

Small is beautiful when it comes to flood protection

February 14 2014, by Mike Addelman

As a series of unprecedented storms continue to wreak havoc on the country, Dr Angela Connelly, from The University of Manchester, who has just completed research into innovative new flood technologies, argues we can no longer rely on large scale flood defences.

"The appalling storms battering Britain are bringing [flood](#) misery to people living in many parts of the country. But when the clean-up really does start, those people so badly affected will want to know if there is more that can be done to deal with future threats. Long term actions may be some way off, but these are important questions which should be raised now, particularly in light of David Cameron's commitment to offer 5, 800 households up to £5000 to make their homes more resilient.

"Though structural defences continue to play a role in mitigating flooding from rivers and the sea, a changing climate, increasing urbanisation and the prevalence of surface water flooding means we can no longer rely only on large defences to protect people and property. That is why we need to consider how small-scale technologies can be applied to buildings to manage some types of flooding. They can be used in addition to large-scale defences, or where defences are unaffordable.

"Flood doors, flood guards, non-return valves and perimeter barriers are becoming a crucial tool to counter flooding caused by intense rainfall, however not enough people or organisations are aware of these technologies, how to use them and what they can – and cannot - do.

"To address this problem, myself and colleagues at The University of Manchester, Manchester Metropolitan University and The Building Research Establishment have designed new guidance on how to use these measures. It is aimed at local authorities, property owners, and flood risk professionals in England. Just launched online, the six step process guides users on how to implement new flood resilient technologies from surveying the property, through to design and maintenance.

"Based on the latest research and working with industry partners, our guidance simplifies the process and shares best practice. We hope this guidance achieves the longer term goal of improving the route to market for innovative technology in order to help make buildings more resilient to future flooding."

More information: The guidance is available at www.smartfloodprotection.com

Provided by University of Manchester

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