

# news release

## Leeds flood alleviation scheme

25 January 2018

### Decision on Leeds Flood Alleviation Scheme proposals for Rodley Nature Reserve

Following a consultation late last year on options for the second phase of the Leeds Flood Alleviation Scheme and detailed discussions with key stakeholders and residents, the option of Rodley Nature Reserve as a location will no longer be pursued for water storage to reduce flood risk.

Proposals for upstream water storage areas are being assessed and developed as part of the scheme. These areas can be operated by a control gate system meaning water can be held within the chosen storage area and then released back into the river when safe to do so. Rodley Nature Reserve was identified as one potential location where the scheme could create more water storage to help manage river levels through the centre of Leeds during a flood.

**Leeds City Council executive member for regeneration, transport and planning Councillor Richard Lewis said:**

“We have had some very positive discussions with Rodley Nature Reserve through our consultation process, but after looking further into using the reserve as part of a scheme to reduce flood risk, and listening to the concerns of stakeholders, we have taken the decision not to proceed with this location as an option.”

“We’d like to thank all of those with an interest in Rodley Nature Reserve for taking the time to take part in these amicable discussions and for giving their feedback.”

**The Trustees of Rodley Nature Reserve Trust Limited said:**

"The Trustees of Rodley Nature Reserve are very pleased that the reserve is no longer being considered for use as a flood water storage area. This helps to safeguard the reserve as a refuge for wildlife and as a great community asset. We would like to put on record our appreciation of the very professional way that the Leeds Flood Alleviation Scheme team has worked with the trustees of the reserve to produce a good resolution to this issue."

Following the successful opening of the £50 million first phase of the scheme serving the city centre, Holbeck and Woodlesford in October last year, phase two of the Leeds Flood Alleviation Scheme identifies measures further upstream including the Kirkstall corridor which was badly hit by the 2015 Christmas floods. It also looks at areas beyond the city boundary to further reduce the possibility of the river flooding in Leeds, as well as additional measures to offer protection for the South Bank area of the city centre which is a key future economic driver for Leeds.

The phase two plans have a strong focus on Natural Flood Management (NFM), with proposals to create large new woodland areas alongside other approaches to slowing the flow in the River Aire catchment upstream of Leeds. It also proposes water storage areas to be created and developed,

operated by control gates system meaning water can be held and then released back into the river when safe to do so. A third element would be the removal of existing obstructions along the river to help reduce water levels, along with lowering the riverbed in places to improve its capacity and flow.

Aside from these measures, phase two would also see some new infrastructure measures installed including landscaping, terracing, embankments and walls, but due to the range of natural measures the height of any engineered defences would not need to be as high as originally projected, typically averaging 1.2 to 1.5 metres in height.

The business case is currently being finalised, and if approved by the government the proposal created by Leeds City Council working with the Environment Agency and BMMJV Limited would see work scheduled to begin in early 2019.

Consultation has been carried out on the proposals with the public and all key stakeholders and landowners, including those in neighbouring authority areas upstream along the River Aire catchment.

For more details on the proposals for the second phase of the Leeds Flood Alleviation Scheme please visit: [www.leeds.gov.uk/fas](http://www.leeds.gov.uk/fas)

**Ends**

**Notes to editors**

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