

The Leigh expansion and Hildenborough embankment scheme

Hildenborough embankment scheme

The Environment Agency has worked with Kent County Council, Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council and the Kent and Medway Economic Partnership (previously the South East Local Enterprise Partnership) to reduce flood risk to over 1,800 homes and 575 non-residential properties in Tonbridge and Hildenborough.

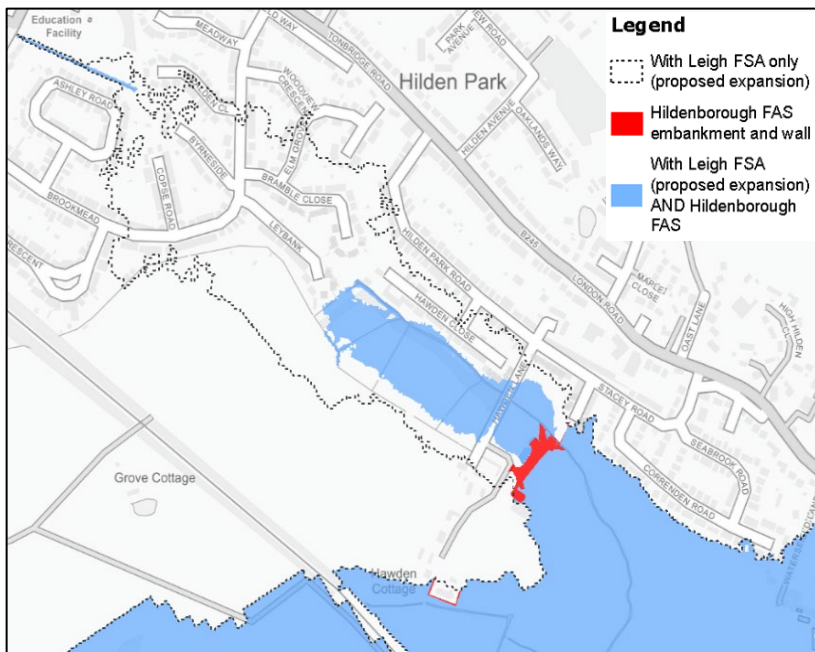
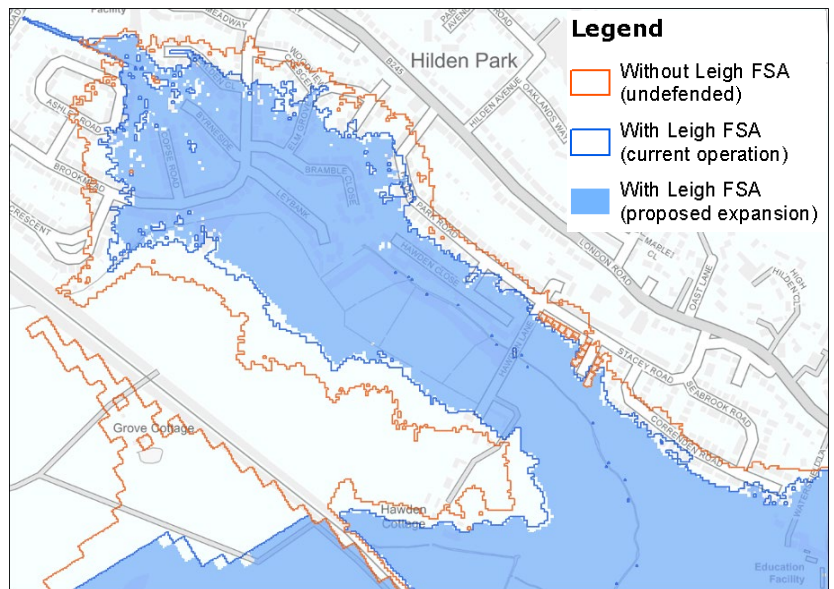
The Leigh expansion and Hildenborough embankment scheme has 2 aspects: increasing the capacity of the Leigh Flood Storage Area (FSA) and constructing a new embankment to protect homes in Hildenborough.

Flood risk in Hildenborough

The most significant risk of flooding in Hildenborough comes from the River Medway backing up the Hawden Stream.

The Leigh FSA helps to reduce flood risk by storing the peak of the flood. This reduces the flows coming downstream towards Tonbridge and Hildenborough. The stored water is slowly released later, once the peak of the flood has passed.

However, even after expanding the capacity of the Leigh FSA, many homes in Hildenborough would still be at risk of flooding due to the low land levels. To reduce this, the Environment Agency has designed a scheme which reduces flood risk to as many homes as possible.



The scheme consists of a new embankment, pumping station and penstock structure on the Hawden Stream. There is also a sheet piled wall which closes the flow path across lower ground levels.

The scheme is designed to work with the expanded Leigh flood storage area and will further reduce flood risk to Hildenborough from the River Medway, up to events with a 1% chance of occurring in any year.

The area east of the embankment still benefits from reduced flooding from the expansion of Leigh FSA.

Left: The change in flood risk during a 1% flood event (plus effects of climate change)

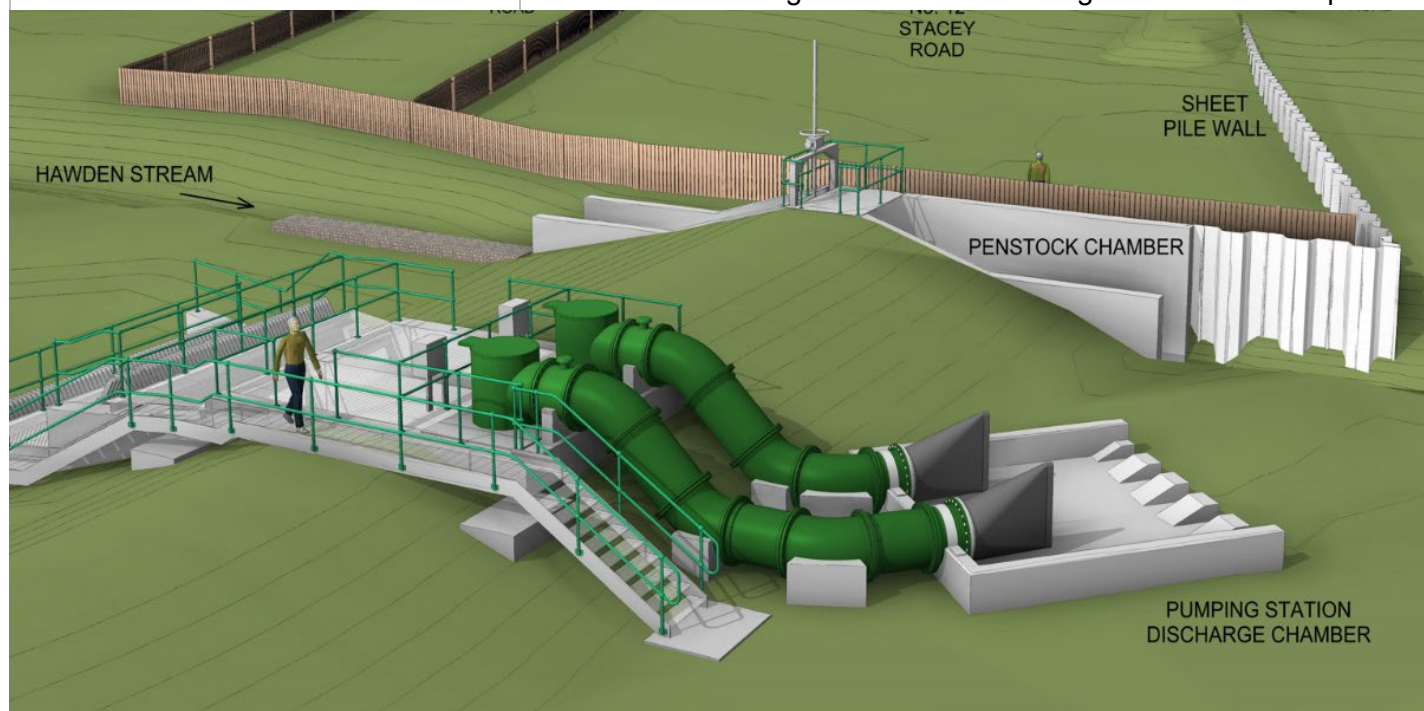
How the Hildenborough scheme works

In normal conditions:

- The penstock gate across the Hawden Stream will be open.
- Water will flow within the Hawden Stream channel as usual.

In flood conditions:

- When downstream water level rises, the penstock gate will automatically close to prevent the water from the River Medway flowing upstream into Hildenborough.
- As the water level on the upstream side rises, the pumps will start to automatically pump the water over the embankment into the downstream floodplain.
- Our modelling shows that no homes are at greater risk of internal flooding with the Hildenborough embankment in place.



Above: Indicative design of the Hildenborough scheme

Maintenance

The Environment Agency will periodically inspect the different elements of the scheme to make sure they continue to work as expected. We will also cut the grass on the embankment through the growing season.

Riparian landowners are responsible for maintaining their section of the Hawden Stream. You normally own a stretch of watercourse:

- that runs on or under your land
- on the boundary of your land, up to its centre.

The deeds for your property or land will tell you if this is not the case. You can find out more about riparian landowner responsibilities and rules here: [Owning a watercourse - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/owning-a-watercourse)

Find out more

You can view animations of how the two elements of the scheme work on YouTube:

- [Hildenborough embankment scheme - YouTube](#)
- [How the Leigh flood Storage Area works to reduce flood risk](#)

You can find out more about the history of the Leigh FSA here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/leigh-flood-storage-area>