

Looe Flood Defence and **Regeneration Scheme**



Enabling the economic regeneration of Looe through the feasibility, design and delivery of a flood defence scheme to protect the homes, businesses and infrastructure.

Looe is a key tourist destination and a thriving fishing port which provides high quality fish for local and national fish markets. It is also at the centre of an emerging network of transport improvements which will enable the town to build on its role as a tourism and leisure destination in an environmentally sustainable way.

Although Looe is a comparatively small town, it is a major destination and functions as part of a larger and integrated economic area with Liskeard. These two communities have a long history of being linked, originally by mining but latterly through the tourism industry, and Liskeard relies on the value created in Looe to give trade to its professional services businesses.

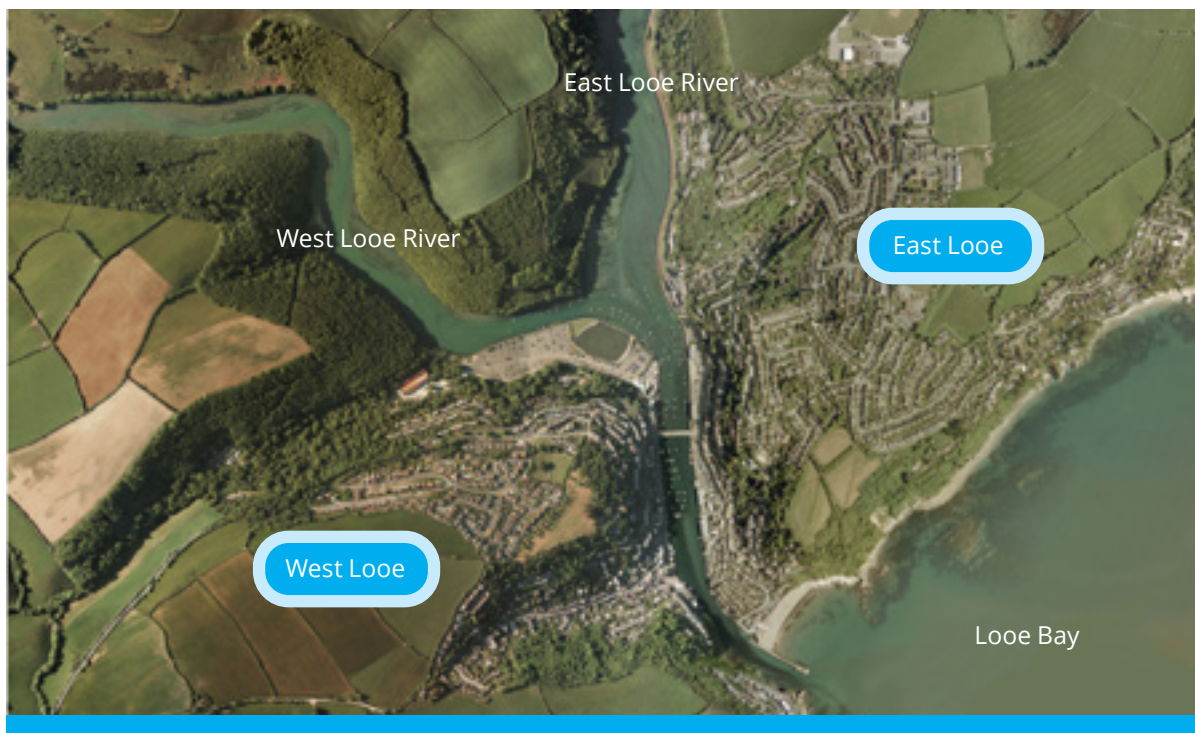
Already described as the most frequently flooded coastal town in the UK, over the next 100 years sea levels are predicted to rise by more than 1 metre as a result of climate change, threatening even more

parts of the town. These include the health centre, the police and fire stations, main food stores and cafes and the fish market, as well as major transport links such as the A387 and the railway station.

Increased flooding will be catastrophic for the town and the wider local economy.

A tidal flood defence scheme has been identified which, if developed and delivered, will:

- protect the entire town, fishing fleet and harbour from increasingly frequent flooding
- enhance the overall environmental integrity of designated sites and water bodies
- help deliver new and improved rail, road, ferry, cycling and walking links
- support the regeneration of Looe and the wider South East Cornwall economy.



Unlocking potential for future growth

The challenge:

- Looe is already **the most frequently flooded coastal town** in the UK
- Sea level increase will mean **flooding will get worse** over time
- A scheme needs to be developed which will not only reduce the risk of flooding but will also attract widespread support, secure all the necessary approvals and permissions, and is capable of being funded.

Current situation

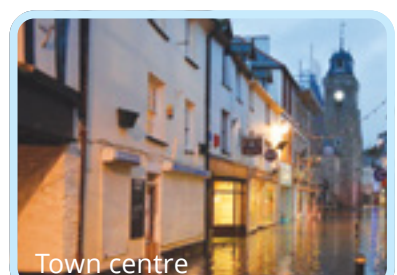
- **Flooding caused £39m of damage** in the town during the last five years
- **Flooding extends over 12 hectares**, affecting properties, businesses, important seafront, and community and transport infrastructure
- **Increase in frequency and extent** predicted due to rising sea levels which will see 16 hectares regularly flooded

The effects on the town centre:

- **Major impact on the local economy**, with 65% of businesses experiencing flooding
- **Additional cost to business**, with each event costing on average £31,000
- **Undermines business confidence**, with many local businesses unable to get insurance and 22% considering their long term future in the town

Key infrastructure that lies within the flood zone

- Railway station and 2 miles of the branch line connecting Looe to mainline rail services at Liskeard
- Main road bridge in the town linking East and West Looe
- Sewers, electricity and other services
- Emergency services with both the fire and police stations in the flood zone
- Health centre which includes local GP surgery
- Fish market which accounts for 10% of all fish landings in Cornwall
- Main food stores serving East and West Looe
- Bank serving businesses in the town and surrounding area



Engagement and support

This is a major project which will have a significant impact on the town. We want **your views** to help shape the scheme and ensure that it meets the needs of all parts of the wider community.

The proposals are aligned with the emerging Looe Neighbourhood Plan and are supported by all the lead organisations in the town.

- **95% of residents are in favour of the scheme** following public exhibitions and consultation with businesses and households
- **Landowner support in principle** secured by Looe Harbour Commissioners
- **Discussions on joint working and funding** with South West Water, Devon and Cornwall Police and Network Rail
- **Economic Impact Assessment** for proposed scheme carried out by Cornwall Council and the Environment Agency

Proposed scheme

In July 2015 Looe Harbour Commissioners funded work to design a new flood defence scheme. This was supported by 95% of local residents and landowners.



Following financial support from Cornwall Council's Cabinet, Looe Harbour Commissioners, Cornwall Council, Looe Town Council, Looe Development Trust, West Looe Town Trust, East Looe Town Trust, the Environment Agency, the RNLI and local MP Sheryll Murray have been working together to turn the draft design into an economically viable and environmentally friendly solution to the town's tidal flooding challenges.

The current proposal* includes:

- A** A **tidal barrier** which will close when flooding is likely.
- B** A **southern breakwater** which will prevent overtopping of the tidal barrier and sea front during tidal surges, provide a shelter for vessels when the flood gates are closed and protect Hannafore Road.
- C** An **extension to the Banjo pier**, creating a low water landing stage providing boat access at all states of the site.
- D** A **cut-off wall below East Looe beach** to prevent tidal flooding bypassing the tidal barrier
- E** A **new walkway from Pennyland in the town to Hannafore** to provide access to the coast path and protected access off the main road.

*Current plans for the positions and lengths of piers, tidal barriers and the breakwater are likely to evolve in response to wave modelling and ecology, and commercial issues

Benefits of the scheme

- **Protect the entire town centre, fishing fleet and harbour from the risk of increasingly frequent flooding** (without the scheme the town centre is unlikely to remain viable beyond 20 – 30 years)
- **Protect 331 homes and 208 businesses**
- **Encourage £49.8m new business growth**
- **Maintain investor confidence** in the town
- **Protect key community services**, including the GP surgery, supermarkets and public utilities
- **Protect the fire and police stations**, enabling emergency services to remain operational
- **Provide continuous access to the harbour side** at all times of the day
- **Restore a missing link of the south-west coast path**
- **Enable development of over 7ha** of employment land
- Part of **integrated series of other investments**, including **improved rail links, 24/7 access to new sea and coastal ferry links**, and **development of a new south east Cornwall cycle hub** at the centre of a new network of routes which address the gap in the national cycle network.

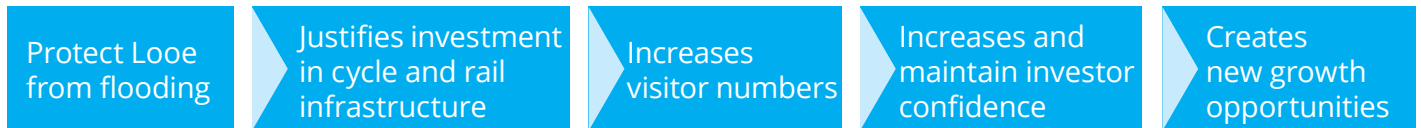
A clear vision for future growth

Looe is at the centre of an exciting emerging network of integrated travel and leisure opportunities, including rail, road, coastal ferries and cycling networks linking the whole of South East Cornwall.

The cycling networks are intended to mirror the success and significance of the North Cornwall cycle links such as the Camel Trail which attracts more than 500,000 visitors per year.

The investment in flood defences is essential to enable these opportunities to progress. It is expected the integrated cycle network will generate around £17.7m over a 15 year period.

None of this will be possible without protecting the town centre's core assets.



Delivery and funding

The current estimated costs for delivering this project are between £60m and £75m.

Some funding has already been committed by local organisations:

- **Cornwall Council has provided £2.3m** to carry out the detailed design work and prepare the business case for the flood protection scheme
- **Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly Local Enterprise Partnership is providing £0.05m** to assess the wider economic benefits of the scheme in South East Cornwall
- **Looe Harbour Commissioners have already committed £0.02m** for the initial options appraisal and continue to lead on local engagement with the community and businesses in the town.
- **Environment Agency have identified the potential for up to £25 million of Environment Agency Flood Defence Grant in Aid**, if approved
- **Looe Town Council have committed £0.02m** to developing the Neighbourhood Plan which will identify sites for future housing, employment growth and sustainable tourism opportunities based on the opportunities created by the flood protection scheme.

There is still a shortfall in funding which will need to be met by other means.

Work is taking place to develop a bid for funding to the Government. Discussions are also taking place with other bodies to encourage joint working. These include South West Water, Devon and Cornwall Police and Network Rail.

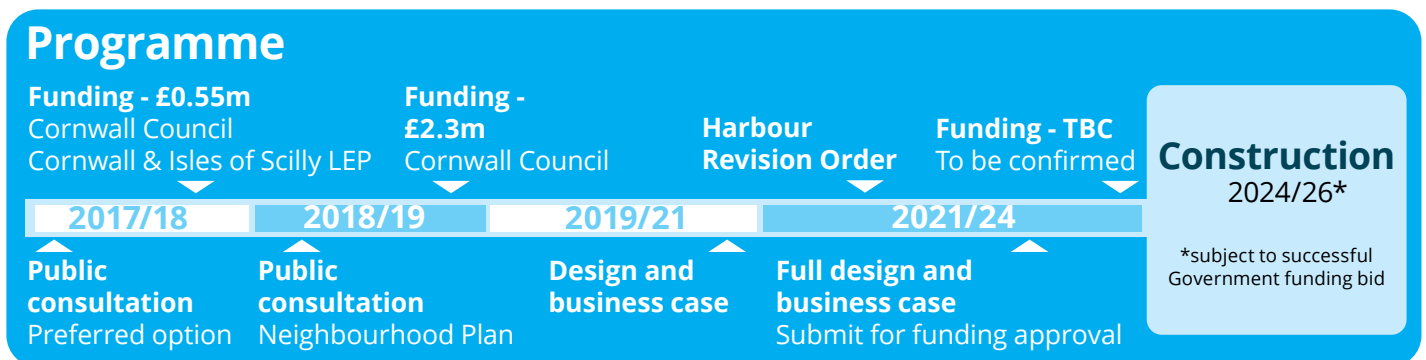
Work is also taking place to bring forward plans to invest in the Looe Valley branch line and a network of cycle trails.

Cornwall Council is providing £4.1m to develop a network of cycle trails in the area as part of a wider set of proposals to boost sustainable tourism in South East Cornwall.

It has become increasingly clear that this vital scheme needs to be delivered as soon as possible to protect homes and businesses in Looe from flooding, and reduce the impact on the wider economy of south east Cornwall.

Following a detailed review of the current timetable for the scheme using the traditional process, the project board are proposing to adopt an accelerated programme which would bring the delivery of the scheme forward by two years.

This would mean that work could begin on developing detailed designs at the same time as seeking the necessary permissions for the scheme (including the harbour revision order, planning permission and marine licences). If the Government provides funding, detailed design work could begin in 2022. The scheme may also be subject to a Harbour Revision Order which could take up to 18 months to complete. This would mean construction is likely to begin in 2024.



You can find out more about the project on our website: www.cornwall.gov.uk/LooeFloodDefence
You can also email us at LooeFloodDefence@cornwall.gov.uk

Information and advice about what to do in a flood is available from the Environment Agency:
<https://flood-warning-information.service.gov.uk/what-to-do-in-a-flood>