

# Managing Flood Risk in Northwich

Newsletter 4 – April 2014

Welcome to our fourth newsletter keeping you up to date with the plans to reduce the risk of flooding from rivers in Northwich.

The Environment Agency and Cheshire West & Chester Council have secured £4million to design and build a sustainable flood risk management scheme in Northwich. The scheme will seek to reduce the risk of flooding from the Rivers Dane and Weaver to around 700 local homes and businesses.

Half of the money was secured from a special growth fund set up by the government following extensive flooding across the UK in 2012. This was made available for the construction of flood defences that would encourage economic growth. The bid for funding in Northwich was successful because, by reducing the risk of flooding in the town, we will protect existing investment and encourage further development that will generate employment.

## Progress Update

Since the last newsletter, issued in December 2013, we have collated all of the information we needed to gather about the constraints, technical viability and cost of various flood defence options. Reviewing this information has allowed us to develop the most appropriate proposals for the reduction of flood risk in the town centre. We have made every effort to ensure our proposals complement the regeneration vision for Northwich, which is to reconnect the town centre with the river, as we see in the re-developed Marina area. The buildings and urban landscape situated so close to the river's edge, however, makes this difficult for us to achieve and has resulted in us limiting the height and visual appearance of the flood defences in our designs, and how they will operate in times of flood.

Data from site investigations has also helped us determine what the nature of the ground conditions are and what we may need to construct.

We ruled out storing water upstream as the whole solution to the problem as there isn't enough available storage space to significantly reduce the height of the defences in the town centre. However, we did find that some storage could reduce the impacts of future increases in river flows and rainfall due to climate change.

We continue to work closely with the Canal & River Trust regarding the upstream control structures on the Weaver Navigation to see whether they can help reduce water levels in the town centre. We have found that, like upstream flood storage, this could help reduce impacts from climate change.

The final option, therefore, involves building raised defences (such as walls, gates and self-closing barriers) in the town centre. We have put together a business case looking at the costs of a scheme of this nature and the benefits it will provide. Our proposals currently include the construction of raised flood defences along the river's edge in some locations. In

locations where defences need to be very high, we are considering glass panels, self closing barriers or demountable defences to maintain the connection with the river. All these proposals have to be within the available budget of the scheme.

## Supporting economic growth

We meet regularly with Cheshire West and Chester Council to discuss our plans and to ensure that we understand their capital investment programme in Northwich, including the Barons Quay and the Memorial Hall developments and the Gyrotory works. We are also liaising with the Canal and Rivers Trust and Waitrose regarding changes we need to make at the Hayhurst Marina. We are talking with those involved with these projects to ensure that we maximise any opportunities of working together and look to minimise any disruption during construction.

## Find out more and have your say

We have already consulted most of the businesses and properties directly affected by the proposed works and will be talking to the remaining outstanding properties through April. We want to speak to the wider community and are planning a series of drop-in events where you can come and find out more about the scheme.

These will take place on the 8<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup> May in Northwich Library between 10 am and 5pm. This is your opportunity to review our plans and speak to us about any ideas, questions or concerns you may have. We will also arrange further community drop-in sessions, which we will publicise in newsletters, local media and online.

Once finalised, we will submit the plans to Cheshire West and Chester Council for approval. We hope to begin construction early in 2015 following planning approval.

## Project timeline

The following dates are indicative only at this stage, but show the steps we need to take to finalise the plans and begin construction of the flood defences:

**Spring 2014:** Consult on plans and confirm a preferred option for a flood risk management scheme in Northwich. Commence procurement and tendering process to identify the construction company that will design and build the scheme.

**Summer 2014:** Submit final designs for planning approval.

**Winter 2014:** Obtain planning approval and other consents.

**Spring 2015:** Construction begins.

**Summer 2016:** Construction complete.

customer service line  
03708 506 506

incident hotline  
0800 80 70 60

floodline  
0845 988 1188

[www.environment-agency.gov.uk](http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk)

## How can I find out more?

We plan to continue our regular newsletters to keep the local community updated on progress and will be hosting drop-in sessions and meetings for the local community to attend so they can meet the team, ask questions, raise concerns and have input into the final designs. We will publicise dates and venues once they have been arranged.

We will be working closely with various agencies including Cheshire West & Chester Council, Northwich Town Council, United Utilities, The Canal & Rivers Trust, the Northwich Independent Retail Association (NIRA) and the River Weaver Navigation Society, so you will also be able to get in touch with these agencies to represent your views.

If you would like further information, please contact the Environment Agency direct:

- Call David Brown at the Environment Agency, on 01925 542269 or email him at [david.j.brown@environment-agency.gov.uk](mailto:david.j.brown@environment-agency.gov.uk)
- Write to the Environment Agency at Richard Fairclough House, Knutsford Road, Warrington, WA4 1HG.
- Follow us on Twitter @EnvAgencyNW
- Find us online by visiting [www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk) and searching for 'Northwich Flood Risk Management Scheme'.

## Be prepared for flooding

Even with flood defences in place, you can never entirely remove the risk of flooding. It is important that you prepare for this by phoning our Floodline, on **0845 988 1188**, to find out if you can sign up for free flood warnings. You can also get information on developing a flood plan, putting together a flood kit and other ways of preparing for flooding by visit our website at: [www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk) and searching for 'prepare for a flood'.

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