £14m already committed to similar schemes across the country.

Environment Secretary Andrea Leadsom said:

I am delighted to offer more support for local communities looking to employ natural flood management measures to better protect their homes and businesses.

We now carefully look at flood risk across an entire catchment area from a river's source to the sea – to make sure we have in place the best tailored mix of natural as well as concrete, engineered defences to better protect communities.

The Environment Secretary announced the new competition in Leicester, where a natural flood management scheme is already successfully in place reconnecting the floodplain with the river.

This scheme has not only reduced the flood risk to 1,200 properties, it has transformed public spaces along the river, with improved seating areas and cycle paths for the local community to enjoy. A total of 100 trees and 7,000 shrubs have been planted and wildlife such as grey heron and little egret are now regularly seen around the area.

The new natural flood management competition will give small-scale natural flood management projects around the country the opportunity to apply for funding, so they too can achieve similar results.

Environment Agency Chair, Emma Howard Boyd, said:

At places such as Leicester, Morpeth, and Medmerry, the Environment Agency has already shown that natural flood management can reduce flood risk alongside traditional flood defences and property

resilience.

There is no 'one size fits all' approach to natural flood management: it's about using a range of measures, from creating ponds and woody dams to redirecting river channels, that work together to reduce flood risk. This competition is a great way to explore the different ways these approaches can benefit communities and the environment.

Details of the competition and how to apply are available [here](#).

The deadline for competition entries is 19 May 2017 and the successful projects are expected to be announced by the end of June 2017.

Notes to editors:

- Applications are to be submitted through existing Catchment Partnerships – bodies formed of local people, landowners and statutory bodies that work together to manage whole river catchments.
- Upstream management of flooding is already a central theme in many areas, including the Cumbria and Calderdale Flood Action Plans.
- The Government has already provided £4.1m to natural flood management demonstration projects in Holnicote (Somerset), Pickering (North Yorks) and Upper Derwent (Derbyshire).

[We need investment, not cuts, for the Armed Forces](#)

UKIP Defence Spokesman Bill Etheridge has slammed a decision by politicians to force the Army to cut £10bn from the defence budget over the next decade calling it "irresponsible and illogical."



Mr Etheridge said the decision to make the Army and the Navy "scrap it out" for funding was "bad government" and "all of our Armed Forces should be

properly funded.”

“This failed policy of pushing the ‘soft power’ of foreign aid rather than hard power of a properly defended country is an irresponsible and illogical policy which has not worked so far and will continue to fail.

“Only this week there were rumours that our helicopter carrier HMS Ocean was being sold to Brazil: this is part of 3 Commando brigade which are one of our two brigades who can rapidly deploy to theatre. Are we only going to be left with one?

“Instead of hiding behind this bureaucratic shield that the government are meeting the NATO targets of 2% of GDP we need urgent investment in the military, which the Army’s own think tank concluded would be unable to withstand an attack from Russia for longer than an afternoon.

EU negotiating guidelines show they have learned nothing from Brexit

The statement put out today by the European Union setting out their guidelines for negotiating with the UK over the next two years is “bound to create more division amongst EU nations”, said Paul Nuttall, the UKIP Leader today.



“By wrapping the negotiations in a bureaucratic straitjacket all that they guarantee to do is highlight the already glaring differences of approach amongst the rump 27 nations in the bloc.”

“As we near March 2019 and the UK’s final days as a member, national politicians in national capitals will realise that the package approved by Brussels will not be in their own specific interests nor that of their citizens.

“Brussels wishes to play hardball with the reciprocal rights of individual citizens. How will Poland, for example, react when 1 million plus Poles live in the UK and only about 30,000 UK citizens live in Poland and their rights are threatened? Those million citizens vote, so do their friends and families. Polish people will expect their own Government to do a deal to

protect their own citizens. The EU's rigid approach will be seen as the problem, not the UK.

News story: Sir David Norgrove appointed as Chair of the UK Statistics Authority

Sir David Norgrove has been appointed by Her Majesty the Queen as the new Chair of the UK Statistics Authority.

He has a long-standing record as a public servant and user of statistics, having previously served as Chair of the Low Pay Commission (2009 to 2016) and the Pensions Regulator (2005 to 2010).

Welcoming the appointment, Ben Gummer, Minister for the Cabinet Office said:

Sir David will make an exceptional Chair of the UK Statistics Authority. Having chaired the Low Pay Commission and the Pensions Regulator, he has an exemplary record and one which will stand him in good stead as Chair of the UK Statistics Authority.

I would also like to extend my thanks to Sir Andrew Dilnot for his excellent work over the last five years and wish him well in his future endeavours.

The appointment was the subject of an open recruitment exercise following the Code of Practice set out by the Office of the Commissioner for Public Appointments, a pre-appointment hearing with the Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs Committee, and approval by Parliament.

Sir David will take up the post on 1 April 2017, for a renewable five year term. He does not hold any other ministerial appointments.

Further information

The UK Statistics Authority was established on 1 April 2008 by the Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007, with a statutory objective to promote and safeguard the production and publication of official statistics that serve the public good.

Sir David Norgrove is an external member and Deputy Chair of Oxford University Council. He has been a trustee and Deputy Chair of the British Museum, and chaired the Low Pay Commission from 2009 to 2016, the Pensions Regulator from its inception in 2005 until 2010, Risk First from 2012 to 2015

and Amnesty International Charitable Trust from 2008 to 2014. He chaired a Government review of the family justice system in 2010 and 2011 and subsequently served as Deputy Chair of the Family Justice Board, having chaired it from its inception in 2012 until 2016.

David began his career as an economist at the Treasury and worked in a Chicago bank before becoming Private Secretary to the then Prime Minister, Margaret Thatcher. He spent 16 years with Marks & Spencer and became a member of the Board there. David was knighted in the 2016 New Year Honours for services to the low paid and to family justice.

The role has a time commitment of 2 days a week and remuneration of £57,000 per annum.

New “robust, fair and transparent” regime of marine licensing fees

In consultation with industry and other partners, a Marine Licensing Fees Review has been undertaken for the first time since 2010 with the intention of developing an updated, suitable system for marine licensing fees and charges in Wales.

The new fees model introduces, for the first time, a tiered approach, with a mix of fixed fees and hourly charges, a change from the previous model of universal fixed fees. The new approach enables cost recovery to be achieved more accurately and fairly.

Application fees are set proportionately against the services being provided. Fixed fee bands of £600 (Band 1) and £1,920 (Band 2) will apply for what are considered small scale and routine activities, respectively. There will also be an hourly rate charge of £120 per hour (Band 3) for the most complex work packages. In these cases customers will be quoted costs upfront and kept regularly informed on costs.

The new fees have been set by the Welsh Government and will be charged by Natural Resources Wales (NRW), the marine licensing authority in Wales.

A wider provision of pre-application services will be provided by NRW, including dedicated and bespoke pre-application discussion and support, as well as the review of draft environmental statements. This is designed to achieve a better service to customers and realise efficiencies in the process.

NRW will implement a programme of continuous improvement for marine licensing and the fees will be reviewed regularly. The existing Marine Licensing Stakeholder Group will also hold regular meetings share information and get

feedback from industry representatives.

The Cabinet Secretary for Environment and Rural Affairs, Lesley Griffiths said:

“I am pleased to confirm we are launching what we consider to be a robust, fair and transparent regime of marine licensing fees and associated charges.

“The marine industry is vitally important to Wales. We worked closely with them when reviewing the fees regime and I am sure they will join us and Natural Resources Wales in welcoming this new system.”