

Flood warning scheme extended across Orkney Islands

A further 19 areas across Orkney, Aberdeenshire and Angus will be covered by Sepa's service.



Coastal communities vulnerable to flooding will be covered by Sepa's warning scheme (Sepa/PA)

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The Scottish Environment Protection Agency (Sepa) has extended its flood warning scheme, helping more communities better prepare for extreme weather.

A further 19 areas across the Orkney Islands, Aberdeenshire and Angus have been added to the scheme.

Sepa estimates that more than 169,000 Scottish homes and businesses will be at risk of flooding by 2080 due to rising sea levels and extreme weather associated with climate change.



Stormy weather batters Stonehaven (Aberdeenshire Council)

The agency operates a 24-hour flood forecasting and warning service to keep local authorities, emergency services and residents up to date.

It said the addition of Orkney and the north-east coast represented “a significant investment and enhancement of Scotland’s overall resilience to the impact of climate change and extreme weather”.

In December last year Storm Caroline resulted in widespread flooding of coastal communities and travel disruption across Orkney.

Vincent Fitzsimons, head of hydrology and flooding services at Sepa, said: “As sea levels rise all around the UK coastline, it brings with it the risk of coastal erosion and more frequent flooding for Scotland’s exposed coastal communities.

“The Orkney Islands are one of three regions particularly at risk from the impact of coastal flooding and Sepa has spent two years developing the new coastal warning scheme in close partnership with Orkney Island Council to provide a state-of-the-art system which will deliver accurate, real-time warnings to those who need it most.”



Eleven areas of Orkney will be covered by the flood warning service (Sepa)

Councillor Graham Sinclair, chair of Orkney Islands Council’s development and infrastructure committee, said: “The additional and advance notification gives everyone extra time to take necessary precautions in terms of any potential risk to property, or in terms of planning their journeys.

“We welcome the introduction of this new warning system and hope that the greater notice it provides will give locals valuable extra time to plan in periods of severe weather. I’d urge everyone in Orkney to consider the warnings they should be signing up for.”

On the north east coast there are a further eight warning areas, between Inverallochy in Aberdeenshire and Montrose in Angus.

Sepa said it had bridged a gap in its coastal forecasting network that now covers the entire length of Scotland’s east coast.

Environment Secretary Roseanna Cunningham said: “We have committed £420 million over 10 years to protect homes in many of Scotland’s most flood-

prone communities, in places like the Orkneys, and north east of Scotland.

“We know that we can’t control the weather but we can change how we respond to it. These coastal flood warning schemes provide an invaluable tool for doing that.”

PA



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