FloodAction
Scaling nature-based solutions to flood and drought
Coalition

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FloodAction Coalition announces two UK-first regional water resilience programmes

Launching in Cambridgeshire and Greater Manchester, the two pioneering c.£100m programmes will unite water companies and other organisations exposed to water risk to demonstrate how collective investment in nature at regional scale can strengthen resilience to flooding, drought, pollution and wildfires.

London, 14 October 2026: FloodAction Coalition today announces two regional demonstrator programmes, in Cambridgeshire and Greater Manchester.

Unveiled at Blue Earth Summit, each c.£100m programme treats nature as critical infrastructure, anchoring a water company alongside energy, road and rail operators, and brings together the organisations exposed to water risk in that region to invest in nature-based solutions.

The timing reflects devolution. Combined authorities now hold decision-making and fiscal powers across whole landscapes and the demonstrators give them, and the private sector, a model they can invest in.

At the core of both programmes is a repeatable buyer-investor model, designed to unlock investment at scale. The water company anchors each programme as a catalytic regional investor. Other beneficiaries, from rail and roads to developers and insurers, pay for the wider benefits they receive. This lowers the water company's share and the pressure on customer bills and gives every party a stake in the same outcome. The returns go beyond resilience: new jobs, cleaner water and growth, as reliable water supply and lower flood risk let businesses expand and developers build homes.

Paul van Zyl, Co-founder of FloodAction Coalition and Co-Founder of The Conduit, said:
"FloodAction Coalition is turning resilience into action. Our UK-first demonstrators in Cambridgeshire and Greater Manchester bring water companies, investors, landowners and communities together to invest at scale, in a model we can build on across the UK, protecting homes, livelihoods and nature."

Claudine Blamey, Chief Sustainability Officer, Aviva, and Chair, FloodAction Coalition, said:
"Climate risk is no longer a distant threat. The Environment Agency's research shows the number of homes at flood risk in England could rise by 25% to 8 million by 2050, while warmer weather is already raising the risk of fire. These risks differ from place to place, which is why regional action matters. We need to move from reacting to risk to investing in resilience, and FloodAction Coalition brings the market together to do exactly that."

A DEFRA spokesperson said: *"The government is engaging closely with FloodAction Coalition's regional water resilience demonstrators in Cambridgeshire and Greater Manchester, which are showing how nature-based solutions for flood, water resources and water quality can be scaled from one-off projects into mainstream regional investment. Water companies will co-invest alongside business, local and national beneficiaries, and together we will work to overcome the regulatory and market barriers to make these kinds of approaches repeatable across the country."*

TWO REGIONS, ONE MODEL

Cambridgeshire: an economy that water can sustain. One of the UK's most important growth engines is also one of its driest regions, and drought and wildfire have made water a live constraint on growth. Anglian Water anchors the programme, which will treat water as one connected system: catchment interventions, sustainable drainage and "sponge city" design, water quality, aquifer recharge and supply resilience. The investment plan is being built ahead of the next water funding cycle (AMP9), so Cambridgeshire can set the template for the next generation of water infrastructure.

Greater Manchester: from the uplands to the city. A flood-exposed city-region, where rain on the hills sets the risk for communities, businesses and infrastructure downstream. Recent wildfires in the Peak District show how quickly the same landscape can swing from flood to fire. The programme will show nature-based solutions working at scale, from upland and rural land into dense urban neighbourhoods, bringing rail, energy, airports and universities together as one source of demand rather than leaving each to act alone.

Together, the two demonstrators build the evidence that regional water resilience works and can be repeated across the UK.

PROGRESS TO DATE

Five letters of intent are already in place across the two regions, laying the ground for anchor buyers, regional buyers and the regulatory change needed. Partners include the Environment Agency, United Utilities, Anglian Water, National Highways and Network Rail. The Coalition is also working with government and regulators at a senior level to support nature-based solutions in the next water price review (PR29), so the approach can be taken up by water companies across the country. The roadmap, work packages, milestones and delivery partners are defined. In parallel, the UK Water Resilience Investment Platform, supported by Google.org through The Conduit Foundation, is building the evidence base and the case for aligning regulated spend.

Aviva, The Crown Estate, Anglian Water and the National Trust are supporting the launch at Blue Earth Summit today at 12:30 during The Crown Estate panel discussion, "Scaling Water Resilience for Communities, Growth and Nature".

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For those attending Blue Earth Summit, we are available to meet media on The Crown Estate stand.

NOTES TO EDITORS

About FloodAction Coalition

Convened by The Conduit and chaired by Aviva, FloodAction Coalition brings together water companies, infrastructure operators, public bodies, insurers, investors, conservation organisations and landowners to scale nature-based solutions that make Britain resilient to flood, drought, pollution, wildfire and urban heat. Since its public launch in November 2025, it has grown to more than 80 member organisations, identified 100 catchment-scale projects and advanced five into active support. At the Water Resilience Investment Summit, attended by 250 people and with Emma Hardy, Minister for Flood and Water, it showcased a £1.5bn pipeline across 1.2 million hectares that would protect 24,700 homes and restore 29,300 hectares of habitat.