

The Future of UK Flood Defences - Protecting Harbours, Marinas and Riverside Businesses from Flooding

Sunday 20 October, 2024

PRESS RELEASE: Protecting Harbours, Marinas, and Riverside Businesses from Flooding – The Future of UK Flood Defences

As Storm Ashley wreaks havoc across the UK, flooding is hitting some of the country's most vulnerable areas—harbours, marinas, and riverside properties. These critical locations not only house vital industries but are also home to thousands of businesses and residents. Now, more than ever, it is essential to install, maintain and upgrade flood defences to safeguard public safety and the economic lifeblood of these areas.

TILT Engineering Design, a leader in maritime solutions, is calling for immediate action to strengthen the **flood resilience** of coastal and riverside infrastructure, ensuring that both businesses and the public are better protected from future storms.

"Harbours and riverside businesses are on the frontline of flooding risks," says Ian Dobson, Managing Director of TILT Engineering Design. "With extreme weather events becoming more frequent, **upgrading flood defences** is not just about protecting property—it's about ensuring the safety of local communities and the continuity of economic activity in these vital areas. A lot of focus [and funds] is directed towards protecting homes, however if we really want to have a resilient growing economy we must ensure that businesses are adequately protected"

Harbours and Marinas: Critical Areas for Flood Protection

Harbours and marinas are highly susceptible to storm surges and rising sea levels, which can cause significant flooding, disrupt maritime activities, and damage infrastructure incurring huge costs. These areas need **robust flood defence systems** to mitigate the risks posed by coastal flooding. For many businesses it falls to the owners and occupiers to ensure that they are resilient to flood events.

"Waterfront infrastructure needs a rethink," says Dobson. "We must move beyond traditional methods and embrace modern, innovative solutions that are capable of withstanding the challenges of rising sea levels and more severe weather patterns."

Harbours and marinas often require a combination of solutions, from **reinforced seawalls** and **flood gates** to **storm surge barriers**. Dobson emphasises the need for **proactive planning**, including regular inspections and maintenance of existing defences, as well as **upgrading structures** to account for increasingly intense weather events.

At the same time, there is significant opportunity to **integrate natural flood defences**—such as salt marshes and wetland restoration—that can act as buffers against storm surges while enhancing the local environment.

Riverside Businesses and Public Safety

Riverside areas, particularly those in urban settings, face a unique set of challenges. In addition to the threat of river flooding, **drainage systems** in these areas are often overwhelmed during heavy rainfall, increasing the risk of flash flooding.

Businesses situated along riverbanks need to invest in **flood gates**, **elevated structures**, and **flood-resistant materials** to minimise damage.

"Riverside defences are often overlooked, but the risks are very real," says Dobson. "It's critical that businesses and local authorities work together to ensure that **flood defence systems** are both **up-to-date** and **reliable**."

Riverside areas would also benefit from **improved drainage systems** and **pumping stations** to ensure that floodwaters can be effectively removed, reducing the impact on both businesses and public spaces.

Innovation and the Future of Flood Defences

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While maintaining current flood infrastructure is essential, **future-proofing** flood defences requires embracing new technologies and design solutions. TILT Engineering Design is working with local authorities and businesses to develop **customised flood defence systems** that address the unique needs of harbours, marinas, and riverside areas.

“We need to be innovative in our approach, particularly where the capital investment is borne by the business,” says Dobson. “Whether it’s using **smart flood barriers** that can respond to real-time conditions, or deploying **floating breakwaters** and **dynamic flood gates**, we have the engineering solutions to make these areas more resilient.”

Investing in flood protection from concept and design stage is paramount. However adapting and improving waterside configurations immediately will not only safeguard businesses and communities but also help to reduce insurance costs and protect critical infrastructure. **“The cost of inaction far outweighs the investment needed to upgrade our flood defences,”** Dobson adds.

A Call for Action: Collaboration for Long-Term Safety

As climate change continues to drive more severe storms and rising water levels, it’s clear that **coastal and riverside areas need immediate attention**. TILT Engineering & Design is calling for collaboration between the government, local authorities, and private industry to ensure that **harbours, marinas, and riverside properties** are adequately protected from flooding risks.

“By working together, we can build **stronger, smarter flood defences** that not only protect the public and businesses today but also prepare us for the future,” concludes Dobson. **“We can’t afford to wait for the next storm—the time to act is now.”**

For more information on how to protect harbours, marinas, and riverside properties from flooding, contact **TILT Engineering Design**.

Company Contact:

TILT Engineering Design Ltd

T. 02392 983894

E. gemma@tilt-ed.com

W. <https://www.tilt-ed.com>

Additional Contact(s):

Gemma 07823775369

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