

Mytholmroyd Flood Alleviation

Your questions answered

25 May 2016

Reducing the risk of flooding is a priority for us. The government has given us extra funding to deliver a flood alleviation scheme that will benefit Mytholmroyd.

The Mytholmroyd action plan sets out the programme that will be implemented to further reduce flood risk to the town along with the anticipated timescales for delivery.

This document will answer questions that may be raised by the community and partners as we move forward with designing a scheme for the town.

DETAILS OF THE PLAN

I thought the action plan would present a solution, but there isn't much detail here. Why not?

Deciding on a solution for Mytholmroyd is something that will take time and be subject to extensive consultation if we are to ensure that we make the right decisions that fit local needs. The action plan is just the first step in a lengthy process and sets out the programme needed to be implemented to further reduce flood risk. We want to involve the local community at every opportunity and that's what we're doing by publishing the action plan today.

How much will it cost?

It is estimated that we will be spending more than £10m. Once we have finalised options we will have a better understanding of the overall cost.

How long will this process take?

The full business case, details below, will be approved by October, with construction starting at the end of 2016.

Construction of a scheme for Mytholmroyd is likely to take approximately two years. A continuous programme of natural flood risk management measures will run on beyond the duration of the construction.

What are the next steps?

The action plan is one step in a bigger piece of work.

Over the next few months the priority is to engage and discuss the options that have been identified as a result of the evidence collected and investigations carried out.

Our project team will now be starting preparatory work.

It is expected that work will immediately commence on finalising detail design and construction of any proposed linear defences, such as flood walls, and formal storage areas.

Can it not be done quicker?

We need to ensure we can deliver the right scheme for Mytholmroyd and this means investigation, evidence and design work which we would then expect to consult the community on. We anticipate work to start in December 2016.

Options for early interventions and quick wins will also be considered.

Will this stop a repeat of the December floods?

Flood risk can be reduced but we can't totally eliminate the risk of flooding. December 2015 was the wettest December on record, but also the wettest calendar month overall since records began in 1910.

The growing threat from more extreme weather events means we must always be as prepared and as resilient as possible.

What will the wall heights be?

The extent, height and appearance of any walls will be developed as the outline design is progressed in consultation with partners and the local community and will depend on other viable measures to reduce flood risk. Raised walls will be required on both banks of the river Calder and Cragg Brook with maximum wall heights of approximately 1.8m. Measures to soften the visual impact of walls will include the use of glass panels, raised footpaths and landscaping.

Why aren't you considering any natural flood management measures?

The plan presently outlines the potential options using hard engineering techniques in the town. Options to further reduce flood risk such as upstream storage and Natural Flood Risk Management measures will be looked at in more detail through the wider Calderdale Catchment Plan.

MAINTENANCE

Why can't you do more dredging?

We completed a study in 2014 which concluded the benefits of dredging are very limited due to the geometry of the river. Our current maintenance programme focuses on clearing vegetation and maintaining the channel, however, we will revisit the benefits of dredging once a scheme for Mytholmroyd is finalised.

RECOVERY & FUNDING

What have you been doing since Boxing Day?

Since Boxing Day, Environment Agency teams have carried out thousands of inspections and made a number of repairs and removed blockages. Temporary defences have also been constructed to help protect the town. Crucially, data and evidence has been gathered during the inspection process in order to produce models that provide a better understanding of the catchment and how certain scenarios for flood risk measures will work.

2016	
January	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continued to manage the ongoing risk from high river levels and storm threats. Our incident room remained open and work started on emergency repairs and removal of debris Requests for information from the public, partners, DEFRA and media escalated rapidly. Data and evidence takes time to gather after such a big incident and therefore limits what we are able to respond with straight away
February	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completed or made temporary repairs to approximately a third of identified defects across Yorkshire, a significant number of these involve blockage removal Monitored, inspected, and maintained temporary defences during rainfall periods in the Upper Calder Valley, all temporary defences held during these events Continued to work with third parties influencing them to promptly and effectively repair their assets which were damaged during the floods Secured approval from our national large projects board (LPRG) to progress the appraisal for the Hebden Bridge Flood Alleviation Scheme Consultants appointed to develop a plan for Mytholmroyd by the end of May Attended drop-in sessions in Calder Valley and at the Calderdale MBC Flood Commission
March	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Permissions and organisation of removal of the collapsed building in Mytholmroyd Work was also done to remove gravel from Hebden Water Ongoing work with Calderdale Council Speaking to partners to validate draft flood extents received from our consultants. We aim to have a final version completed by June 2016 Environment Agency Chairman visited affected businesses in Mytholmroyd and Hebden Bridge. She also met with local flood wardens and saw the continued gravel clearance works We have been developing our engagement plan with the help of an engagement specialist. We are starting with a focus on Mytholmroyd and the Catchment Plan, and this will be expanded into a valley/programme wide plan
April	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meetings held with new flood wardens in Calderdale to develop Community Flood Plans Attended a public meeting with Hebden Bridge Partnership to discuss works and what is happening three months on from the flooding Negotiating terms for office space within the Grange Dene medical centre complex in central Mytholmroyd. It will be available for the community to drop in to talk to us about the scheme and our wider work throughout Calderdale Attended a meeting on 16 April called by Craig Whittaker MP to update people on the progress of recovery and future works in Calderdale

What are you doing to make sure the area is better protected now?

Following the December floods, the Prime Minister also announced a package of £40m to rebuild and improve flood defences following the December 2015 flooding (£10m of this is earmarked for improvements to the Foss Barrier in York to provide greater resilience during future floods. The remaining £30m has been allocated for repairs and improvements to flood risk assets in a number of high priority areas across the affected parts of Yorkshire).

Since the December floods, the Environment Agency has inspected nearly 7,000 flood defence structures in Yorkshire and identified 1000 defects requiring repair. Permanent and temporary repairs, have been completed with a number of repairs still in progress.

£280m will be invested between April 2015 and March 2021 in Yorkshire, better protecting over 100,000 homes.

Is there enough funding available to protect the town?

Flooding can have a devastating effect on people's lives, homes and businesses and reducing the flood risk in Calderdale is absolutely vital. Across Yorkshire, we will be investing £280m to improve flood protection in the current six year programme, reducing the risk to more than 100,000. This includes multi-million pound projects in Skipton, Hebden Bridge, Mytholmroyd and the Humber estuary.

The funding for the core scheme will be provided by Government, but further local funding may be required for any additional complimentary enhancements proposed.

The phasing and timing of works will be determined by the appointed contractor, but the construction of a scheme for Mytholmroyd is likely to take more than two years.

Where to get further information

General enquiries - Monday to Friday, 8am to 6pm

National Customer Contact Centre PO Box 544 Rotherham S60 1BY Email enquiries@environment-agency.gov.uk	Telephone 03708 506 506 Minicom (for the hard of hearing) 03702 422 www.gov.uk/environment-agency
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How you can help

Please report any debris or blockages in a watercourse that could increase the risk of flooding to our incident hotline on 0800 807060 Telephone (24 hour service)

Sign up for Flood Warnings Direct - Contact Floodline on 0345 988 1188 to register