

West Kent flood storage area expansion scheme

The Environment Agency scheme to build a flood embankment and pumping station in Hildenborough has received planning permission from Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council.

The works planned at Hildenborough include a new embankment, pumping station, kiosk and flood defence wall. This will form part of the larger flood protection scheme involving increasing the capacity of the Leigh flood storage area (Leigh FSA) by approximately 25 per cent. Once completed, the overall scheme will reduce the risk of flooding for 1,430 properties.

At a cost of around £21.5m, construction is due to start at the Leigh FSA in spring 2023, and is expected to begin at Hildenborough in 2024. The full scheme is expected to be completed in autumn 2025.

Sally Harvey, Environment Agency area director for Kent, South London and East Sussex, said:

Securing planning approval for the Hildenborough embankment element of the scheme enables us to press ahead with construction works that will improve flood protection to more than 1,400 properties in Tonbridge and Hildenborough.

Tom Tugendhat, MP for Tonbridge and Malling, said:

Expansion of the Leigh flood storage area and the Hildenborough expansion scheme will help defend thousands of residents from flooding. I am pleased this crucial landmark has been passed and construction can start next year.

This project will help protect us from flooding caused on the River Medway and its tributaries, and I look forward to the works starting.

Cllr Robin Betts, Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council cabinet member for environment and climate change, said:

Approval of these proposals is a crucial milestone in this major project, enabling work to start and the risk of flooding to homes and businesses to be significantly reduced. This is especially important as we confront the increase in extreme weather we are all experiencing due to climate change.

Tony Hills, Kent County Council deputy cabinet member for the environment, said:

Kent County Council is pleased that the Hildenborough embankment scheme has been approved. Together with the Leigh flood storage area, the two schemes will significantly reduce flood risk in Tonbridge and Hildenborough, helping the county to be resilient to climate change and reduce the disruption flooding causes to lives and livelihoods.

Christian Brodie, South East Local Enterprise Partnership chair, said:

We are delighted that work can begin to improve the Leigh flood storage area and local embankments in Hildenborough. This vitally important investment will help to further reduce the flood-risk for more than 1,400 homes and businesses.

It will also unlock new sites in the future, allowing Tonbridge and Hildenborough to attract new businesses and residents, creating a culture of growth that will benefit the whole local community.

The scheme is being delivered by the Environment Agency in partnership with:

- Kent County Council
- Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council
- South East Local Enterprise Partnership

Funding is through the Government's Flood Defence Grant-in-Aid, with contributions from Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council, Kent County Council and the South East Local Enterprise Partnership.

The investment is part of government plans to invest £5.2 billion in flood defence over the next 6 years.

More information – please visit GOV.UK:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/leigh-expansion-and-hildenborough-embankments-scheme/leigh-expansion-and-hildenborough-embankments-scheme>

You can find out more about how the flood storage area works by watching our [YouTube animation](#).