

Hexham Flood Alleviation Scheme business update April 2022

Introduction

Please find below the latest update on the Hexham Flood Alleviation Scheme.

We are contacting all businesses and residents on the Bridge End and Tyne Mills Industrial Estates in Hexham, to provide information on the design and construction of the scheme, which has been developed to reduce the flood risk from the River Tyne and Skinnersburn.

Background to the scheme

Our proposed scheme aims to reduce the risk of flooding at both industrial estates. The scheme is designed to protect against floods which have up to a 1% chance of occurring in any given year, plus defences will be designed to have an additional 300mm of freeboard. This means our scheme will protect homes and businesses in the Tyne Mills and Bridge End Industrial Estates up to the level of the Storm Desmond 2015 flood event.

The scheme defences are a combination of flood walls and grass embankments along the bank tops of the River Tyne and within the Skinnersburn. The defence on the north bank will run from the existing flood embankment behind Egger UK Ltd to the former Reiver Sports site, where it crosses the site and ties into high ground in the northwest corner. The total length is approximately 370m and varies in height up to a maximum of 700mm.

On the south bank the defence runs from east of the Northumbrian Water Peth Head Pumping Station and along the edge of the Northumberland County Council yard, crossing the Skinnersburn and tying in to high ground. The total length of the defence will be approximately 300m and varies in height up to 815mm. At the Skinnersburn however, the height will be approximately 2.4m above the bottom of the channel.

Design and delivery of the scheme – progress update

Our Final Business Case was approved in October 2021 and funding allocated to the scheme. We also now have agreement from the Local Planning Authority (Northumberland County Council) to obtain a Lawful Development Certificate

We commenced construction of the flood defence at Tyne Mills after Christmas and the wall is almost complete with the final finishes still required.

We are currently completing our design for the Skinnersburn crossing and as part of this we are working closely with Northumberland County Council (NCC) as Local Lead Flood Authority on our submission for Land Drainage Consent.

On the north bank at Bridge End, we are carrying out preparation works in advance of construction. This preparation includes working with Northern Power Grid (NPG) and BT Openreach on utility diversions and the laying of new duct work has started.

As part of the scheme we intend to demolish the building on the former Reiver Sports site. An application is being prepared to seek approval from the local authority and notice of this will be advertised on site.

We remain in discussion with key landowners to gain their agreement for construction access requirements and remaining environmental surveys.

Once we have a confirmed start date for the construction at Bridge End we will provide another update.

Gravel extraction enquiries

We have received several enquiries regarding the plans by a local company, for a gravel extraction site behind the flood embankment, at Anickgrange Haugh. The proposed extraction site is entirely independent of the Environment Agency's Hexham Flood Alleviation Scheme.

The proposal for the gravel extraction site is not part of our Flood Alleviation Scheme. We are not working in partnership with the local company proposing the gravel extraction site nor have they contributed to our scheme.

Any decision about the gravel extraction site will be determined by the local planning authority i.e. Northumberland County Council. The Environment Agency is a statutory consultee on planning matters.

Hexham Flood Alleviation Scheme - Completion timescales 2022

We expect to complete the Hexham Flood Alleviation Scheme by winter 2022.

Funding and contributions from businesses

We are seeking financial contributions to the scheme by businesses who will benefit from the scheme. However, we are very mindful that at the current time and with the ongoing pressures of Covid-19, many businesses may not be in a position to offer a contribution.

If you are in position to contribute towards to the scheme, it's not too late! We would welcome a conversation with you and will gladly answer any questions that you may have. Our Project Team's contact details are below.

Next steps and information

We will keep you updated on construction progress over the coming months through our newsletters and our website:

<https://consult.environment-agency.gov.uk/north-east/hexham-flood-alleviation-scheme/>

We are always happy to answer any questions that you may have.

Please contact our Project Team if you have any questions about Hexham Flood Alleviation Scheme, by emailing: hexhamfas@environment-agency.gov.uk

If you would prefer to speak to us by telephone, please contact Amanda McKeivitt on 0208 4746410.

Flood Resilience on the Hexham industrial estates – advice and guidance

Tips to help you prepare for flooding

Alongside Flood defence schemes, one of the most important areas that businesses and residents can consider is improving their overall resilience to flooding. This can be through preparedness to prevent the property flooding in the first place and also resilience measures that can be used to help you bounce back as quickly as possible following a flood event.

These are just some of the ways you can improve your resilience to flooding:

[Sign up to the free Flood Warning Service](#) – this a free text or phone service that issues an EA Flood Alert or Flood Warning when we believe there may be flooding in your area.

[Link with Hexham Community Flood Group](#) – you can link your property/business with the Hexham Community Flood Group to receive support and earlier notifications of potential flooding.

[Create a Business Flood Plan and allocate Flood Wardens as part of that plan](#) – a flood plan can be used to highlight vulnerable employees, safe evacuation routes and safe muster points. Most companies have a plan in place in case of a fire, but statistics show you are at greater risk of flooding these days.

[Install Property Level Resilience \(PLR\) measures](#) – these can be physical flood defence measures, such as flood barriers and flood doors and also things like raising electrical sockets and how you store materials, etc.

If you would like support to improve your business's resilience to flooding, please contact our Northumberland Community Engagement Officer, Colin Hall, who will be happy to help you. Email colin.hall@environment-agency.gov.uk or telephone 020 7714 0547.