



## Welcome to the first edition of Looe Flood Defence News Sign up for our future newsletter editions emailing us:

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Our new newsletter will keep you in touch with what is happening with the development of the Looe Tidal Flood Defence project by providing the latest information about events, activities and key milestones.

### About our project

**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.

Looe is already the most frequently flooded coastal town in the UK, causing £39m of damage to homes and businesses during the last five years. 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.

Potential areas at risk include the local GP surgery, police station, main food stores and cafes, the fish market and potentially the fire station, as well as major transport links such as the A387 which crosses the Looe River joining West and East Looe together, and the railway station which connects the town to the mainline at Liskeard.

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.



With tourism worth around £47.8m to the local economy and supporting more than 1,500 local jobs, a decline of the town centre could not only deter people from visiting the town and reduce future investment, but could also affect holiday parks, communities and businesses right across South East Cornwall.

This would be catastrophic for the town and the wider local economy.

It is clear that action needs to be taken to reduce the extremely high risk of further coastal flooding and erosion in Looe over the next 100 years. By delivering this scheme as quickly as possible, we can reduce this risk and protect key transport links in and around the town, at the same time as enhancing the marine and visitor economy.

## What is being proposed?

**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

**The proposal\*, which aligns with the Looe Neighbourhood Development Plan, includes:**

- A tidal barrier which will close when flooding is likely

- 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.
- An extension to the Banjo pier, creating a low water landing stage providing boat access at all states of the site.
- A cut-off wall below East Looe beach to prevent tidal flooding bypassing the tidal barrier
- 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 are likely to evolve in response to wave modelling and ecology, and commercial issues



## Who is involved?

The project is being led by a range of partners.

**These include:**

- Cornwall Council
- Looe Harbour Commissioners
- Environment Agency
- Looe Town Council

- Looe Development Trust
- West Looe Town Trust
- East Looe Town Trust and
- RNLI

Discussions are also taking place with South West Water, Devon and Cornwall Police and Network Rail to encourage joint working.

## What are we doing?

A number of different options have considered as potential solutions during the past 20 years. Unfortunately, following detailed consideration, only one – the tidal barrier scheme – was considered viable.

In July 2015 Looe Harbour Commissioners funded work to develop proposals for a new food defence scheme. The outcome was supported by 95% of local residents and landowners.

Last year Cornwall Council's Cabinet agreed to support the development of the Looe Flood Defence project, allocating £2.3m from the South-East Cornwall Regeneration Programme.

Since then Cornwall Council members and officers have been working with Looe Harbour Commissioners, Looe Town Council, Looe Development Trust, West Looe Town Trust, East Looe Town Trust, the Environment Agency, the RNLI and local MP Sheryll Murray to turn the proposals into an economically viable and environmentally friendly solution to the town's tidal flooding challenges.

A Project Board and Steering Group have been set up to drive the progress of the scheme and ensure that key milestones are met.

The costs for delivering this exciting and ambitious project are currently estimated at between £60m and £75m. Work is taking place to prepare a bid for funding to submit to the Government.



At the same time more detailed work is being carried out for the outline design of the scheme. During the summer surveyors from the MWJV design team used a small amphibious vehicle to carry out a detailed laser scan and sonar survey of the Harbour, Banjo Pier and Seawall.

Discussions are also taking place to acquire the land required to increase the capacity of Looe Rail Station. Cornwall Council is also working with GWR, Network Rail and the Devon and Cornwall Rail Partnership on plans to improve the service between Looe and the mainline.

In addition, 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. This will involve bringing forward plans to invest in the Looe Valley branch line and a network of cycle trails.

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## How will the project benefit the town?

### The main aims of the proposal are to:

- protect the entire town, the fishing fleet facilities and harbour from increasingly frequent flooding
- protect 331 homes and 208 businesses in and around the town centre
- protect key transport links, including rail, road and cycle hub
- allow the emergency services to remain operational.

### It will also support the regeneration of Looe and ensure the long term sustainability of the area by:

- encouraging £49.8m new business growth
- providing access to the sea at all states of the tide, and
- providing an answer to a missing link in the south-west coast path

Looe is at the centre of an exciting emerging network of integrated travel and leisure opportunities.

## The scheme will make it easier to provide:

- improved rail links, with new investment in the Looe Valley branch line
- continuous access to sea and coastal ferry links, and
- the 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. This will aim to mirror the success and significance of the North Cornwall

cycle links, including the Camel Trail which attracts more than 500,000 visitors a year to the local area.

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.

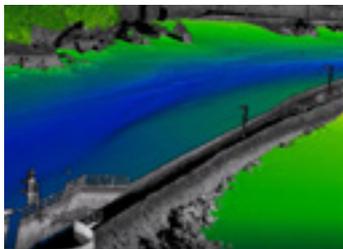
None of this will be possible without protecting the town's core assets from flooding.

## What has been achieved during the past four months

Members of the project team have been carrying out a series of surveys and detailed assessments as part of the ongoing work to design the scheme and to help secure Government funding for the project. **These include:**

### Waterfront survey

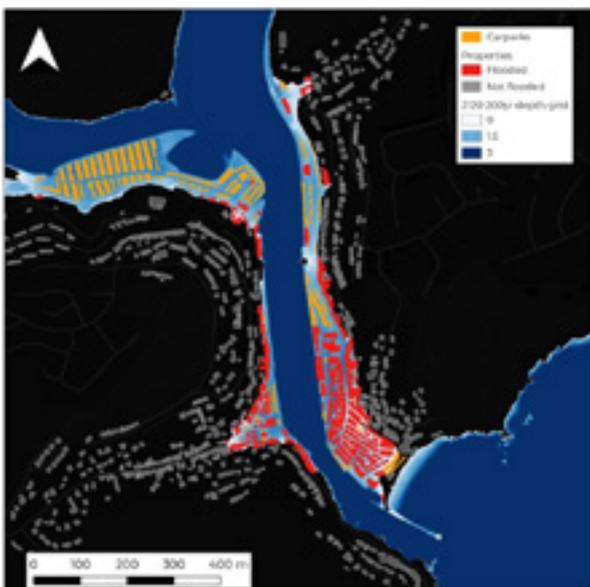
We have carried out a very high resolution 3D survey of nearly every inch of the Looe's waterfront.



This survey is being used for numerous parts of the project development – from working out where to specify ground investigations to modelling the flood risk and soon to designing the proposed structures.

### Flooding risk

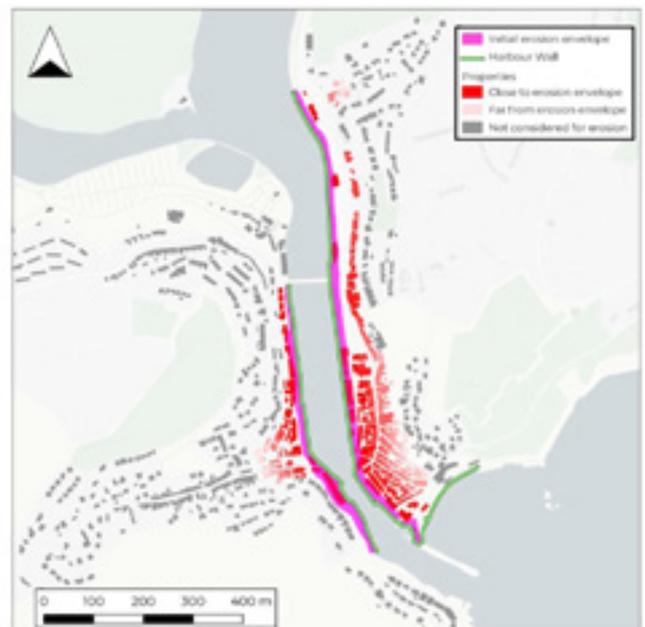
Using the latest Environment Agency data on extreme water levels and the government's modelling of future sea level rise we have looked at the extent and depth of flooding over the next 100 years.



This has allowed us to work out the number of residential and commercial properties at risk and estimate the economic impact of the flooding.

### Erosion risk

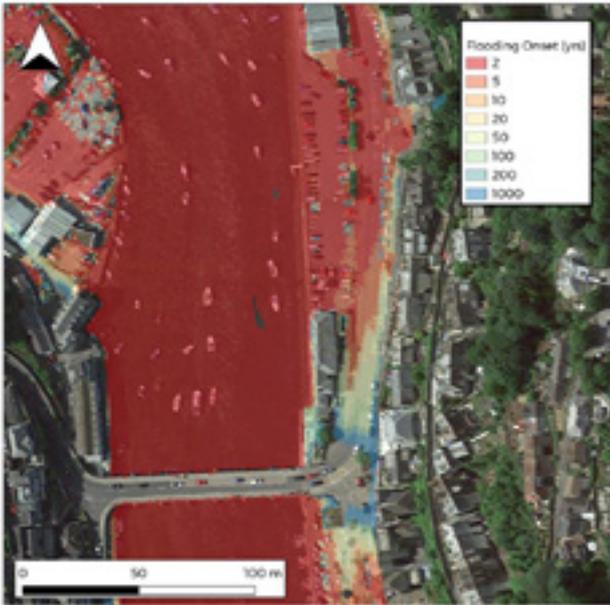
If no one did anything to maintain the current harbour walls, then over time they would fail and lead to erosion which would severely affect the town.



We have estimated how significant this impact would be, again to justify how important it is to invest in the walls and the future defences.

### Impact on transport links

The road and rail links to Looe flood with a relatively high frequency. We have estimated the economic impact of these transport impacts to support the case for investment in the flood defences.



### Impact on utilities

In addition to people and property at risk on the ground, we also need to consider what is at risk of flooding below ground.



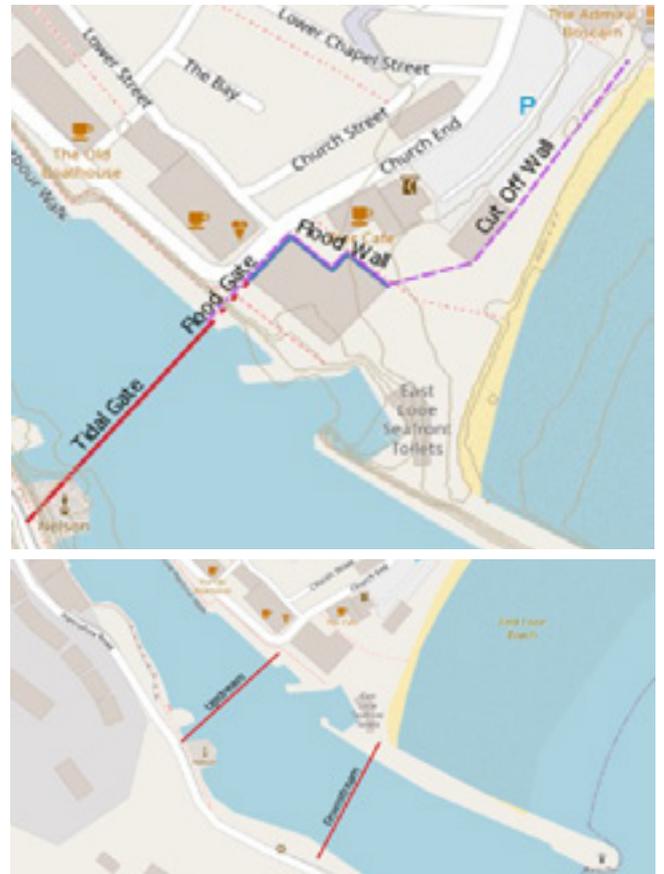
Figure 10 - Location of below ground utilities

A good understanding of these services allows us to value the impacts of flooding and make sure we don't interrupt services when carrying out works.

### Tidal Gates

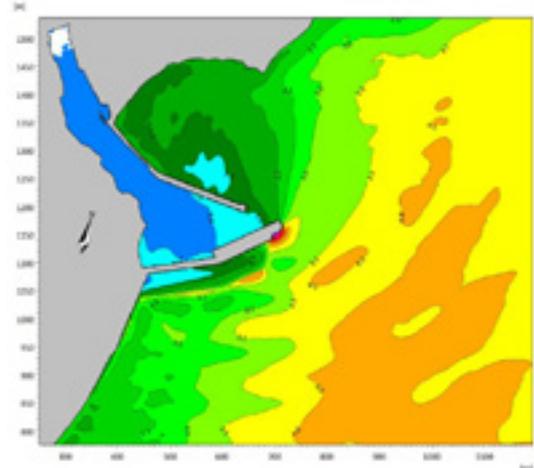
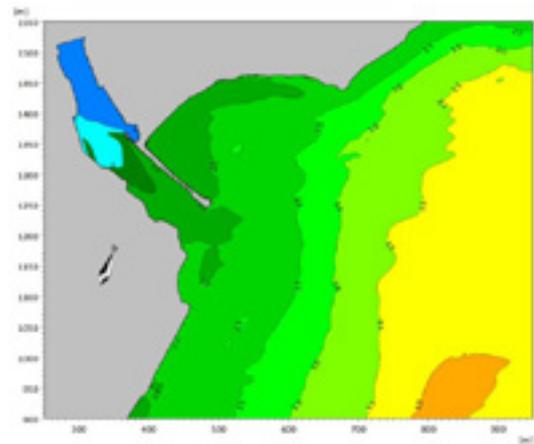
We have explored a number of locations to place a gate or gates and accompanying flood wall to prevent flood water flowing inland.

No locations have been finalised yet as we now need to carry out ground investigations, look at local impacts such as visual impact and discuss with landowners and the town council.



### Wave heights

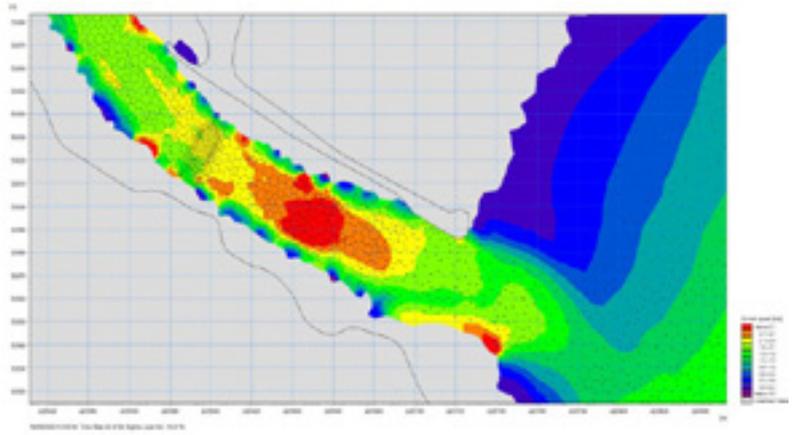
We have modelled how much wave heights can be reduced with a new breakwater. Although the location and the type of breakwater has yet to be agreed, we can demonstrate that it can deliver the much needed shelter for the harbour.



## Peak water speeds during a fluvial flood and spring tide

We have modelled the water velocities with and without the tidal barrier.

This information will be used to both design the gates for safe access and to assess the impacts on sediment movement and water quality.



## Getting involved

We recognise that this is a major project which will have a significant impact on the town.

There was overwhelming public support for the proposals put forward by the Harbour Commissioners in 2015 and we want to build on this support and ensure that the emerging scheme meets the needs of all parts of the wider community.

We are already working closely with a range of local organisations and key stakeholders including the Harbour Commissioners, the Town Council, Looe Development Trust, RNLI and East and West Looe Town Trusts. But we also want local residents and businesses to have the opportunity to help shape the scheme.

We will also be providing information and updates at key milestones throughout the project and using surveys and online questionnaires to enable local people to give us their views on the proposals.

As well as this newsletter, regular updates and information about the progress of the project will be provided on our website

**[www.cornwall.gov.uk/LooeFloodDefence](http://www.cornwall.gov.uk/LooeFloodDefence)**

You can also get information and advice about what to do in a flood from the Environment Agency

**<https://flood-warning-information.service.gov.uk/what-to-do-in-a-flood>**

## What happens next?

It has become increasingly clear that we need to ensure that this vital scheme is delivered as soon as possible to protect homes, businesses and key infrastructure in Looe.

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, provided funding is secured and all the necessary permissions are in place, (including the harbour revision order,

planning permission and the marine licences), construction could begin in 2024, with the scheme completed by 2026.

While there are obviously some risks for the partners in continuing to work on the scheme without the confirmation of future support from the Government, we feel that these are outweighed by the significant benefits of preventing two more years of flooding in the town.

We are currently finalising the bid to the Government for funding for the next stage of the scheme which is due to be submitted in 2021.

### Contact:

You can find out more about the project on our website:  
**[www.cornwall.gov.uk/LooeFloodDefence](http://www.cornwall.gov.uk/LooeFloodDefence)**

You can also email us at **[LooeFloodDefence@cornwall.gov.uk](mailto:LooeFloodDefence@cornwall.gov.uk)**