

NORTH WEST REGIONAL FLOOD AND COASTAL COMMITTEE

21 JULY 2023, 10:00AM

The Gujarat Hindu Society and Community Centre, South Meadow Lane, Preston, Lancashire PR1 8JN

AGENDA

<u>Time</u>	<u>Agenda Number</u>	<u>Item</u>	
10:00	1.	Welcome Welcome, Chairman's Introduction, and Apologies for Absence	For information
10:10	2.	Minutes of the RFCC meeting held on 21 April 2023 (<i>Paper for approval</i>)	For decision
		Matters arising and actions from the last meeting (<i>Paper</i>)	For information
10:15	3.	Flood Incidents Update To receive reports from the partnerships on recent flood incidents across the North West	For discussion
10:30	4.	Resilience and Adaptation (<i>Papers</i>) To receive an overview of resilience and adaptation and an update on the Pathfinder Projects <i>Presented by Andrew Eden, EA National FCERM Manager and Programme Executive</i>	For discussion
11:20		BREAK	
11:25	5.	Report from the RFCC Finance and Business Assurance Sub Group (<i>Papers</i>) To discuss and consider the recommendations from the RFCC Finance and Business Assurance Sub Group <i>Introduced by Adrian Lythgo and supported by Adam Walsh, EA Area FCRM Programming Manager and Sally Whiting, EA Senior Adviser</i>	For approval
11:50	6.	Strategic Flood Risk in the North West - Update on Flood Risk Management Plans (<i>Paper</i>) <i>Presented by Jennifer Bridgeland, EA Senior Adviser</i> - Drainage and Wastewater Management Plan (DWMP) Overview (<i>Paper</i>) <i>Presented by Perry Hobbs, RFCC Member and Mike Clough, Drainage and Waste Water Manager, United Utilities</i>	For discussion
12:40	7.	Presentation on the Preston Flood Risk Management Scheme <i>Presented by Ian Counce, EA FCRM Adviser</i>	For information
12:50	8.	Any Other Business	
13:00		CLOSE	

INFORMATION PAPERS

Info item A	Update from the North West and North Wales Coastal Group	NW RFCC specific
Info item B	Quarterly Update from United Utilities	NW RFCC specific
Info item C	Biodiversity Net Gain for FCRM Capital Projects	National EA
Info item D	National FCRM Update Paper	National EA
Info item E	'Building Community Resilience' ambition – Annual Report (Newground)	NW RFCC specific

Future RFCC meetings

20 October 2023 (face to face meeting)
19 January 2024 (Virtual meeting)

Future RFCC Finance and Business Assurance Sub Group meetings

6 October 2023 (Virtual meeting)
5 January 2024 (Virtual meeting)

North West Regional Flood and Coastal Committee

Draft Minutes of the meeting held on Friday, 21 April 2023

(Virtual meeting held on MS Teams)

Present

Adrian Lythgo (Chairman)
Councillor Giles Archibald (Cumbria Strategic Flood Risk Partnership)
Councillor Stephen Clarke (Lancashire Strategic Flood Risk Partnership)
Councillor Jane Hugo (Lancashire Strategic Flood Risk Partnership)
Councillor Tricia Ayrton (Greater Manchester Strategic Flood Risk Partnership)
Councillor Alan Quinn (Greater Manchester Strategic Flood Risk Partnership)
Councillor Ray Mashiter (Greater Manchester Strategic Flood Risk Partnership)
Councillor Laura Crane (Cheshire Mid Mersey Strategic Flood Risk Partnership)
Councillor Elizabeth Grey (Merseyside Strategic Flood Risk Partnership)
Neville Elstone (EA Appointed Member - General Business and Assurance)
David Shaw (EA Appointed Member – Planning and Design)
David Harpley (EA Appointed Member – Conservation/ Natural Flood Management)
Carolyn Otley (EA Appointed Member – Working with Communities)
Suzana Ilic (EA Appointed Member – Coastal)
Perry Hobbs (EA Appointed Member – Water Industry)
Paul Barnes (EA Appointed Member – Agriculture)
Stewart Davies, EA Board Member

Also in attendance

Doug Coyle, Cumbria Strategic Flood Risk Partnership
Andrew Harrison, Cumbria Strategic Flood Risk Partnership
Marcus Leigh, Lancashire Strategic Flood Risk Partnership
Laura Bigley, Lancashire Strategic Flood Risk Partnership
Clare Nolan-Barnes, Lancashire Strategic Flood Risk Partnership
Councillor James Shorrock, Blackburn with Darwen Council
David Boyer, Cheshire Mid Mersey Strategic Flood Risk Partnership (part attendance)
Matt Winnard, Cheshire Mid Mersey Strategic Flood Risk Partnership
Katie Eckford, Shoreline Management Plan Co-ordinator / Coastal Group Secretariat
Sarah Wardle, Merseyside Strategic Flood Risk Partnership
Paul Wisse, Sefton Council
Samantha Godfrey, Sefton Council
Sharma Jencitis, United Utilities (UU)
Len Harris, Wyre Council
Martin Evans, Manchester University
Emma Shuttleworth, Manchester University

Environment Agency Officers Present

Ian Crewe, Area Director, Greater Manchester, Merseyside and Cheshire (GMMC)
Ollie Hope, Area Flood and Coastal Risk Manager (GMMC)
Nick Pearson, Area Flood and Coastal Risk Manager (GMMC)
Adam Walsh, FCRM Programming Manager (Cumbria & Lancashire)

Ben Robinson, FCRM Programming Manager (GMMC)
 Rachel Harmer, RFCC Secretariat Officer (GMMC)
 Sarah Fontana, Senior LA Capital Projects Advisor (GMMC)
 Gary Hilton, Local Authority Capital Projects Advisor (GMMC)
 Rachael Broadhurst, Local Authority Capital Projects Advisor (GMMC)
 Stuart Mault, FCRM Programming Advisor (C&L)
 Fran Clarkson, FCRM PSO Team Leader (GMMC)
 Dave Brown, Senior FCRM Advisor (GMMC)
 Dave Kennedy, Senior FCRM Advisor (C&L)
 Gary Jones-Wright, Senior FCRM Advisor (C&L)
 Mia Mullender, FCRM Programming Advisor (C&L)
 Kerry Harmer, FCRM Operations Manager (C&L)

Observers:

Chloe Boyle, Marine Management Organisation (MMO)
 Anup Shah, Member of the public

23 (13) Welcome and Chairman's Introduction

Adrian Lythgo opened the meeting, thanked Members for joining and welcomed attendees.

Adrian asked Members if there were any objections to the meeting being recorded, purely for the purposes of minute taking. There were no objections from Members.

The Committee were advised presentation slides will be used throughout the meeting, which have been circulated in advance. Adrian advised if anyone wished to make a contribution to the meeting at any point, then to use the hands-up function on MS Teams.

Adrian noted that no declarations of interest have been received.

Members were advised it is the first meeting for Councillor Giles Archibald, who represents the newly created Westmorland and Furness Council, which together with Cumberland Council cover the area formerly covered by Cumbria County Council. Members noted Councillor Archibald will be the formal RFCC Member for these two new councils for the next 12 months.

Adrian advised this is also the first meeting for Ian Crewe, the new Environment Agency (EA) Area Director for Greater Manchester, Merseyside and Cheshire (GMMC) and Members noted Ian will be the lead NW Area Director supporting the work of the NW RFCC.

Members approved and supported the correctly nominated substitution of Paul Wisse for Councillor Ian Moncur, who has sent apologies for today's meeting.

A number of people, who are helping with the meeting, including; Emma Shuttleworth and Martin Evans from Manchester University helping with the item on Natural Flood Management (NFM) and catchment approaches; and Len Harris from Wyre Council who is

supporting the coastal item, were welcomed to the meeting, along with Anup Shah, a member of the public, here to observe the meeting.

Adrian highlighted his quarterly report, circulated on 6th April and advised he will take this as read. He noted a letter received from Alan Lovell, the new EA Chairman, which has been circulated to Committee Members and advised much of which is in this letter will be covered in today's agenda item 5. He highlighted the detail within the annex to the letter which reports the North West RFCC's £92.6 Million Grant in Aid (GiA) allocation for 2023/24, which is the second highest regional allocation nationally, which the NW RFCC will welcome and Adrian advised this figure does however, reflect the level of flood risk that our communities face in the North West.

The Committee were advised in slight contrast the letter also advises the NW RFCC have received an allocation of £11.5 Million for EA Asset Maintenance work for 2023/24, which is more in the normal range for RFCCs and an area which we will continue to focus on.

Adrian highlighted the information papers, advising that three of the four papers relate to the delivery of the NW RFCC Business Plan. Members heard the United Utilities (UU) report includes detail on catchment approaches and other activities and he suggested this should be looked at in more depth at Strategic Partnership Group Meetings. He noted the Flood Risk Management Plan (FRMP) paper, an update on the second cycle FRMP, which shows an update on the strategic flood risk for the North West, which Members may consider in the context of looking at flood risk in each of the Strategic Partnership Group areas.

Members heard the main discussion items for today's meeting also cover areas which are important in the Business Plan, covering catchment approaches, NFM and land management, along with a coastal discussion following on from the recent coastal conference.

Ian Crewe introduced himself to the Committee advising it is a privilege to join this very important Committee. He advised he has spent the last 30 years in the Police Force in Merseyside and Greater Manchester, where he has a lot of experience in the area. Ian advised latterly he was the District Commander for Central Manchester and more recently he was Head of Major Incidents at Greater Manchester Police, as the Detective Superintendent in charge of homicide and organised crime.

He advised he has been in the EA for about 6 weeks, where he has lots of transferable skills but there is a lot to learn and subject matter is more important. He advised this is a challenge well worth rising to and looks forward to ongoing relationships with the Committee.

Adrian thanked Ian for this introduction and advised the Committee are looking forward to working with him.

Councillor Giles Archibald introduced himself to Members and thanked Adrian for allowing a Member and an observer from the two new councils to attend the meeting.

He advised he lives in Kendal, which has been affected by Storm Desmond and advised he is grateful for the work ongoing in Kendal right now. Councillor Archibald advised he has just completed a Masters Degree in climate change and biodiversity at the University of London and is the portfolio holder for climate change and biodiversity at Westmorland and Furness Council. He advised he is interested in acting as a Councillor to address these issues along with Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) in relation to managing flooding, which has been mentioned by David Harpley, and he raised the other issue that he would like to bring to this Committee is the problem of sewerage overflow. He thanked the Committee for all that it does and advised that Cumbria is very grateful.

Adrian Lythgo advised he is very much looking forward to working with colleagues in the north of the North West under the new government arrangements and they are very welcome.

Adrian Lythgo advised as far as the Local Authorities (LAs) are concerned we have entered the pre-election period and he knows this is a very busy period for those LAs who have elections on their patch and thanked them for their attendance today.

23 (14) Apologies for Absence

Adrian Lythgo noted apologies for absence from: Councillor Daniel Barrington, Councillor Ian Moncur and Councillor Tony Brennan (Merseyside Strategic Flood Risk Partnership); Carl Green (Chair of the North West and North Wales Coastal Group); Fran Comyn (Greater Manchester Strategic Flood Risk Partnership); Jim Turton (Cheshire Mid Mersey Strategic Flood Risk Partnership); Lorah Cheyne (Lancashire Strategic Flood Risk Partnership); Sally Whiting, EA RFCC Senior Advisor (GMMC); Pete Miles, EA Area Flood and Coastal Risk Manager (C&L) and Sharon Kennedy, EA Acting Area Flood and Coastal Risk Manager (C&L).

23 (15) Minutes of the RFCC Meeting held on 27 January 2023

Adrian Lythgo asked if there were any comments on the draft minutes from the meeting on 27 January 2023. Councillor Archibald advised that David Harpley had made a good comment in the minutes and enquired how the Committee follows up these comments.

Adrian Lythgo advised in terms of specific actions we have an item on matters arising, and for those things that are discussed at a meeting which do not specifically lead to an action these are very much up to the Members of the Committee to take back to their Strategic Partnership meetings to take forward. He noted that if anyone feels like actions are missing from Matters Arising then it will get raised here.

Adrian also highlighted an item regarding the Stannah Pumping Station in Lancashire, which we asked to be taken offline. Members were advised this has been followed up since the meeting and there are ongoing discussions, but there have been some changes in responsibility for those involved. He advised Rachel Harmer, who looks after the Committee, will keep a running list of items to be taken up offline in order for them to be kept in view and the item Councillor Archibald raised will be added to this list.

The minutes of the meeting held on 27 January 2023 were proposed by Councillor Ray Mashiter and seconded by Councillor Jane Hugo.

There were no further comments.

23 (16) Matters arising and actions from the last meeting

Adrian Lythgo advised there are three actions from the last meeting which have each been addressed and resolved.

There were no further comments or questions.

23 (17) Flood Incidents Update

Adrian Lythgo advised no reports of any major flooding during the last quarter have been formally raised. For the benefit of new Members, Adrian advised this is a standing item on the agenda so that colleagues can raise specific impacts of flooding. He noted the Committee formally monitors the flooding recorded by the constituent authorities within the Committee area.

There were no further comments.

23 (18) Managing Water on a Catchment Scale with Nature

Adrian Lythgo advised the discussion in this session very much features in the delivery of the North West RFCC Business Plan and he introduced David Harpley, Dave Brown and David Kennedy here to present the item.

Dave Brown (Senior Advisor from the EA) provided Members with an overview of the recent national Natural Flood Management (NFM) Evaluation Report ([link](#)) of the 2018 to 2021 Defra catchment and community scale £15 Million funding to carry out NFM. Members heard key findings from the work, including strong partnership working and the fact that it takes a lot of strong local knowledge and leadership to deliver NFM projects; sticking points included clarity on future maintenance responsibilities. When valuing the benefits of NFM projects they were found to reduce runoff and could store significant volumes of water, but benefits were less accurately predictable for NFM interventions when compared to conventional methods such as building flood walls.

Members also noted that a lighter touch for NFM approval is required, as currently compliance with the full business case approval is quite difficult for some of the smaller projects, and further detail on this is forthcoming. The updated, second version of the Working with Natural Processes Evidence Directory will also to be available later this year, containing more evidence and worked examples. Dave advised that nationally across England, NFM interventions to date provide at least 1.6 million metres cubed of flood water storage capacity upstream of 15,000 homes and within that helped to restore 610 kilometres of river, 4000 hectares of habitat has been created or improved, and 100 hectares of

woodland planted. Therefore, not only are there improved benefits to the flood risk to homes downstream, other elements of habitat have been created and improved, which all fits in with the 25 Year Environment Plan.

In the NW between 2018 and 2021, the delivery totals so far are: 210,000 m³ of additional flood storage created; 219 Ha of woodland (220,000 hard wood trees) and 243 Ha of wet grassland restored; contributed to improving 110 km watercourse contributing to Good Ecological Potential; Flood risk reduced risk to 26 communities at risk (C@R) (894 properties – but no (as yet) proven change in risk band).

Members were shown photographs of NFM work that has been carried out at Smithills (near Bolton), Stalybridge and locations in Cumbria.

Adrian Lythgo noted the caution being taken with regard to moving properties from one risk band to another as a result of work being carried out to reduce their risk of flooding and asked if this is still the case even after the introduction of the intermediate risk bands approximately 18 months ago. Dave Brown advised the intermediate response is less challenging to prove and more feasible to achieve and there is good data and evidence to support it and greater confidence that this way of working and can be relied upon going forward. Dave highlighted that for some small community-led projects, there is a concern that more money could be spent on justifying the intervention than on its implementation, and highlighted that a small Local Levy capital pot for NFM delivery for small, community projects would assist delivery.

Paul Barnes commented that the NFM review was carried out by the managers who implemented it and that it would have more credibility if the review had been done independently. Dave Brown noted Paul's comment and advised it is his understanding that the evidence review will be carried out by independent consultants.

Councillor Alan Quinn asked about the re-naturalisation of rivers and if this is the way of describing putting the meanders and bends back into the rivers that were originally there. Dave Brown advised this is correct and by doing this it makes it easier for the floodplain and the river to connect, which in turn attenuates and reduces the peaks of water, therefore reducing the risk of flooding to locations downstream.

David Kennedy highlighted in addition to the Working With Natural Processes Review, close working has taken place with Lancaster University, whose 'Q-NFM' project was funded by NERC. Many of the NFM features have been monitored over the last 6 years and have produced some excellent data.

Members were shown a short video that has been produced to show how the flow of floodwater and rivers can be reduced by slowing the flow of water on the land. A further video showing the work being undertaken on the moors above Stalybridge was shown and Dave Brown provided information on work being done in collaboration with Manchester University and Moors for the Future, on their NERC funded 'NFM-Protect' project.

Martin Evans from Manchester University provided Members with an overview of the three NERC projects looking at NFM. These are Q-NFM (quantifying NFM benefits), NFM-Protect (moorland restoration) and 'Landwise' (looking at farming practices and flooding).

With regard to peat restoration, Councillor Giles Archibald advised Cumbria has thousands of hectares of peat that is very badly degraded and he is interested in how we can bring together the different agencies to discuss the different benefits to make sure that action is taken to do something about it. Martin Evans advised that, at a recent policy forum, work on this was presented and the discussion was centred around how various funding strands can be pulled together so that multiple benefits can be recognised and delivered. He noted that combined efforts are well worth the investment, but it's the policy challenge that needs to be clarified.

Adrian Lythgo advised as an RFCC we have very much taken the view that we can play into and try to affect those national level policy debates and in addition to that, through the RFCC Business Plan, we can try to collaborate at scale on specific projects.

With regard to the RFCC Business Plan 'Managing Water at Catchment Scale' theme Perry Hobbs highlighted the opportunity mapping work underway, which includes; where and how we build our flood interventions to produce multi benefits, whilst still allowing the landowners to make a living from the land, by bringing together the right partners and corraling funding. He also noted the work being carried out in the Integrated Water Management Plan for Greater Manchester, by bringing key partners together to lead work on looking at water systems, what we need to do where, and how we try and join up our work and our funding to deliver multiple outcomes and share learning.

Paul Barnes commented on Landscape ELMS and in line with Neville Elstone he questioned the catchment areas of 500 hectares, advising that catchment areas need to be much bigger. He also noted the roughness and coarseness on the water flow over the peat areas called the Manning's Effect.

Adrian Lythgo summarised that what the Committee is looking for are opportunities to intervene at catchment scale and advised the presentation has really reinforced the importance of doing the right interventions in the right places. At the beginning of the NFM programme it was about getting interventions in where you could. He noted the evidence that we're getting from this is about what are the right combination of interventions in the right places. This is really important and informs that opportunity mapping.

Adrian advised that as a Committee we've just been talking about trying to take this work forward and it would be good if the Committee could find opportunities in each of the five sub-regional partnership areas to be able to try and work on. He advised this is the direction of the business plan and he welcomes all of the Members' input into that continuing development.

Councillor Giles Archibald said that in his opinion not enough had been done to restore peat at a landscape scale and suggested that as individual Councils they did not have the resources to take this forward, that an overarching programme and project plan should be

set up and resourced. David Harpley advised a partnership exists across the north of England called 'The Great North Bog', which includes a number of partners.

Emma Shuttleworth advised of Manchester University's involvement in the working up of data from a lot of the projects of the Yorkshire Peat Partnership, which is a 3-4 year programme, where data will be informing the baseline for the restoration work. Members noted there is a hope this work will continue, funding permitting, where the land can be monitored for the next 25 years in order to see the long-term benefits of restoration.

Adrian Lythgo advised it is worth reflecting this Committee has funded peat restoration in Cumbria and in Greater Manchester and highlighted what the Committee is impatient to do is to build on those pilots, so that we're investing in the right stacked interventions for the most effective flood risk management interventions for communities which are at risk. He noted it is about getting the right combinations and working with the right landowners to try and identify the best opportunities for doing that. This comes up in most of our discussions about the business plan and how we take it forward, but that doesn't in any way change the specifics of peat that has just been discussed.

Dave Kennedy provided Members with an overview of work that is being carried out in Cumbria on the back of the NFM programme as part of the Defra pilot Resilience Innovation Programme. Members noted that Cumbria were successful in being awarded £6.6 Million of investment and whilst this has a NFM focus, it effectively has 6 work streams with NFM being just one of them. The Committee were advised Lancaster University are working with the EA to build on the knowledge already in place (via Q-NFM), so that evidence is built up over a credible length of time using the same sort of methodologies, establishing more assurance about what the benefits are of the key learning points from the NFM programme.

Dave Kennedy highlighted the importance of, when talking to landowners, having a trusted intermediary in place and therefore two Natural England Catchment Sensitive Farming Officers have been employed to help with this work. This has many benefits and has also opened up the option for being able to bring in additional funding through the Countryside Stewardship scheme and then beyond that it is hoped through Environmental Land Management.

Members noted the other area of heavy focus has been the work on community preparedness and resilience within communities themselves, building on the work Carolyn Otley has led for the Cockermouth Emergency Response Group and others. United Utilities and National Highways are also working in partnership with the EA and Councils to see how work can be co-designed to get multiple benefits.

Councillor Stephen Clarke advised the Lancashire partnership are working to do as much NFM as possible but highlighted more help from the EA is required to take this forward. Dave Brown advised Rob Dyer is the North West Area NFM Appraisal Postholder, who can work with Lancashire and appraise what can be done in terms of NFM delivery.

Adrian Lythgo thanked everyone for their contributions to this item and commented today's discussion shows the evidence is now a lot stronger to allow us to stack benefits and invest

in the right interventions in the right places. He advised this is something the Committee will very much come back to and noted the impatience from Members to see these flood risk measures making a difference on the ground.

There were no further comments or questions.

23 (19) Report from the RFCC Finance and Business Assurance Sub Group

The following Finance and Business Assurance Sub-Group papers from the 6 April meeting were provided for this item:

- Minutes from the 6 April RFCC Finance and Business Assurance Sub Group meeting
- Programme Update Report to the 6 April RFCC Finance and Business Assurance Sub Group meeting
- 2023/24 FCERM Grant in Aid (GiA) Final Allocation (National EA paper)

Neville Elstone advised one of the key recommendations from the RFCC Finance and Business Assurance Sub Group (RFCC F&BASG) is about the Penketh and Whittle Flood Risk Management Scheme and highlighted the scheme is an example of a case study of many of the problems and issues being encountered in delivering the programme. He noted there are common themes such as inflation, materials, framework, and just getting works moving. Neville noted a key point from this is a thank you to everyone working in Risk Management Authorities (RMAs) in making things happen and acknowledged the challenges.

Neville highlighted the level of budget allocated for the 2023/24 year is similar to that of the 2022/23 year, which is good news.

Ben Robinson stepped through the report, which provides an overview of the North West RFCC 6-year investment programme 2021 - 2027. It provides an overview of progress on delivering the in-year (2022/23) capital (all RMAs) and revenue (EA only) programmes.

2022/23 capital programme

This year, the North West programme is forecasting to better protect 3,440 properties from flooding, which is a reduction from 4,337 properties, reported at the January 2023 meeting. This reduction of 897 properties is due to a few projects being pushed back in the programme. Members heard we are not delivering improved protection to fewer homes, but rather these are being reprofiled into future years. To date, this financial year, we have better protected 2,256 properties from flooding in the North West.

Ben highlighted the request to change the 2022/23 target for properties better protected submitted to the national Programme Management Office earlier this year. A target of 3,957 properties was requested instead of the target of 8,162 properties set based on the allocated funding and programme. Members heard the final decision from the National Delivery Portfolio Board has been received, the request to change the target has not been accepted and therefore the North West target will remain at 8162 properties better protected.

Total capital funding available to the North West RFCC 2022/23 programme is £118.975 Million. This includes £98.375 Million of FCRM Grant-in-Aid (FCRMGiA), £10.574 Million of Local Levy (adjusted from the opening allocation of £6.210 Million), and £10.026 Million of Partnership Funding Contributions.

In terms of expenditure, forecasts at mid-February 2023 showed that we are expecting to draw down £107.554 Million this year. This is £11.421 Million less than allocated and £7.226 Million less than the forecasts reported at the January 2023 meeting. Members heard this doesn't mean we are anticipating to spend less, it just means the funding has been reprofiled into future years. Ben advised at the end of January 2023, actual spend was 76% of the full year forecast, which is an improved picture from the 53% reported at the January meeting.

A number of risks to the current programme were noted, some of which have previously been reported and will continue into the coming year. Risks include: over-optimistic forecasts; inflation increasing the costs of materials; lengthy lead times for materials impacting scheme costs and viability; adverse weather conditions during the winter months; delays caused by incidents as teams move across to work on this priority activity; and industrial action. With regard to the risks associated with materials, this is something that is being monitored so risks can be mitigated as we become aware of them.

There are also risks regarding framework changes. Ben advised we are currently in the process of either transitioning to new or renewed frameworks, which may create a risk in delay for programme delivery, but the risk will be mitigated on a national and local level and it's something that all colleagues are monitoring closely.

Members also noted there will be new legislation in November 2023 for Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG), when it will become law that all planning applications submitted beyond this point will need to provide 10% BNG for them to be granted.

Against our efficiency target, Ben advised we are significantly under the 10% Grant-in-Aid efficiency target, which remains a condition of the current 6-year Capital Investment Programme. Efficiency reporting was paused for Q1 and Q2 of the first year (2021/22) of the new reporting period, whilst the condition was being negotiated. Since then there has been a subsequent loss of momentum in reporting nationally due to the impact of the Covid pandemic. As a result, we are now at a total of just over £12 Million (for 2021/22 and at Q3 2022/23 to date) against a cumulative target of £120 Million. Reporting needs to improve dramatically to get back on track to achieve the national 6-year target.

The North West is also significantly under the 10% target having contributed £531K of efficiency savings (for 2021/22 and at Q3 2022/23 to date), against a cumulative target in the region of £20 Million.

Members heard a new approach has been launched nationally in an attempt to improve efficiency reporting utilising Area resources to act as gatekeepers to review submissions. In the North West we are also doing our part, having recently undertaken a soft re-launch of the efficiencies process in the North West, providing training sessions, materials, and a new process map.

Local Levy programme and Frequently Flooded Allowance

Ben then went on to report on the Frequently Flooded Allowance (FFA) announcement that was made on 5 April, which included the following North West schemes:

- Carlisle Appraisal Package Appleby Town Centre
- North Road, Holme Village Flood Alleviation
- Burrow Beck Conveyance Improvements
- Lindale Road, Grange over Sands
- Irwell Vale to Chatterton
- Little Bollington River Bollin Property Level Resilience
- West End Road, St Helens

Some of these schemes were requesting Local Levy contributions which are no longer required. This means that the Levy reserve available at the end of 2023/24 will now be higher. However, we are still forecasting to use up the reserve by the end of 2024/25.

The North West RFCC is expected to start the 2023/24 financial year with a Local Levy balance of £15.143 Million, which includes the income of £4.411 Million plus the balance to be carried forward at the end of 2022/23 of £10.732 Million.

The total allocation for 2023/24 is £8.153 Million. Currently it is anticipated a Local Levy balance of £6.99 Million will be carried into the start of the 2024/25 year. Ben advised this is based on the current Local Levy forecasts and requests and as always is subject to change throughout the year.

2022/23 EA Asset Maintenance Programme

With regard to the Maintenance Programme, EA revenue funding for the North West in 2022/23 currently totals £21.956 Million. This includes staff costs, maintenance, and revenue project information.

Members noted both C&L and GMMC forecasts remain very similar to funding. C&L forecast underspend has improved from £75K under last quarter to £39K under this quarter. The total variance to budget has changed from £56K under last quarter to £30K above budget this quarter.

2023/24 capital programme

Ben Robinson provided us with a summary of the North West FCRMGiA capital allocation for 2023/24, which is £85.1 Million and has now been confirmed and approved by the EA Board. We noted this is made up of capital maintenance, defence and property level resilience schemes. It also includes the enabling and support programme (apart from for Asset Reconditioning which is going through its own Local Choices process).

Members noted the 2023/24 Resource Programme has not received its final allocation yet.

Councillor Alan Quinn advised staff turnover remains to be a concern, noting that EA officers are leaving which is also reflected in Local Authorities. He commented that many of the experienced staff are leaving and highlighted the problem of not having the right staff in

place to manage projects and the need to start an academy to bring in the next generation of young engineers.

Adrian Lythgo advised the pressure on resource and people across all of the Risk Management Authorities is clearly recognized nationally. He advised it is also worth saying that we are fairly near full employment, which creates the circumstances that Councillor Quinn is concerned about and Adrian noted that as a RFCC we've been trying in a limited way to put resource back into the system including funding posts directly to help the flood programme go forward.

Adrian Lythgo commented that the work being considered by the Greater Manchester Combined Authority utilising their devolved input into skills mentioned by Cllr Quinn is wider than engineers and is seeking to identify and fill gaps across the skills ladder and wider skills needed in addressing climate and water management.

Neville Elstone advised a deeper conversation had taken place regarding this at the RFCC F&BA Sub Group and encouraged people to attend this forum.

Councillor Jane Hugo advised it would be interesting to know at a national level what is being done about the risks around capacity, where funding has already been allocated and now the new legislations, regarding Schedule 3 of the Floods and Water Management Act and Biodiversity Net Gain, that are coming on board are going to take up more energy and effort, noting the funding will not have been built in to those projects as the legislation happened after the funding was allocated.

Ben Robinson advised the National EA Programme Management Office are going through this new legislation with regard to how it might look in terms of cost and resources and how we might best be able to build a resilient programme that includes those factors. He advised the outputs of this are yet to be received and advised he will report back on this at the July meeting.

ACTION: Ben Robinson

Ollie Hope advised in terms of Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) the EA are in a similar position to the other authorities, in that there is still a significant degree of ambiguity around how we land BNG and what's to be expected in terms of developers. He highlighted there are a number of centres around the county gathering best practice on how existing projects are trying to tackle and overcome the requirement, so this information is being centralised so we can be prepared for when this legislation becomes live.

Councillor Jane Hugo raised concerns from the Lancashire Partnership about projects that have already been agreed and making sure there will be capacity built in to meet these projects.

David Shaw enquired about when projects will fall under the new BNG legislation and was advised it is anything that applies for planning permission after November 2023.

David Harpley commented BNG could be built into Natural Flood Management measures, so in effect it could be used to fund further work the EA might wish to do.

Adrian Lythgo advised he will continue to press national on the resources regarding the Schedule 3 of the Floods and Water Management Act.

There were no further comments.

Ollie Hope provided Members with a brief overview of the Penketh and Whittle Flood Risk Management Scheme and the Local Levy request of £1 Million in addition to the £250K of Local Levy that has already been approved. Members were advised the project was brought to the RFCC FSG last year when it was in its early stages and the project was caught up in the inflationary period following the outbreak of the war in Ukraine.

As detailed in the Investment Programme Report, the Committee were provided with an overview of the approvals history for the project along with challenges the project has encountered to date and noted risks that may yet materialise, which include risks associated with landscaping works, future maintenance provision of BNG site, liaison with Cadent Gas and potential requirements for protection measures to be installed to allow maintenance access to a trash screen, weather and flooding risks causing programme delays and any future challenges with land or water contamination.

Ollie advised the project now requires a robust contingency plan in place. We heard £678K of the additional £1 Million Local Levy requested is to essentially underwrite the risk contingency part of the scheme, which will safeguard against any of the risks from materialising. Members noted if the risks don't materialise then the funding will be released to the Local Levy programme.

Neville Elstone thanked Ollie for his overview and summarised the total of the scheme's Local Levy request is £1.25 Million, which is the total of the £1 Million that is being asked for today and the £250K that has already been approved. He then confirmed the scheme will be protecting 221 properties and noted the Local Levy request for this project still sits below the 15% Local Levy funding contribution limit.

Adrian Lythgo highlighted the recommendation from the Finance and Business Assurance Sub Group for is for the full RFCC to approve the additional £1 Million contribution.

Adrian Lythgo noted the good examples of Quick Win Funding, provided in the report, that have been used to good effect and he advised Members to have a look at these and to keep our foot down on delivery of these quick wins, highlighting they are good examples of how relatively small amounts of Local Levy funding have been used to very good effect. He also asked Members to note the RFCC Business Plan update provided in the paper.

Resolved:

Following the recommendations from the RFCC Finance and Business Assurance Sub Group Meeting, the Committee:

- noted the progress on delivering the 2022/23 capital programme
- noted the progress on delivering the 2022/23 resource maintenance programme

- noted the current/ future position of the Local Levy programme and latest spend forecast
- noted the GiA Allocation for 2023/24
- noted work across the Strategic Partnerships carried out using RFCC Quick Wins Funding (provided in the paper)
- noted the RFCC Business Plan Update (provided in the paper)

Local Levy:

- considered and approved the Local Levy request for £1 Million in 2023/24 for the Penketh and Whittle Flood Risk Management Scheme, in addition to the £250K of Local Levy funding previously approved. However, as the £1 Million of Local Levy funding is to be used mainly to underwrite the risk contingency part of the scheme, it has been approved with the understanding that should any of the risks not materialise then the funding will be released to the Local Levy programme.

Adrian Lythgo thanked Members for the discussion and there were no further comments or questions.

23 (20) Coastal Update

Adrian Lythgo advised on 29 and 30 March the North West Coastal Conference took place, which focussed particularly on the impacts of climate change on the North West coast. He advised that post conference he wanted to provide a space for the full Committee to understand some of the key issues raised at the conference and have the opportunity to discuss some of the matters arising.

Suzana Ilic introduced Katie Eckford, who along with Samantha Godfrey organised and managed the event, held in Grange-Over-Sands, on behalf of the North West and North Wales Coastal Group. Katie thanked Adrian Lythgo for attending and opening the conference and thanked all those RFCC Members who were able to attend.

Members heard the Coastal Group wanted to bring together coastal practitioners to provide different perspectives on coastal management and to highlight the move towards nature based coastal solutions, innovative coastal research and how we can work together more effectively. The conference was sponsored by VolkerStevin and Balfour Beatty and over the two days it was attended by 123 people and 41 different organisations were represented including wildlife charities, Local Authorities, private companies and educational institutions. Exhibition stands were provided by a number of key organisations including the Morecambe Bay Partnership and 4 field trips to possible sites of nature based solutions took place.

The Committee also noted all of the conference was recorded and talks can be shared with those who were unable to attend.

Suzana Ilic provided a number of key messages from each session of the conference, summary information from Carl Green and thanked Adrian Lythgo for his talk. Suzana's key messages included:

Climate challenges on the coast

- Sea rise is accelerating and is difficult to reverse, this is happening not just because of ice melting but also with regard to thermo ocean expansion and the sea taking a long time to cool down if the temperatures drop.
- There are lots of uncertainties of coastal predictions - how do we engage with stakeholders, partners and the public to look at emissions?

Members heard in Scotland they have started to look at Shoreline Management Plans (SMPs) and have adopted an approach of where we are now and where we need to get to. Suzana advised this is probably an easier method to disseminate to the general public instead of using the epochs of 50 years and 100 years. They are also looking at doing dynamic adaptation pathways.

Working with Data

- Excellent progress is being made with new technologies, lots of data is being collected and there are new developments involving the general public in data collection.
- More work needs to be done to effectively use data for short and long term planning. This will be the evidence for adaptation work for example.

Members were advised of a report from the Wales Coastal Monitoring Centre and were advised the dissemination of the general understanding of coastal systems is being provided on the Flood Hub.

Inspiration and the future

- This session centered around nature based solutions (NBS) and how we can provide coastal protection and other ecosystems services.
- There is a lack of quantitative and comparative assessment of NBS, which is generally not suitable for high energy coastlines.
- Innovation projects should address some of the gaps in the quantitative assessments of NBS.
- We need to be ambitious in addressing some of the other adaptation methods including planned retreat from the coast.

Changing mindsets

- This resonated with many people, in moving the conversation from issue to action.
- Challenges in changing mindsets (perceptions, attitudes and beliefs) about coastal changes and adaptations, including political norms and institutional cultures.

Resourcing the future

- Who should pay for all the adaptation measures?
- Is there sufficient resource capacity to deliver strategies/plans/solutions and work with communities?
- The need to work together in partnerships, coordinating resources to deliver.

Suzana advised Members that everyone is keen to make coastal areas more resilient, however having so many partners involved sometimes can delay processes and conflicting information can come through and asked if it is time to introduce integrated coastal zone management, which would bring all partners together on the same page.

David Shaw advised he had found the conference to be a very enjoyable and intense couple of days, where a lot of information was provided by the 4 or 5 speakers presenting each of the sessions.

Members were advised there were a lot of parallels to what the Committee were previously discussing regarding complexities and partnerships, but there is a need to talk less about the climate emergency and more about the actions we are taking to overcome it. David advised there are lots of innovative actions taking place and partnerships working together in the North West and elsewhere and it is important that we learn from what's happening in other places. He noted coastal resilience work taking place in the east of England, where they have an interesting way of moving and sharing resources between the Local Authorities.

David advised there were many interesting and interested stakeholders present, many of whom knew each other, but there were many new faces too and he highlighted we need to ensure that current experience and expertise is passed to the next generation.

Councillor Alan Quinn commented on the next generation that will take on this work moving forwards and that many of the people with experience are leaving.

David Shaw recommended that people keep an eye out for the 2024 coastal conference dates and thanked Katie and Sam in making the conference run so smoothly.

Katie Eckford provided the results of the conference survey advising 98% had said the conference was useful. Attendees had also advised they had found the conference stimulating and had heard many new ideas. 94% advised it had been a good opportunity for networking, and 100% of attendees said the conference was well structured and organised. There was feedback which advised more time for networking would have been really useful, but overall the conference was well received.

Adrian Lythgo introduced Members to Len Harris, who previously attended a RFCC meeting to present an item on a survey of Local Authorities looking at the influence of coastal planning on local development planning. Members were advised Len is attending today's meeting to feed back on his work.

Len Harris advised the Shoreline Management Plan (SMP) is going through a refresh process at a national level and a key issue coming from this process is a question around the link between shoreline management planning, land use planning and marine planning and a sense that this link is not as strong as it could be.

Members heard each of the Coastal Groups around the country are looking at this issue, but not necessarily all in the same way. It was noted there are uncertainties within the Local Planning Authorities about how to use the SMP and key issues around the age of the document, produced in 2010, and whether the information contained within it could be relied upon. Also, as the SMP is not a statutory document, there was also questions about how much weight can be given to it, given that it is not a statutory requirement.

The Committee heard the SMP is not a single document and a series of guides have been produced to provide support for the SMP process, which step you through the SMP and the detail of the information behind it. A detailed report on the findings of this work has been produced, which includes 29 recommendations and a template for LAs to use to create their own SMP leaflet has been created.

Len highlighted some excellent work that has taken place in South Lakeland and Barrow in developing a guide for Westmorland and Furness Council and Cumberland Council.

Members were provided with the detail of the 10 guiding principles following a number of issues that have been raised.

Adrian Lythgo advised he wanted this item on the agenda to provide access to those people who were unable to attend the North West Coastal Conference, particularly with regard to the issue of joining up what happens on the coast with what happens inland and to have a very real narrative that's accessible across all the organizations involved on what is a burning platform around climate change.

Councillor Giles Archibald thanked Len for this work and for raising it today, advising this is a very important subject that we have probably passed some of the tipping points on that mean we will have to live with the problem of higher sea levels. He commented that when looking at probabilities sea levels are due to rise much more dramatically than is being forecast. He questioned how much we are emphasizing to Government how serious this is, highlighting areas of the North West that will be endangered and asked if this is being addressed with enough urgency.

Councillor Jane Hugo referred to the five task groups that have been set up within Len's work and suggested that a sixth group could be set up to address climate change.

Councillor Hugo then highlighted a map that appeared in The Telegraph newspaper, that was developed by Climate Central, which detailed areas on the Fylde Coast which will be under water by 2030. She advised this information does not match the information being provided by the EA and as a consequence investors and developers for Blackpool Council are concerned and have written to Blackpool Council Directors about the risks and are questioning whether they should be investing in the area.

Suzana Ilic advised in Climate Central's newspaper article they had made some very simplistic predictions and didn't take into account measures that are currently in the public domain and the detail of how water is going to spread, and by doing this they have caused a lot of public anxiety and uncertainty. She highlighted this is very bad in terms of the wrong information being reported, but at the same time it has raised some issues and discussions.

Members noted the importance of how we communicate the right facts to the public and how we manage messaging around the climate change emergency. Suzana suggested the Government should provide funding so work can commence to provide evidence of future coastal flooding predictions and all consequences of some of the future decisions and how this can be dealt with.

Adrian Lythgo reflected that here we are dealing with something which is going to have an immense impact on some coastal communities. He advised there is no such thing as a simple truth and noted the consensus from the coastal conference was around having a shared narrative that we can all use. He noted the request for an additional workstream, which will detail who is pulling this shared narrative together so that we can all use it and agreed this is something the RFCC and the Coastal Group might want to reflect on, so we can clarify who needs to take the lead.

Suzana Ilic highlighted there are some areas of the coast which will move to 'managed realignment', and some that will stay at 'hold the line' for a longer period of time. She recognised the need to look at those areas which are going to move from hold the line to managed realignment, which means transferring from one state of being completely protected into something that it's not going to be completely protected. She advised conversations should be taking place with regard to how and when this is going to happen.

Adrian Lythgo advised this doesn't change the fact that whichever climate change scenario we look at, there's been immense investment in parts of our coast which for any developer will give them certainty for long enough. He advised there is a simple answer at one level that these are 100-year epochs in terms of some of these impacts, but however we do need to have a straight story to tell.

David Shaw reflected there are multiple narratives to tell with regard to coastal management, but the same sort of narratives need to be told in relation to natural approaches to flood risk management. He advised what we need to face in the future is part of what the Committee needs to be thinking about more generally and not just specifically or exclusively in relation to the coast.

Adrian Lythgo thanked Suzana and the coastal team for the conference, advising the huge amount of energy at the conference and the keenness to turn what has been learnt into actions that will make a difference.

There were no further comments.

23 (21) Change to the date of the July 2023 RFCC meeting

For business planning and attendance reasons Adrian Lythgo advised there is a requirement to change the date of the next RFCC meeting from 14 July to 21 July. As a consequence, this will also involve a change to the date of the RFCC Finance and Business Assurance Sub Group Meeting from 30 June to 7 July. Adrian noted that Rachel Harmer has recently sent Members an email with the detail of these anticipated changes.

Councillor Alan Quinn advised there could be a clash of dates with a Greater Manchester Combined Authority meeting and Carolyn Otley noted the new dates fall within the school holiday period.

There were no objections to the change of meeting dates and Adrian advised Rachel Harmer will be in contact with Members outside of the meeting in order to see what attendance will

look like on the newly advised RFCC meeting date.

Members approved the change of date for the next RFCC meeting from 14 July to 21 July.

23 (22) Any Other Business

No items of any other business had been received in advance of the meeting.

There were no further items of business raised.

Adrian thanked Members for attending and for their contributions and closed the meeting.

DRAFT

NORTH WEST REGIONAL FLOOD AND COASTAL COMMITTEE

21 JULY 2023

**UPDATE ON ACTIONS FROM THE
NORTH WEST REGIONAL FLOOD AND COASTAL COMMITTEE MEETING
HELD ON 21 APRIL 2023**

	ACTION/ MATTER ARISING	ACTIONED
	Report from the RFCC Finance and Business Assurance Sub Group	
1.	<p>Biodiversity Net Gain</p> <p>Ben Robinson advised the National EA Programme Management Office are going through this new legislation with regard to how it might look in terms of cost and resources and how we might best be able to build a resilient programme that includes those factors. He advised the outputs of this are yet to be received and advised he will report back on this at the July meeting.</p> <p>ACTION: Ben Robinson</p>	Complete. Please see Information item C.



Department
for Environment
Food & Rural Affairs



Environment
Agency

Adaptation pathways programme

Part of the £200m

Flood and coastal innovation programmes

We will drive innovation in flood and coastal resilience and adaptation. We're investing £8 million to develop adaptation pathway plans in 4 locations of national significance. This will help local places to better plan for and adapt to future flooding, coastal change and climate hazards.

Climate change is happening now, and its impacts will continue to worsen. Sea levels are rising, and rainfall patterns are changing, causing more frequent flooding. We need to do things differently.

Creating climate resilient places lies at the heart of our [Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management \(FCERM\) Strategy](#). Its vision is for "a nation ready for, and resilient to, flooding and coastal change – today, tomorrow and to the year 2100". The Strategy sits alongside and supports the delivery of the government's 2020 policy statement on flood and coastal erosion risk management.

This £8 million programme will support 4 strategic locations in England to develop long term investment plans for climate adaptation. The development of these plans will help policy makers and practitioners improve how we adapt to future flood risk and plan for end of century options.

We must get ready for the unavoidable impacts of climate change by adapting and helping the nation to become more resilient.

Definitions

Adaptation means anticipating appropriate action to prevent or minimise the likelihood and consequences of flooding and coastal change, both now and in the future. It has been shown that well planned, early adaptation action saves money and lives later.

Adaptation pathways is a decision-making approach that enables practitioners and policy makers to identify what actions can be taken now and in the future. Looking out to the year 2100, we need to help local places better plan and adapt to future flooding and coastal change. For practitioners and policy makers, this means remaining agile to the latest climate science, growth projections, investment opportunities and other changes to our environment. It's about making the right decisions at the right time. Adaptation pathways can also reduce the overall cost of flood and coastal risk management in the longer term by timing investments when they provide maximum benefit.

Adaptation pathways programme

The £8 million Adaptive Pathways Programme which will develop long term investment plans for managing flooding and coastal change to 2100 and beyond in strategic locations including the Thames Estuary, Humber Estuary, River Severn and Yorkshire. The programme will enable the Environment Agency to work with partners to develop and explore how:

- different resilience actions could help to better plan for, better protect, respond to, and recover from flooding and coastal change over pathways to 2100 and beyond
- local land use and development choices could better enable more flood and climate resilient places
- better coordination of planning and investment cycles with infrastructure and utilities could unlock investment in flood resilient infrastructure and services
- opportunities for delivering integrated water level management could improve flood and coastal resilience whilst also enhancing water quality and the natural environment

Alongside, the Environment Agency will develop a bank of best practice and digital tools to equip risk management authorities to embed adaptive approaches to flooding and coastal change into their projects, investments and strategic plans.

Case study: Thames Estuary 2100 Plan

The Environment Agency has championed adaptive planning to future climate risks through our trailblazing [Thames Estuary 2100 Plan](#). The Plan sets a long-term approach to managing this risk protecting over 1.4 million people and £320 billion worth of property in London and the wider estuary. It is internationally recognised as a leading example of a climate adaptation strategy, which enables practitioners and policy makers to plan, monitor and review how to adapt to flood risk to the end of the century and beyond.

It sets out a range of pathways for managing differing amounts of sea-level rise, river flows and increasing risk of storm surges whilst also improving the riverside environment. This includes a decision-making framework for switching between pathways, using the latest climate projections as a basis for those decisions.

As new data, scientific evidence and climate change projections become available, the Plan is reviewed to ensure it continues to set out the most effective way to manage tidal flood risk. For instance, if the projected level of sea level rise increases, the Plan can adapt the deadlines for raising defences to be earlier. By taking this approach, we can implement the most cost-effective solutions at the right time. The ten-year review of the Thames Estuary 2100 Plan is currently underway for publication in Spring 2023.

Further information

For more information on the Adaptation Pathways projects see our [£8 million Adaptive pathways programme](#) page or contact: InnovativeResilience@environment-agency.gov.uk.



Department
for Environment
Food & Rural Affairs



Environment
Agency

Flood and coastal innovation programmes

We will drive innovation in flood and coastal resilience and adaptation to a changing climate. We're investing £200 million to test and develop new ways to create a nation resilient to flooding and coastal change.

At least one in six people in England are at risk of flooding from rivers and the sea with many more at risk from surface water flooding. Sea levels will continue to rise and the frequency and severity of floods and storm surges is only going to get worse.

We need to be better at planning and adapting to the unavoidable impacts of climate change, while maximising opportunities for at-risk communities. This will ensure when flooding and coastal change happens, it causes much less harm to people, does much less damage, and ensures life can get back to normal much quicker.

Creating climate resilient places lies at the heart of our [Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management \(FCERM\) Strategy](#). Its vision is for "a nation ready for, and resilient to, flooding and coastal change – today, tomorrow and to the year 2100". The Strategy sits alongside and supports the delivery of the government's 2020 policy statement on flood and coastal erosion risk management.

In June 2022 the Environment Agency published a [Roadmap](#) summarising the practical actions organisations implementing the FCERM Strategy will complete by 2026. This includes a wide range of public, private and third sector partners.

We must get ready for the unavoidable impacts of climate change by adapting and helping the nation to become more resilient.

Definitions

Adaptation means anticipating appropriate action to prevent or minimise the likelihood and consequences of flooding and coastal change, both now and in the future. It has been shown that well planned, early adaptation action saves money and lives later.

Resilience is the capacity of people and places to plan for, better protect, respond to, and to recover from flooding and coastal change. Places can achieve this by making the best land use and development choices, better protecting people and places, and, responding to and recovering from flooding and coastal change, whilst all the time adapting to climate change.

Flood & coastal innovation programmes

In 2020, the government announced £200 million of funding to drive innovation in flood and coastal resilience and adaptation to a changing climate from 2021 to 2027.

The funding sits alongside and will inform our £5.2 billion FCERM capital investment programme.

The funding supports 3 programmes:

- The [£150 million Flood and coastal resilience innovation programme](#) which will enable local authorities, businesses and communities in 25 places to test and demonstrate innovative practical resilience actions.
- The [£8 million Adaptive pathways programme](#) which will develop long term investment plans for managing flooding and coastal change to 2100 and beyond in strategic locations including the Thames Estuary, Humber Estuary, River Severn and Yorkshire.
- The [£36 million Coastal transition accelerators programme](#) which will support communities in areas at significant risk of coastal erosion to transition and adapt to a changing climate.

The remaining funds are being used to support the projects and the [evaluation](#) of the programmes. This will help us mainstream learning, tools and products to benefit practitioners and policy makers across the country who are delivering flood and coastal resilience projects.

Wider benefits

These innovation programmes will:

- Improve our evidence on the costs and benefits of innovative resilience actions as well as helping to inform future policy approaches to, and investments in, FCERM. This includes informing our next long term investment scenarios and Spending Review bids.
- Produce a bank of best practice and digital tools to equip all risk management authorities to embed adaptive approaches to flooding and coastal change into their projects, investments and strategic plans. This will be accessible to Environment Agency operational teams, local authorities, water companies and internal drainage boards.
- Create a network of connected partners from academia, risk management authorities, utilities, business, infrastructure and affected communities, to champion innovation.

Further information

For more information on project profiles, videos, case studies and briefings visit our [dedicated site](#) or contact InnovativeResilience@environment-agency.gov.uk.

NORTH WEST REGIONAL FLOOD AND COASTAL COMMITTEE

Finance and Business Assurance Sub Group

DRAFT Report of the meeting held on 7 July 2023

Strategic Partnership Group Representation	
Cumbria	Y
Lancashire	Y
Merseyside	Y
Greater Manchester	Y
Cheshire Mid Mersey	Y

Attendees:

Adrian Lythgo	RFCC Chair
Cllr Stephen Clarke	RFCC Member - Lancashire Partnership
Cllr Jane Hugo	RFCC Member - Lancashire Partnership
Cllr Tricia Ayrton	RFCC Member - Gtr Manchester Partnership
Cllr Laura Crane	RFCC Member – Cheshire Mid Mersey Partnership
Cllr Daniel Barrington	RFCC Member - Merseyside Partnership
Cllr Phillip Cusack	RFCC Member - Gtr Manchester Partnership
Cllr Giles Archibald	RFCC Member – Cumbria Partnership
Cllr Karen Shore	RFCC Member – Cheshire Mid Mersey Partnership
Cllr Richard Silvester	RFCC Member - Gtr Manchester Partnership
David Shaw	RFCC Member – Planning and Design
Carolyn Otley	RFCC Member – Communities
David Harpley	RFCC Member – Conservation/NFM
Nick Pearson	EA Area Flood Risk Manager, Greater Manchester
Rachel Harmer	RFCC Secretariat
Adam Walsh	EA FCRM Programming Manager
Sally Whiting	EA Senior RFCC Adviser

Support Officers/Observers:

Doug Coyle	Officer - Cumbria Partnership
Marcus Leigh	Officer - Lancashire Partnership
Lorah Cheyne	Officer - Lancashire Partnership
Clare Nolan-Barnes	Officer - Lancashire Partnership
Sarah Wardle	Officer – Merseyside Partnership
Cllr James Shorrocks	Blackburn with Darwen Council
Jill Holden	Officer - Greater Manchester Partnership
Sarah Fontana	Officer – EA Senior LA Capital Projects Adviser
Paul Bowden	EA Ops Local Delivery Lead
Francis Comyn	Officer – Greater Manchester Partnership
Marcus Leigh	Officer - Lancashire Partnership
Nick Rae	Officer - Cumbria Partnership
Imran Munshi	Officer - Lancashire Partnership

1. Welcome and apologies for absence

Adrian Lythgo opened the meeting, thanked Members for joining and welcomed attendees. Adrian asked Members if there were any objections to the meeting being recorded, purely for the purposes of minute taking. There were no objections.

Members were advised that formal votes would be administered by members via the hands-up function on MS Teams.

Adrian welcomed two new RFCC Members to their first meeting - Councillor Philip Cusack and Councillor Richard Silvester who are both representing the Greater Manchester partnership.

Adrian stated that he had received formal apologies from Councillor Elizabeth Grey, Councillor Tony Brennan and from Matt Winnard.

Adrian stated that the Finance and Business Assurance Sub Group is where the formal aspects of the Committee's responsibilities are discussed, both with respect to the Capital Investment Programme and Environment Agency's Maintenance Programme for flooding, and the RFCC Business Plan.

2. Feedback from the RFCC Meeting on 6 April 2023 and actions since

Adrian reminded Members of a number of programme-related items noted in the last RFCC meeting and that the Sub Group would get a further update on those during this meeting.

The main decision from the last meeting was that the Committee approved the Local Levy request for the Penketh and Whittle flood risk management scheme of £1 million, an increase of £750 thousand on what had already been agreed.

3. Investment Programme Update

Adam Walsh (Environment Agency Programme Manager for Cumbria and Lancashire area) presented this item.

Looking first at the expected outcomes from the 2023/24 programme, Adam highlighted the target of 3,598 properties to be better protected and referred Members to further detail of how this is made up in Appendix A in the paper.

Referring to Appendix A, Cllr Karen Shore notified Adam that the Hooton Green, Ellesmere Port scheme was incorrectly labelled as coming under the Merseyside partnership, instead of Cheshire Mid Mersey (Cheshire West and Chester Council). Adrian and Adam thanked Karen, noted her comments and stated that this would be corrected.

ACTION: Adam Walsh to amend Appendix A of the Programme Update report to correct the partnership information before the RFCC meeting

Cllr Giles Archibald asked why the Kendal scheme was not included within Appendix A, as he believed this scheme was responsible for protecting many properties. He also asked whether the schemes listed within Appendix A were all confirmed and fully funded.

Adam advised Cllr Archibald that the Kendal Scheme was not included within Appendix A because those included were only the ones that were expected to provide reduced flood risk to properties this financial year 2023/24.

Cllr Archibald shared his understanding that the Kendal scheme is better protecting properties this year and therefore questioned Adam's response.

In response to Cllr Archibald's second question, Adam responded to say he would expect all the schemes delivering in 2023/24 (i.e. in Appendix A) to be fully funded but that he would look into the detail of this and confirm.

Adam and Cllr Archibald agreed to pick this up after the meeting to both clarify the situation with the Kendal scheme and provide further detail on funding and approvals for the listed schemes.

ACTION: Adam Walsh to work offline with Cllr Archibald to clarify when outcomes from schemes are reported, and the funding status of schemes in the 2023/24 outcomes list.

Adrian Lythgo added that they would re-circulate to all members the conventions on which schemes are included or not included, as well as responding to both Cllr Archibald's and Cllr Shore's specific queries.

ACTION: Adam Walsh to provide clarification for all Sub Group Members on conventions for when outcomes from schemes are counted/reported.

Adam Walsh went on to highlight the total investment available in 2023/24 of £108.542 million and how this is made up. He explained that certain schemes were benefitting from funding from the Department for Education and Department for Transport.

On expenditure, Adam reported actual spend to the end of May of £8.5 million and full year forecasts of £112.495 million. This is £3.9 million more than allocated which in essence is providing some desirable overprogramming.

NW RFCC Local Levy Programme Update

In terms of the Local Levy programme, Adam highlighted the total funding available at the start of 2023/24 of £15.55 million, and the current programme allocation of £9.557 million. He explained that this allocation is now higher than the £7.556 million approved by the RFCC in January as it now includes contributions for the Kendal scheme (£1.43 million) and

the Golburn Clough Scheme (£0.13m) which were re-profiled from 2022/23 at year-end, as reported to the RFCC in April, and it includes the increased Levy contribution of £1 million for the Penketh and Whittle scheme approved by the RFCC at its April meeting. Adam referred Members to the updated full Local Levy programme for 2023/24 in Appendix B.

Referring to the graph showing the Local Levy reserve, Adam highlighted that the size of Levy programme in this and recent years, with the RFCC's investment in both flood and coastal risk management schemes and the Business Plan, means that the amount of reserve funding is reducing rapidly. Based on the approved and indicative allocations for 2023/24 and 2024/25 respectively, the reserve is expected to drop from just under £6 million at the end of 2023/24 to under £1 million at the end of 2024/25.

Adam reported that there had been some review of future scheme allocations in the programme and it had already been possible to release some of those allocations where Local Levy is no longer required. He gave the example of The Pool in Southport (led by Sefton Council) which now has a healthy partnership funding score. He reported that this review of allocations in the future years of the programme would continue.

Adam reinforced the importance of continuing to review the programme's priorities to ensure the best use of funding within those affordable limits. He also highlighted that there is always some uncertainty regarding scheme Levy funding needs as these often change over time.

Adrian Lythgo added that it isn't unusual for the Committee to approve an allocation of Levy to a scheme, which subsequently isn't required, and that is one of the reasons that the Sub Group seeks to over-programme. Adrian then stated that the trend that Adam highlighted, in terms of the reducing Levy balance, is good news as it shows that we are spending the money on protecting people against flooding. He concluded that it does however mean that the future programme will be more constrained to the annual income.

Sally Whiting then spoke to members about the RFCC's Local Levy Strategy and the proposal now to refresh this. She explained that the Strategy is a set of principles and commitments that the RFCC agreed in relation to the Local Levy programme, which was developed and published in September 2020, anticipating a reduction in the Local Levy reserve. There are now certain elements of the Strategy which need to be updated to reflect subsequent changes including the publication of the National Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Strategy and the RFCC's latest Business Plan.

The key updates needed relate to the Innovation and Change Fund (now Business Plan investment) and the process for reviewing unclaimed Levy allocations.

The Strategy refresh will be a consultative and collaborative process taking members views on the scope of the proposed review and funding priorities.

Adrian formally asked members if they had any objections to the recommendations Adam and Sally had illustrated which were:

- To note the current Local Levy position and latest spend forecast.
- To endorse the review of what's included in current Local Levy allocations
- To support the initiation of a refresh of the Local Levy Strategy.

Cllr Archibald then raised a similar query again as to whether the schemes listed as having Local Levy allocations in 2023/24 were approved and fully funded.

Adrian asked Adam Walsh to respond. Adam stated that schemes having Local Levy contributions in the current year's programme aren't necessarily fully funded and could still be working to secure contributions, with one element of that funding being Local Levy. However full funding would need to be in place before the scheme can then continue to delivery on the ground.

Cllr Archibald then responded to say that he would have liked greater clarity on whether projects are fully funded and their likelihood of going ahead, and asked if other Councillors would also find that additional information useful.

Adam Walsh responded that regular review of the programme is always ongoing and that he would explore options for better informing the Sub Group on project progress/status.

Cllr Archibald stated that this would be helpful and thanked Adam for this suggestion.

ACTION: Adam Walsh to work with EA Programme teams arrange for additional detail on project/funding progress/status to be provided in future reports.

Cllr Karen Shore raised her hand to express that she was slightly concerned by the impact on the future programme and wondered whether the Sub Group had considered having a working group of members to review this further so that members really understood the impacts.

Adrian responded to Cllr Shore by stating that this was very much part of how the RFCC considered support for both capital schemes and on the Business Plan. Adrian agreed to consider how the Sub Group could take this further and asked Cllr Shore to confirm if she was primarily considering capital schemes or the Business Plan.

Cllr Shore responded that she was mainly thinking about capital schemes but agreed that it would be helpful to consider both aspects.

Adrian responded that the Sub Group would consider this as part of the Local Levy Strategy review. He stated that initially we could organise a virtual session to give an overview on the background of the Local Levy Strategy for Councillors, bearing in mind that not all current members of the Committee will have been on the Committee at the time those priorities were established.

Cllr Shore welcomed Adrian's recommendation and stated that something similar had been done in the past but in a face-to-face format.

Adrian responded that he would be willing to organise a collective session with Councillors face to face subject to their availability.

ACTION: Adrian Lythgo and Sally Whiting to consider and advise how Sub Group members can be fully engaged in the Local Levy Strategy refresh.

There were no further comments or questions from members.

RFCC Business Plan update

Sally proceeded to give an update on implementation of the RFCC Business Plan, which covered the implementation of the agreed governance arrangements, and a new reporting tool extracts of which were included in the report. Sally asked for members to provide any feedback on how helpful the reporting tools first outputs had been.

Against a total allocation for the Business Plan delivery in 2023/24 of £1.384 million, the latest spend forecast of £1.27 million indicates a slight underspend of £115 thousand this year, which will be kept under review. A more comprehensive update on this matter will be available at the next Finance and Business Assurance Sub Group.

Sally then introduced three proposals for the Finance and Business Assurance Subgroup to either recommend or approve which were recommendations coming from the relevant Ambition Steering Groups. Fuller details on these had been provided in the report.

Recommendation 1

An 8.5% increase in the funding provision for delivery partner Newground to continue to provide the same level of service on delivering three of the four actions under the Building Community Resilience ambition. These actions include the ongoing management and development of The Flood Hub website, aligned social media, an ongoing action campaign to grow flood resilience, and the support they provide to risk management authority partners on engagement with community flood groups. This increase is necessary to cover cost increases due to inflation on both staff and website developer and subscription services. This equates to an increase from £230 thousand per year (at this level for several years) to £249.55 thousand per year, through to 2026/27.

Since this represents a small increase in funding on existing agreed Business Plan projects which does not increase the overall level of investment in the current year, the Sub Group have delegated authority from the RFCC to approve this recommendation. The increase in 2023/24 is fully offset by underspend on the Business Plan this year.

Cllr Archibald asked if Newground committed to delivering their services for £230 thousand per year at the start of the current three-year agreement.

Sally clarified that alongside the three-year partnership agreement, there is an annual process of confirming the level of funding available for each year and the deliverables agreed. The annual review for this year is currently being prepared.

Cllr Archibald accepted Sally's response and proceeded with a second question which was whether the NW RFCC knew if Newground were delivering what they promised at the start of the agreement and if they were monitoring their levels of service delivery.

Sally responded that the NW RFCC do monitor Newground's performance via two governance groups for the specific Business Plan ambition. She explained that there was a high-level steering group and a project group made-up of practitioners who are informing the content of the work programme that Newground carry out. Furthermore, Newground provides quarterly reports and analytics from the Flood Hub website and other reports to RFCC for review.

Cllr Shore shared her personal experience of working with Newground in Cheshire West and Chester where she stated that she had experienced very good support particularly regarding community engagement in communities at risk of flooding. She encouraged other authorities to engage with Newground so that they could also benefit from their services.

Carolyn Otley, the RFCC member sponsor for the Building Community Resilience ambition, supported the collaborative agreement with Newground and highlighted the real benefit of using the experience of Newground staff to upskill new employees in Local Authorities and the Environment Agency on community engagement work. Carolyn stated that the agreement was working well and was a valuable addition to the work of the NW RFCC.

Cllr Archibald asked if the quarterly reports created by Newground are shared with Committee members.

Rachel Harmer confirmed that she shares these with all Committee members and support officers.

There were no further comments from members therefore Adrian invited members to vote on the requested increase in investment to Newground by raising their hands via the MS Teams function.

The recommendation was approved by a majority vote which included votes from all five sub-regional partnerships.

Recommendation 2

Formal closedown of action ID11 - Evidence gathering – Effectiveness of Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) advice on planning applications.

Sally stated that the steering group for this ambition had concluded that the resource required from already stretched Local Authorities to implement a data gathering process going forwards exceeds the benefits to be gained. Furthermore, the subsequent announcement to implement Schedule 3 of the Flood and Water Management Act, which will change roles on planning within Local Authorities mean this action is no longer useful.

Adrian stated that members should raise their hands if they wish to keep this action. No one raised their hands therefore Adrian stated that this proposal would go through to the RFCC Meeting on 21st July as a recommendation for approval.

Recommendation 3

Proposal to incorporate support for a new project in the Business Plan - the development of a Highway SuDS Design Guide with an emphasis on SuDS retrofit as part of urban regeneration projects. The Design Guide would be delivered by the Greater Manchester Partnership, with a partnership formed of Transport for Greater Manchester, Greater Manchester Combined Authority, United Utilities, and the Environment Agency (in an overview role). All these partners are also providing funding for the project.

Although the guide would have a Greater Manchester focus, the design guide would mainly consist of generic information about the design, construction, and maintenance of different types of highway SuDS and therefore it would have a high degree of transferability to all partnerships, particularly those with large urban areas.

The project is seeking a Local Levy contribution of £20 thousand in 2023/24, which would be fully offset by underspend this year.

No members had any questions or comments regarding this final proposal therefore Adrian proceeded to ask the group to raise their hand via the MS Teams function if they were in support of the recommendation.

The Sub Group voted in favour of recommending this to the RFCC for approval, including votes from all five sub-regional partnerships, and independent members.

Rochdale and Littleborough Flood Risk Management Scheme

This update was presented by Nick Pearson (Environment Agency Area Flood Risk Manager for Greater Manchester) on behalf of David Baines who was unable to attend the meeting at

the last minute. This set out a change of approach in business case delivery on the Rochdale and Littleborough Scheme.

Nick explained that the 2018 Outline Business Case (OBC) set out the principles of delivering a 1% standard of protection in Littleborough and 1.33% in Rochdale.

The key updates were:

- 1) Substantial construction work on phase one had been carried out, and current costs are approx. £18 million in delivering Phase 1A, which includes conveyance improvements, replacement of roads to provide a bigger opening, removal of bridges and some smaller wall raisings.
- 2) Project costs have increased partially due to inflation and are now approx. £112 million from an OBC value of between £40 and £50 million, so a large increase. Phase 1 Littleborough estimated cost is approx. £59 million and Rochdale Phase 2 £253 million.
- 3) Previously £5 million of Local Levy has been given to the original combined Rochdale and Littleborough FCRM Scheme. The current proposal is to split the business cases into two and to give the £5 million to the Littleborough phase to allow it to have 100% partnership funding. This assists delivery of the Littleborough scheme now.
- 4) There is currently no intention for the project to return to the RFCC to ask for more Local Levy - it is just a reappportioning of funds to allow progression of Phase 1.

The recommendation to the Sub Group is that rather than delivering a full business case which incorporates both Phase 1 and Phase 2, there should instead be separate business cases for Phase 1 and then subsequently in 2026 for Phase 2. This represents a change in delivery.

Adrian responded by stating that it would need to be a formal RFCC decision as it would lead to all of the Local Levy being spent on Phase 1. He then asked if there were any questions and comments from members of the subgroup.

Cllr Archibald raised his hand to ask what the scheme's carbon saving figure was.

Nick replied that he would ask David Baines who is the Senior Project Manager for the scheme so that he could provide the information to Cllr Archibald prior to the full RFCC meeting.

The Sub Group voted in favour of supporting this recommendation, including votes from all five sub-regional partnership.

EA Asset Maintenance Programme 2023/24

Paul Bowden (Operations Delivery Lead for Greater Manchester) provided a presentation on the North West Maintenance and Revenue Programme for 2023/24.

Paul highlighted that this additional detail was being provided on the back of the substantive item provided to the January 2023 RFCC meeting on the EA's maintenance programme. This is the first time such a package of information had been provided to the Sub Group, which is intended to be provided on a regular basis. Paul therefore asked for feedback from the Sub Group on whether it matched what they wanted to see.

The presentation included information on the following:

- Incident Response which included monitoring River Levels at St. Michaels on Wyre.
- Maintenance to Flood Embankments at Wrea Brook Lancashire.
- Mutual aid which involved sharing equipment and expertise from the EA and Cumbria and Lancashire to support colleagues in Somerset.
- Details of collaborative working across the RMA's, with an example of EA staff clearing watercourse channel to enable Local Authority staff to access and clear Highway Culvert under A6, Levenshulme preventing persistent highway flooding.

The key messages from the presentation were as follows:

- Internal framework renewals have impacted delivery in 2023/24. For the Resource budget it is the CCTV programme affected. We do have a solution and aim for it to be implemented in Q2.
- Inflation – this is affecting the cost of our projects and the amount of work we can deliver for our budget has had to reduce.
- Staff resource and budget pressures – although we have had successful recruitment drives, training and developing our new starters takes time.

In response to the presentation Cllr Archibald asked two questions, as follows:

1. How do you protect biodiversity?
2. Do you use glyphosate?

Paul Bowden responded to the first by stating that all of the EA's maintenance programmes are screened by our internal biodiversity and fisheries teams. Furthermore, Paul stated that if they need to remove trees as part of maintenance work, they plant more to replace them ensuring there is no net loss.

Paul Bowden was unsure on the answer to Cllr Archibald's second question but advised that he would make enquiries.

ACTION: Paul Bowden to feed back to the Sub Group on whether glyphosate is used as part of the EA's asset maintenance.

Adrian explained that he chose to include this discussion as the Sub Group does have to consent the maintenance budget for the Environment Agency for the Northwest each year and therefore he thought the presentation would be helpful to inform the Sub Group how the budget is spent. Adrian urged the Sub Group members to provide feedback on the

presentation. No one had any initial feedback to provide therefore Adrian requested that they submit feedback after the meeting. Adrian stated that he will contact new Councillors in the Sub Group for general feedback on the meeting to understand what would be beneficial for them to discuss in future meetings.

ACTION: All Sub Group members to provide feedback on the helpfulness of the programme information provided, format and content, in particular the presentation on the EA Asset Maintenance programme.

Risks to the Programme

Adam Walsh reiterated the ongoing risks to both the capital and EA resource / maintenance programmes, which include transition to new frameworks, the new Biodiversity Net Gain legislation, and staff resource availability (both EA and LA).

Adrian Lythgo clarified that the risks discussed by Adam were risks related to the capital programme and not explicitly risks relating to the Business Plan.

Cllr Tricia Ayrton raised her hand to ask whether concerns raised by Councillor Quinn in a previous meeting regarding challenges with recruitment and retention had been assessed.

Adrian responded that there were ongoing discussions taking place within sub regional partnerships. He stated that the Sub Group could also do something to present an overview of the issue to the next meeting if that was requested by members.

Cllr Tricia Ayrton confirmed that she would appreciate that.

ACTION: Adrian Lythgo to discuss with EA colleagues how to collate and provide information on resource challenges across risk management authorities for the next meeting.

There were no other comments or questions from members.

Annual investment programme refresh process

Adam Walsh finished his presentation by providing an overview of the annual process to refresh the funding allocations for the capital programme.

He pointed members to where we are in the process for this year with Area Programme Teams currently preparing collated EA and LA bid submissions to the National Programme Management Team by the end of July.

Adam highlighted the persistent challenge with the slight misalignment of the allocation process with RFCC and Sub Group meetings which means the detail of the bid submission is not available to be shared with the Sub Group until the October meeting.

Adam also gave an update on the process for the annual refresh of the Asset Maintenance Resource Programme.

Adam stated that they would be able to provide indicative allocations for 2024/25 at the October meeting round.

Adrian Lythgo reiterated to the Sub Group that the NW RFCC oversee a major five-year investment programme which is refreshed annually. As a result, the content changes and the Committee have a role in consenting that programme annually.

Adrian highlighted that the individual schemes that make up the programme in the first instance are the subject of agreement between individual risk management authorities and the Environment Agency. The Committee's role isn't to put forward individual projects - it's to consent the programme in its entirety on the basis that it addresses the flood risk as we understand it in the North West.

Adrian concluded that the EA Area Programme Teams would be happy to provide further information on the process should the Sub Group require it.

Resolutions

RFCC Business Plan

The Finance and Business Assurance Sub Group **approved**:

- the proposed increase in Local Levy funding for the Business Plan 'Building Community Resilience' ambition, from £230 thousand per year to £249.55 thousand per year, to 2026-27 (within delegated powers from the RFCC).

The Finance and Business Assurance Sub Group considered and **recommends that the RFCC**:

- **Approves** the formal closedown of action ID11 - Evidence gathering – Effectiveness of Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) advice on planning applications.
- **Approves** the inclusion of support for a Highways SuDS Design Guide requiring a Local Levy contribution of £20 thousand in 2023-24.

Local Levy Programme and Strategy

The Finance and Business Assurance Sub Group considered and **recommends that the RFCC**:

- **Notes** the current Local Levy position and latest spend forecast.

- **Endorses** the ongoing refresh of the scheme-specific Local Levy allocations in the future years of the programme
- **Supports** the subsequent initiation of a refresh of the Local Levy Strategy.
- **Approves** the reapportionment of Local Levy contribution to the Littleborough element of the Rochdale and Littleborough scheme.

North West investment programme

The Finance and Business Assurance Sub Group considered and **recommends that the RFCC:**

- **Notes** the progress in delivering the 2023-24 Capital and Resource programmes.
- **Notes** the risks to the North West Programme in 2023-24.

4. Minutes, matters arising and actions from the last meeting

Adrian confirmed that there had been no changes raised to the minutes from the last Finance and Business Assurance Sub Group meeting in July. The minutes were therefore approved.

5. Any Other Business

Adrian notified the Sub Group that there is a new Area Flood Risk Manager for Cumbria called Richard Knight.

Cllr Stephen Clarke requested that going forwards the detail on schemes in the programme within the report be provided at Local Authority level rather than just partnership level.

Adrian Lythgo expressed that this should be fairly easy to resolve so committed to this.

ACTION: EA Programming teams to provide scheme information at Local Authority as well as partnership level in future reports.

Cllr Archibald asked how he could see the progress and the expected timelines on schemes in the programme. He also asked if the Sub Group would receive information that illustrated whether a project was completed on time and on budget.

Adrian explained to Cllr Archibald that those discussions should occur at sub-regional meetings with his colleagues in Cumbria so that the granularity of those details and discussions make sense to individual councils and councillors.

Cllr Archibald acknowledged Adrian's comment but stated that he would also like to be able to access this information on schemes across the North West, such as for the Rochdale scheme the Sub Group had voted on today.

Adrian confirmed that this information is available to the Sub Group at programme level.

Finally, Adrian apologised to the Sub Group for any confusion caused by the vote recording during this meeting. He explained that the RFCC had approved changes to the Terms of Reference for the Finance and Business Assurance Sub Group but that we haven't yet fully operationalised them into the actual recording of votes.

Adrian clarified that every recommendation besides Sally's first recommendation regarding increased investment to Newground would go forward for approval at the full RFCC meeting.

Adrian concluded the meeting by thanking everyone for joining and stated that he would look forward to seeing members at the full Committee meeting in Preston on the 21 July where the Committee would also have the opportunity, after the formal meeting, to visit one of the FCRM schemes which forms part of the programme.

6.Date of the next meeting

The next meeting of the Finance and Business Assurance Sub Group will be held via MS Teams on 6 October 2023.

Summary of actions

Amend Appendix A of the Programme Update report to correct the partnership information before the RFCC meeting	Adam Walsh
Work offline with Cllr Archibald to clarify when outcomes from schemes are reported, and the funding status of schemes in the 2023/24 outcomes list.	Adam Walsh
Provide clarification for all Sub Group Members on conventions for when outcomes from schemes are counted/reported.	Adam Walsh
Provide additional detail on project/funding progress/status in future reports.	Adam Walsh / EA Programming teams
Consider and advise how Sub Group members can be fully engaged in the Local Levy Strategy refresh.	Adrian Lythgo and Sally Whiting
Feed back to the Sub Group on whether glyphosate is used as part of the EA's asset maintenance.	Paul Bowden
Provide feedback on the helpfulness of the programme information provided, format and content, in particular the presentation on the EA Asset Maintenance programme.	All Sub Group members
Discuss with EA colleagues how to collate and provide information on resource challenges across risk management authorities for the next meeting.	Adrian Lythgo
Provide scheme information at Local Authority as well as partnership level in future reports.	Adam Walsh / EA Programming teams

Report to the North West RFCC Finance & Business Assurance Sub Group (FBASG)

7th July 2023




1. Purpose

1.1 This report to the Finance & Business Assurance Group provides progress on delivering the in-year (2023-24) capital and resource investment programmes, including the RFCC’s Business Plan.

The FBASG are asked to:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Note the progress delivering the 2023-24 capital and resource programmes • Note the current / future position of the Local Levy Programme and latest spend forecast • Note the update and funding proposals on the RFCC Business Plan



2. Capital investment programme 2021-22 to 2026-27

2.1. Overview

			
	Properties to be better protected	Partnership funding	Efficiency savings
National Overview	We are investing £5.2 billion over the next six years to better protect hundreds of thousands of properties	We have secured £990 million of partnership funding contributions	The deadline for Q1 efficiency submissions is 7th July. Details will be reported at the next meeting
North West Overview	4,839 properties forecast to be better protected in 2023-24	Approximately 10% of the North West Programme is made up of partnership funding	The deadline for Q1 efficiency submissions is 7th July. Details will be reported at the next meeting

2.2 2023-24 Programme


What outcomes are we delivering?

		* North West Target 3,598	North West Forecast 4,839	Actual to date 38
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**No official North West RFCC target. Targets are split by Area.*

- 2.2.1 Initial targets for ‘properties better protected’ have been set for 2023/24. Measures for non-residential properties and properties better protected from increased levels of risk due to climate change were introduced for this programme.
- 2.2.2 Whilst targets are set by Environment Agency Area, rather than RFCC, the unofficial North West RFCC properties better protected target for 2023/24 is 3,598. This comprises GMMC 1,171 and CLA 2,427. Forecast figures at mid-May 2023 indicate the North West will better protect 4,839 properties from flooding this year. See Appendix A.

2.2.3 Are we spending the funding we have secured?

	Capital funding available £108.542 million	Capital forecast £112.495 million
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- 2.2.4 The total capital funding available to the North West RFCC 2023-24 programme is £108.541 million. This includes £94.777 million of central Government FCRM GiA (Grant in Aid), £8.153 million of Local Levy and £5.611 million of Partnership Funding Contributions. Sources of partnership contributions include local authorities themselves, European Regional Development Funding, and other government departments such as the Department for Education and the Department for Transport.
- 2.2.5 Forecasts at mid-May 2023 show that we are expecting to draw down £112.495 million this year. This is £3.953 million more than allocated.
- 2.2.6 North West actual spend to end of May 2023 was £8.477 million (GMMC £4.295, CLA £4.182), against a budget of £108.542 million, and a forecast of £112.495 million.
- 2.2.7 Risks: 2023-24 (this financial year)
- Current forecasts and allocations of funding in 2023-24 may be significantly different than required
 - Likely increase in the cost of materials (inflation), impacting scheme costs and therefore viability
 - Material purchase and lead times could delay delivery

- Industrial action may continue into 2023-24
- Ongoing resource challenges
- Planning permission and BNG (Biodiversity Net Gain) requirements from November 2023
- Framework changes

What level of efficiency are we demonstrating?

2.2.8 The deadline for Q1 efficiency submissions is 7th July. Details will be reported at the next meeting.

2.3 2024-25 Programme

2.3.1 The Annual Refresh of the FCRM Capital Investment Programme is ongoing. Final bids for 2024-25 are due to be submitted at the end of July.

3. NW RFCC Local Levy programme for 2023-24 and beyond

3.1 Current position 2023-24

3.1.1 The North West RFCC started the 2023-24 financial year with a total Local Levy resource of £15.550 million (£4.411 million income plus £11.139 million carried forward from 2022-23).

3.1.2 The total current allocation for 2023-24 is £9.557 million. This has increased from the allocation of £7.556 million approved by the RFCC in January 2023 as it now includes allocations for the Kendal (£1.43m) and Golburn Clough (£0.13m) schemes which were re-profiled from 2022/23 at year-end, and includes the Levy contribution of £1 million to the Penketh and Whittle scheme which was approved by the RFCC at its April 2023 meeting. The updated Local Levy programme allocation for 2023/24 is shown at Appendix B.

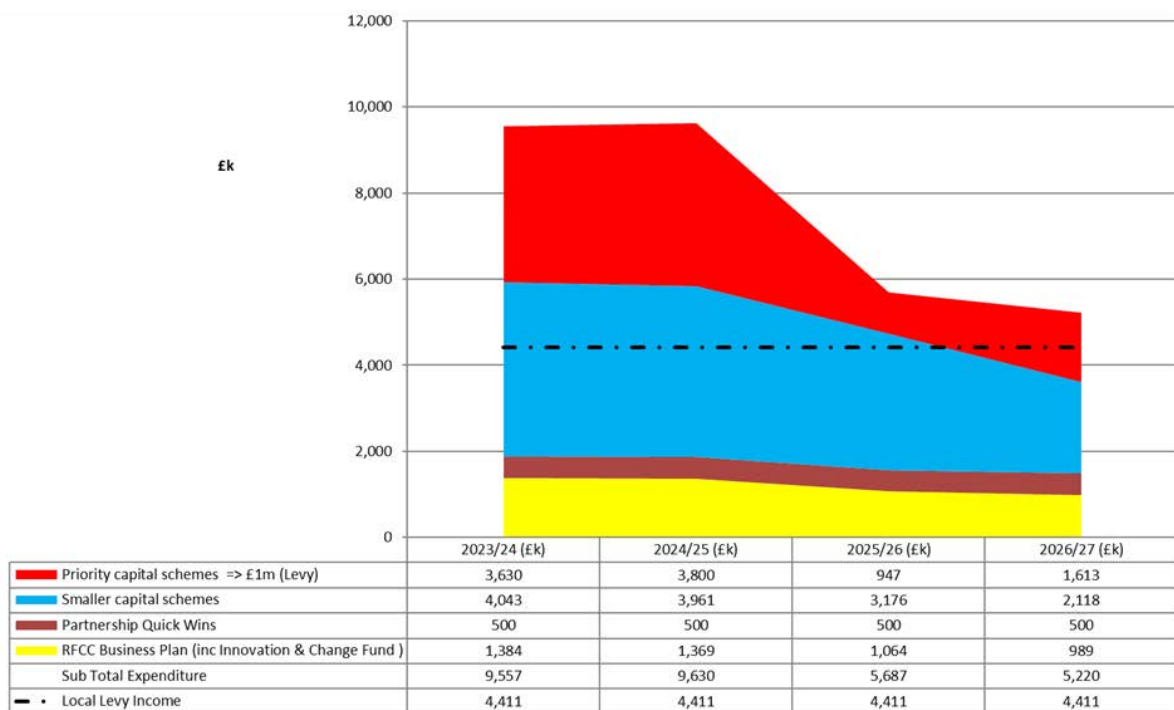
Summary of Local Levy income and spend

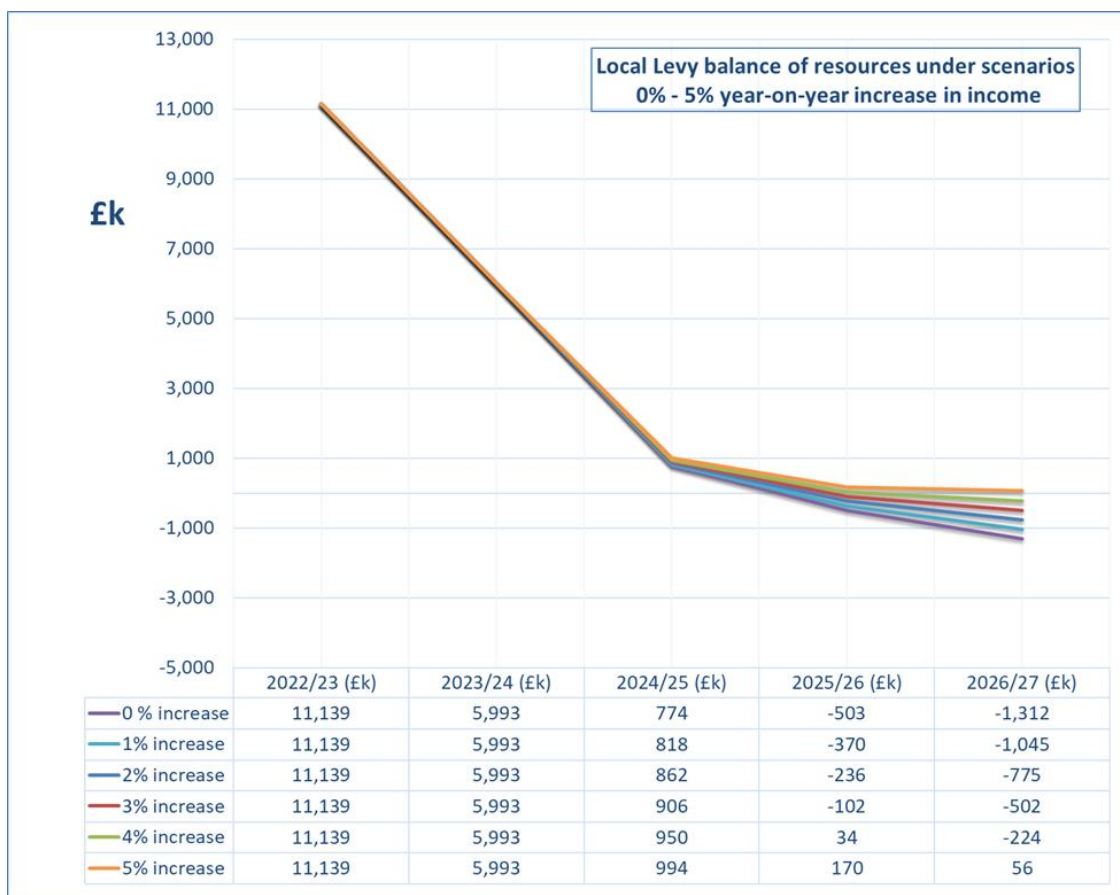
2023-24	
Local Levy income and allocation summary (£ million)	
Cash balance at start of year	11.139
Local Levy income	4.411
Total available balance	15.550
Allocation	9.557
Expected remaining balance at year end (based on allocation)	5.993

3.1.3 For a number of years, the RFCC has carried a sizeable reserve in its Local Levy fund. At the start of 2023/24, this balance was £11.139 million. The size of the Levy programme in this and recent years, with the RFCC's investment in both FCRM schemes and its Business Plan, means the amount of reserve funding is reducing rapidly. This is something the RFCC was keen to see.

3.1.4 The below graphs show the income & expenditure scenario. This shows that the programme and its allocation significantly exceed the annual income in 2023/24 and 2024/25, leading to a reduction in the reserve.

3.1.4 Based on the 2023/24 allocation, and indicative allocation for 2024/25, the reserve at the end of 2023/24 is expected to be just under £6 million, reducing further to under £1 million at the end of 2024/25.





- 3.1.4 Ultimately, once this reserve is largely or wholly drawn down, this will constrain the programme to the annual Local Levy income raised. It is important that we continue to review our priorities and to keep the programme under review to ensure that we are making best use of the funding within the affordable limits.
- 3.1.5 Since the last meeting, there has been some review of the programme which has identified some allocations which could be reprofiled or released.
- 3.1.6 Sefton Council have confirmed that they no longer require £495 thousand Local Levy allocated in 2024-25 for 'The Pool' scheme in Southport as they have a healthy PF score and so should be fully funded by GIA.
- 3.1.7 There also remains some uncertainty on whether some Levy contributions will be needed. This will be kept under review.
- 3.1.8 With schemes that are further ahead in the future programme, there is always some inherent uncertainty and funding needs do change over time. The total Local Levy current allocation for the period 2024-25 to 2026-27 is £18.477 million. The detail of this is outlined in Appendix F. It is proposed that the detail of these individual allocations is reviewed with stakeholders over the coming weeks and months to ensure they are still required.
- 3.1.9 Given the anticipated smaller programme ahead, we have been looking to the RFCC's approved Local Levy Strategy. It is apparent that while a

significant portion of the Strategy remains relevant and appropriate, there are other aspects which require a refresh.

- 3.1.10 It is proposed that, once the future scheme allocations have been refreshed to confirm need and timing, working with local authority partners, a process to refresh the Strategy is initiated. A survey of members and RMA representatives will invite feedback and comment before a paper is brought back to the Finance and Business Assurance Sub Group.

Asks of the FBASG:

- To note the current position and latest spend forecast.
- To endorse the ongoing refresh of the scheme-specific allocations in the future years of the programme
- To support the subsequent initiation of a refresh of the Local Levy Strategy.

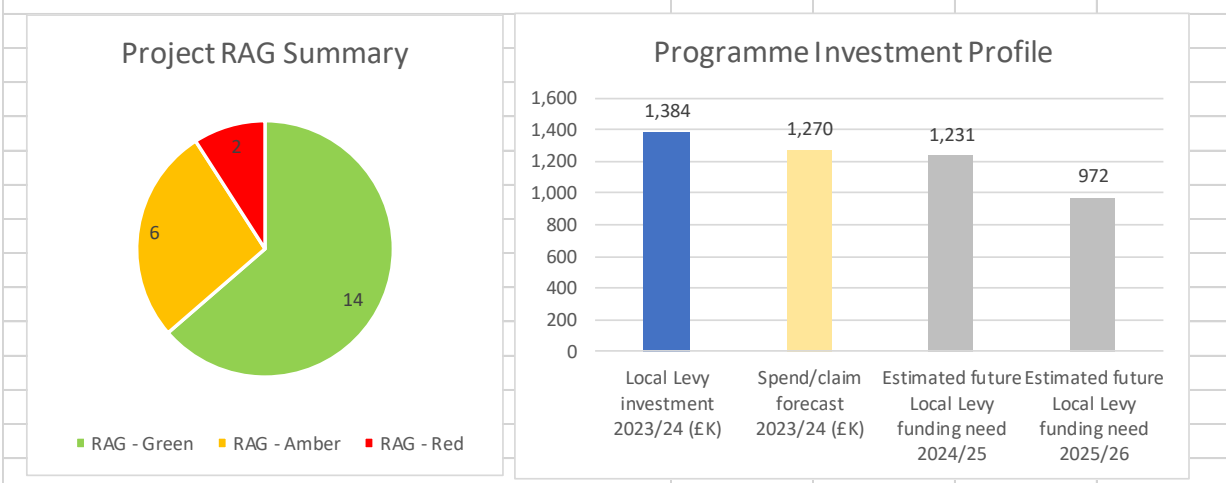
3.2 RFCC Business Plan (Local Levy funded)

Summary

- 3.2.1 Good progress continues to be made on the projects being supported by the RFCC through its Business Plan.
- 3.2.2 The governance arrangements approved by the RFCC in January, and new reporting arrangements, continue to be implemented.
- 3.2.3 Of the 22 projects currently approved, 14 are rated Green to reflect good progress that is broadly in line with the expected schedule, 6 are rated Amber which reflects progress is behind schedule, and 2 are rated Red as they are not progressing. Some projects are well established and ongoing. Where projects are new, work is ongoing to initiate them and put in the place appropriate contractual arrangements.
- 3.2.4 In terms of investment and forecast spend, the RFCC approved Business Plan investment in 2023/24 of £1.384 million. The latest most likely spend forecast is £1.270 million. This represents an underspend this year of £115 thousand.
- 3.2.5 The graphs and tables below illustrate this, broken down by Business Plan Ambition. These are taken from the new Business Plan reporting tool.

North West RFCC Business Plan Reporting Tool

Programme Level reporting



Ambition	No. of projects approved	RAG - Green	RAG - Amber	RAG - Red
Accessing investment and funding	4	2	1	1
Building community resilience	5	3	2	0
Managing water at catchment scale with nature	4	2	2	0
Achieving climate resilient planning, development & infrastructure	4	3	0	1
Increasing RMA capacity and collaboration	5	4	1	0
	22	14	6	2

Ambition	Local Levy investment 2023/24 (£K)	Spend/claim forecast 2023/24 (£K)	Variance (over- or underspend) (£K)
Accessing investment and funding	220	145	-75
Building community resilience	230	290.5	60.5
Managing water at catchment scale with nature	111	84	-27
Achieving climate resilient planning, development & infrastructure	204	155	-49
Increasing RMA capacity and collaboration	619	595	-24
	1384	1,270	-115

Action recommended for close down

3.2.6 The RFCC has always envisaged the Business Plan to be a live initiative, subject to a degree of annual refresh of the actions, and with actions being closed down or added as time progresses. Actions will be closed down if, on further consideration and scoping, it is felt that the benefits do not sufficiently outweigh the investment of time, money or resource required, or if the original aim is superseded by changes in policy or legislation. Following recommendation from the relevant ambition Steering Group, these closure

decisions need to be endorsed by the Finance and Business Assurance Sub Group, and recommended to the RFCC for approval.

3.2.7 There is one project recommended for closedown this quarter. This is one of the two projects rated Red as not progressing.

Ambition	Achieving Climate Resilient Planning, Development and Infrastructure
Action	ID11 Evidence gathering – Effectiveness of Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) advice on planning applications

3.2.8 Initially, this action was paused, pending the outcome of ID10 – a broader evidence gathering initiative on planning and development in relation to flood risk. In addition, it was always recognised that ID11 would be an ambitious project. Data on planning application decisions and how they fit with LLFA advice is not currently collected by Local Planning Authorities, their resourcing levels means that it would have been a big ask, and it would not have been retrospective but rather seeking to put in place a data collection process going forwards. Since then, we have had the Government announcement on the implementation of Schedule 3 of the Flood and Water Management Act which will bring about significant changes in the assessment of planning applications and the role of LLFAs in this.

3.2.9 This action had no Local Levy allocation in 2023/24 but it has indicative allocations of £50 thousand in 2024/25 and £50 thousand in 2025/26. These indicative allocations will now be released for reallocation to other Business Plan actions or the wider investment programme.

3.2.10 The Steering Group for the ambition has recommended that this action be formally closed down.

Asks of the FBASG:

- To recommend to the RFCC the formal closedown of action ID11 - Evidence gathering – Effectiveness of Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) advice on planning applications’.

Proposed funding allocation change

3.2.11 Appendix D provides a briefing note on work being carried out under the ‘**Building Community Resilience**’ ambition of the RFCC Business Plan by the RFCC’s delivery partner Newground. This sets out a proposal for a small (8.5%) increase to the Local Levy contribution which is required to maintain the current level of resource, given increases in staff and website maintenance costs (for The Flood Hub).

- 3.2.12 The proposed increase takes the investment from £230 thousand per year (at this level for several years) to £249.55 thousand per year, through to 2026/27.
- 3.2.13 For 2023-24, this is offset by underspend on the Business Plan overall and does not represent a net increase in investment.
- 3.2.14 In line with the agreed Business Plan governance rules, the Sub Group have delegated authority from the RFCC to make prescribed allocation decisions within the approved business plan where it relates to agreed actions.
- 3.2.15 This proposal is supported and recommended for approval by the Steering Group for the ambition, led by RFCC member sponsor Carolyn Otley.

New project recommended for support

- 3.2.16 The Finance and Business Assurance Sub Group are asked to consider and recommend to the RFCC for approval, the incorporation of a new project within the Business Plan programme.
- 3.2.17 Appendix E provides a briefing note on a '**Highways SuDS Design Guide**'. The RFCC are being asked to support this work with a Local Levy contribution of £20 thousand in 2023-24.
- 3.2.18 The Highways SuDS Design Guide will be produced by the Greater Manchester partnership, with partner funding from Transport for Greater Manchester (£20 thousand), Greater Manchester Combined Authority through their Natural Course programme (£14 thousand), and United Utilities (£20 thousand).
- 3.2.19 The project briefing has been shared with all partnerships, been subject to some initial discussion, and is intended to be a largely generic design guide which other partnerships could readily use.
- 3.2.20 The proposal has been considered and endorsed by the Steering Group for 'Achieving climate resilient planning, development and infrastructure' ambition, led by RFCC member sponsor Chris Findley. The Group recommends that the FBA Sub Group support and recommend to the RFCC the addition of this action and Local Levy contribution to the Business Plan programme.
- 3.2.21 In 2023/24, when the Local Levy contribution of £20 thousand is being requested, there is a forecast underspend of £115 on this ambition of the Business Plan. There would therefore be no net increase in Business Plan investment.

Asks of the FBASG:

- To approve the proposed Local Levy for the Business Plan ‘Building Community Resilience’ ambition, within delegated powers from the RFCC.
- To support and recommend to the RFCC for approval, the inclusion of support for a Highways SuDS Design Guide requiring a Local Levy contribution of £20 thousand in 2023-24.

3.3 Requests for Local Levy support for FCRM schemes

3.3.1 Appendix B provides a briefing note on the ‘**Rochdale & Littleborough Flood Alleviation Scheme**’. This is a request for the RFCC to support a reappropriation of Local Levy contribution to the Littleborough element only.

Asks of the FBASG:

- Note and recommend for approval the reappropriation of Local Levy contribution to the Littleborough element of the Rochdale and Littleborough scheme

4. 2023-24 EA Resource Maintenance Programme

4.1 Environment Agency Resource funding for the North West currently totals £21.604 million. This includes staff costs, maintenance, and resource projects.

4.2 Both Areas are currently showing a forecast underspend according to the reporting system. However, the ‘Approved Position Tool’ (APT) budgets have only been set in recent weeks and the system is not reflecting the up-to-date forecast. The real position is that both Areas are forecasting to budget.

EA Resource Programme financial summary 2023-24

Resource Programme, inc. Maintenance, Staff Costs and Resource Projects	Budget £k	Forecast £k	Forecast Variance to Budget £k
Cumbria & Lancashire	11,368	8,335	-3,033
Greater Manchester, Merseyside & Cheshire	10,236	8,913	-1,323
EA Total FCRM GiA Resource	21,604	17,248	-4,356

4.3 A supplementary report (presentation) will be provided in the Finance and Business Assurance Sub Group meeting which will give more detail on the maintenance programme that has been carried out by the Environment Agency during Quarter 1 of 2023/24. This will cover activities completed, as well as key risks and challenges. Feedback will be invited from the Sub Group to refine the content and format of the report with the intention of providing regular quarterly updates.

APPENDICES

Appendix A	Properties better protected – 2023-24 forecasts (and targets for info only)
Appendix B	Local Levy Programme 2023/24 (Update)
Appendix C	Rochdale & Littleborough Flood Alleviation Scheme – request to reapportion current allocation
Appendix D	RFCC Business Plan – Building Community Resilience – Proposal to increase existing support from £230 thousand per year to £249.55 thousand, through to 2026-27
Appendix E	RFCC Business Plan – Achieving Climate Resilient Planning, Development and Infrastructure - Highways SuDS Design Guide: – New proposal to support this project requiring a total investment of £20 thousand in 2023/24
Appendix F	Local Levy Programme Review – summary of Local Levy Programme 2024-25 to 2026-27

Appendix A	Properties better protected – 2023-24 Forecast and Target data
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Scheme Name	Partnership	2023/24 Forecast	2023/24 Target (for info only)
Wyre Beach Management Scheme	Lancashire	1,756	1,896
Radcliffe & Redvales Flood Alleviation Scheme	Greater Manchester	1,550	0
Manchester Restoration of Open Channels of Ordinary Watercourses	Greater Manchester	309	385
West Kirby Flood Alleviation Scheme	Merseyside	245	0
Penketh and Whittle FRM Scheme	Cheshire	221	275
ENVDebrisScreensGMMC	Cross-Partnership	102	127
Jenny Beck Culvert Refurbishment, Bolton	Greater Manchester	65	81
Skirting Beck, Egremont	Cumbria	60	75
Ewan Close, Barrow in Furness	Cumbria	57	71
Brecon Road Scheme, Blackburn	Lancashire	44	22
Appleby pumping station capital maintenance	Cumbria	38*	0
Lumb Brook, West View, Rossendale	Lancashire	38	47
Threlkeld Village	Cumbria	32	40
CL Culvert Refurbishment Programme	Cross-Partnership	32	40
Lentworth Drive at Burrow Beck	Lancashire	32	40
Golburn Clough, Greenfield Oldham	Greater Manchester	28	0
Flimby Surface Water Alleviation - RMA Scheme	Cumbria	25	31
Lower Screens Programme 2022-2023	Cross-Partnership	25	0
Churchill Ave Culcheth Culvert Renewal	Cheshire	24	30
Salerno Drive – Culvert investigation works	Merseyside	24	0
Lindale Road Grange over Sands	Cumbria	17	21
Ravenglass, Cumbria - Surface Water	Cumbria	15	19
Greystoke Surface Water Flood Alleviation	Cumbria	15	19
Fitzgerald Drive, Darwen	Lancashire	15	0
Lenham Gardens Surface Water Alleviation Scheme	Greater Manchester	13	0
Coronation Park Greasby Flood Relief	Merseyside	12	15
Guildrey Lane, Sedbergh	Cumbria	10	12
Beetham Surface Water Flood Alleviation	Cumbria	10	12
North Road, Holme Village Flood Alleviation	Cumbria	10	0
Greenbank, Ambleside Surface Water Flooding	Cumbria	6	0
Badgers Rake Lane, Little Sutton	Cheshire	5	4
Adder Hill Great Boughton	Cheshire	3	0
Dubmill Point Coastal Erosion	Cumbria	1	0
Bolton Inlets and Screens Improvement	Greater Manchester	0	82
Newchurch Estate, Culcheth, Warrington	Cheshire	0	52
Forty Pitts Drain (possible collapse)	Merseyside	0	44
Manchester Trash Screens Phase 2	Greater Manchester	0	37
Orchard Place, Cleator Moor	Cumbria	0	31
Shap Beck Flood Alleviation Scheme	Cumbria	0	31

Hardman Brook-Hall Carr Brook, Hardman Avenue, Rawtenstall	Lancashire	0	20
Hooton Green, Ellesmere Port	Cheshire	0	16
Little Bollington River Bollin PLR	Cheshire	0	14
Black Brook Culvert St Helens	Cheshire	0	9
TOTAL		4,839	3,598

**Claimed (actual to date).*

Partnership	Number of schemes forecasting properties better protected in 2023-24	Total 2023-24 Forecast	Total 2023/24 Target (for info only)
Greater Manchester	7	1,965	585
Merseyside	6	281	59
Cheshire	6	253	400
Cumbria	15	296	362
Lancashire	6	1,885	2,025
Cross-Partnership	3	159	167
Total	43	4,839	3,598

Appendix B	North West Local Levy 2023-24 – Updated Programme
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Partnership	LRMA Name	Scheme Name	2023-24 Local Levy (£k)
Cumbria	Environment Agency	Low Crosby Pumping Station	450
Cumbria	Environment Agency	Mill Beck, Barrow in Furness	130
Cumbria	Cumbria County Council	Cumbria Quick Win Projects	100
Cumbria	Environment Agency	Lyth Valley Drainage Investigations	87
Cumbria	Environment Agency	Waver Wampool Pumping Station Investigation	70
Cumbria	Environment Agency	Soutergate Beck, Kirkby-in-Furness	70
Cumbria	Environment Agency	Warcop	20
<i>Cumbria</i>	<i>Environment Agency</i>	<i>Kendal Appraisal Package (reprofiled from 2022/23)</i>	<i>1430</i>
Cumbria Total			2357
Lancashire	Environment Agency	River Calder, Padiham	1,000
Lancashire	Environment Agency	Pegs Pool and Wardleys Pool, Hambleton	700
Lancashire	Lancaster City Council	Lancashire Quick Win Projects	100
Lancashire Total			1,800
Cheshire/Mid Mersey	Environment Agency	Sankey Bk FRM Scheme	115
Cheshire/Mid Mersey	Cheshire West and Chester Council	Cheshire/Mid-Mersey Quick Win Projects	100
Cheshire/Mid Mersey Total			215
Greater Manchester	Environment Agency	River Roch, Rochdale & Littleborough FRM Scheme	1,200
Greater Manchester	Environment Agency	Irwell Vale to Chatterton	1,100
Greater Manchester	Environment Agency	River Irwell, Kearsley	150
Greater Manchester	Manchester City Council	Greater Manchester Quick Win Projects	100
Greater Manchester	Trafford Council	Longford Brook Flood Alleviation Scheme	20
<i>Greater Manchester</i>	<i>Environment Agency</i>	<i>Penketh and Whittle (approved April 2023)</i>	<i>1,000</i>
<i>Greater Manchester</i>	<i>Oldham Council</i>	<i>Golburn Clough (reprofiled from 2022/23)</i>	<i>131</i>
Greater Manchester Total			3,701
Merseyside	Liverpool City Council	Merseyside Quick Win Projects	100
Merseyside Total			100
Cross Partnership	All	RFCC Business Plan	1384
Grand Total			9,557

Appendix C	Rochdale & Littleborough Flood Alleviation Scheme – request to reappropriate current allocation
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See separate slide pack attached.

Appendix D	RFCC Business Plan – Building Community Resilience - Proposal to increase existing support from £230 thousand per year to £249.55 thousand per year, through to 2026-27
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Overview

As part of the Building Community Resilience ambition of the North West RFCC's Business Plan, we have an established collaborative relationship with a third-sector delivery partner [Newground](#). Newground have 4 FTEs who deliver direct engagement to communities at flood risk across the North West, and develop and maintain The Flood Hub website and associated social media. As a fully cross-North West initiative, all partnerships benefit from this investment.

Newground are delivering three of the approved projects within the Business Plan:

- ID5 Flood Hub website
- ID6 Supporting community engagement on adapting to coastal change
- ID7 Action campaign – Flood Resilience

The work carried out by Newground also supports some of the other Business Plan ambitions. A baseline survey on planning, development and flood risk (contributing to ID10) was developed with Lancashire County Council and this supports the 'Achieving Climate Resilient Planning, Development, and Infrastructure ambition'. The survey was hosted on The Flood Hub and resulted in 112 responses from a range of different categories of people, such as councillors, landowners, flood professionals, and members of the public from both the North West and further afield. This provides a good understanding on the level of knowledge in the North West on planning, development and flood risk and will enable an action plan to be developed. Newground and The Flood Hub will also be supporting the same ambition through supporting the Paving over Front Gardens action campaign (ID12), through the development of resources for direct engagement and web content, as well as a social media campaign.

Newground has also supported several Local Authorities to increase flood awareness in communities. This is through direct engagement, the development of and support to flood groups, and working with elected members to increase their understanding and knowledge on certain topics, such as property flood resilience (PFR). Many of the

authorities have limited capacity and lack some of the skills to do this type of work. Working with the authorities supports the 'Increasing Risk Management Authority Capacity and Collaboration' ambition of the Business Plan.

Proposal

The contract value for this work is currently £230,000 per year.

In 2021/22, Newground has incurred increased costs for their work and these costs have increased further for 2023/24.

Third-party costs for The Flood Hub website such as the website annual maintenance with the developer, hosting and the many subscriptions services that are required to run the website have increased by approximately 25%.

For 2023/24, the salary costs will be increasing by 6%.

These increases mean that in order for Newground to maintain the current level of service and deliver the Business Plan actions, an increase to the annual contract value of 8.5% (£19,550) is required, to £249,550.

This proposal for increased funding provision is supported and endorsed by the Steering Group for the ambition, led by RFCC member sponsor Carolyn Otley.

Appendix E	RFCC Business Plan – Achieving Climate Resilient Planning, Development and Infrastructure - Highways SuDS Design Guide: - new request of £20 thousand in 2023/24 to support this project
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One opportunity to boost the resilience of our streets and highways to the impacts of climate change, increased rainfall and heatwaves, is by integrating green Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) into our streets and highways. By providing space to manage rainwater, SuDS reduce the direct and rapid channelling of rainwater into our sewers and drainage network, which during storm events overload systems leading to flash flooding. By delivering a wide range of additional benefits, from air quality improvements to recreation and biodiversity enhancement, SuDS can also play a significant role in urban regeneration and place-making.

Despite the range of benefits that SuDS features can deliver, their integration into planned streets and highways improvement projects remains limited.

A project within Greater Manchester has been established to address this. A series of engagement workshops undertaken in June-July 2022, with 93 GM Local Authority (LA) highways engineers, transport planners and urban designers, identified that to increase installation, officers need to have accessible technical advice and guidance on the design and construction of SuDS features.

A GM SuDS design and technical guide for streets and highways would aid design and construction of SuDS features, with a primary focus on increasing the installation of SuDS in highways retrofit schemes (funded in GM via the £1bn City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement (CRSTS)).

The production of a GM SuDS Design Guide for streets and highways is being undertaken and funded jointly between Greater Manchester Combined Authority, Transport for Greater Manchester and United Utilities, and supported in an advisory capacity by the Environment Agency. It will build on the engagement carried out in the summer of 2022 but to write the design guide it is necessary to commission consultants to help produce example detailed designs and cross-section drawings. These designs need to be a sufficient level of detail to significantly help local authority officers to design and construct SuDS in streets and highways projects - simple outline designs, illustrations and visuals will not be suitable.

The commission will also include identifying any training needs and create appropriate learning methods to ensure the principles in the guide are embedded into local best practice and policy where applicable.

The primary aim of the SuDS Design Guide is to help officers to install SuDS as part of planned streets and highway projects, by providing support on the design, construction and maintenance of a range of SuDS types in complex urban environments. The primary audience for the guide is LA highways engineers and

designers, highways asset managers, drainage engineers, urban designers. The guide should also be accessible and relevant for regeneration and capital officers, Landscape design teams, LA environmental managers and estates teams.

The guide will:

- Set out design standards and guidance for retrofitting SuDS in complex urban environments across the region that is complementary to existing Local Authority guidance, where available.
- Provide an agreed consistent approach to designing and delivering SuDS across Greater Manchester
- Become a platform for engagement with developers
- Increase officers’ knowledge, skills, and confidence to promote and deliver SuDS
- Promote the delivery of SuDS across different scales, e.g. opportunistic SuDS at bus stops and junctions to town centre redevelopment or highways corridor projects
- Demystify SuDS – address common issues and constraints to installing SuDS
- Increase officer skills and confidence in SuDS delivery
- Support the application of consistent quality standards for SuDS across GM

The guide could act as a benchmark or platform to engage developers around Section 278 schemes and would strengthen the position of officers when they are asking for better water management on these schemes.

While the design guide will be written with Greater Manchester as the geographical area of focus, a significant portion of the guide will be generic information about the design of SuDS features and is expected to be equally applicable in urban settings elsewhere. It is therefore anticipated that the guide will be readily usable or adoptable by authorities across other North West partnerships.

The project team are conscious of the changes that will be brought about by the implementation of Schedule 3 but are clear that this project should proceed now as Schedule 3 relates to new development applications whereas the design guide relates primarily to retrofitting of SuDS features on existing streets and highways, often as part of regeneration projects.

Project funding

RFCC Local Levy	£20k (Proposed)
Natural Course/GMCA	£14k
TfGM	£20k
United Utilities	£20k
TOTAL	£74k

Recommendation

The proposal has been considered and endorsed by the Steering Group for 'Achieving climate resilient planning, development and infrastructure' ambition, led by RFCC member sponsor Chris Findley. The Group recommends that the FBA Sub Group support and recommend to the RFCC the formal addition of this action and Local Levy contribution of £20 thousand in 2023/24 to the Business Plan programme.

Appendix F	Local Levy programme refresh
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Local Levy Programme Refresh - Summary of Local Levy Programme 2024-25 to 2026-27

The total Local Levy current allocation for the period 2024-25 to 2026-27 is £18.477 million. The detail of this is outlined below. It is proposed that as part of the process to refresh the Local Levy Strategy, the detail of these individual allocations will be refreshed with stakeholders to ensure they are still required, and an updated report will be brought back to the Finance and Business Assurance Subgroup.

Breakdown of Local Levy (£k) by Partnership

Allocation (£k)	2024-25		2025-26		2026-27		Total
	EA	LLFA	EA	LLFA	EA	LLFA	
Greater Manchester	2,996	430	987	115	1,450	250	6,228
Merseyside	0	100	0	547	0	1,213	1,860
Cheshire Mid-Mersey	247	100	161	100	141	100	849
Cumbria	1,588	100	678	165	300	100	2,931
Lancashire	645	100	1,815	100	622	100	3,382
Cross-Partnership	1,254	50	949	50	924	0	3,227
Total	6,730	880	4,590	1,077	3,437	1,763	18,477

Number of associated projects by Partnership

No. of Schemes	2024-25 to 2026-27		
	EA	LLFA	Total
Greater Manchester	7	8	15
Merseyside	0	3	3
Cheshire Mid-Mersey	1	1	2
Cumbria	8	3	11
Lancashire	5	1	6
Cross-Partnership	12	1	13
Total	33	17	50

Detail of projects by Partnership

Partnership	RMA	Name	2024-25 (£k)	2025-26 (£k)	2026-27 (£k)	Total (£k)
Cheshire/Mid Mersey	EA	Sankey Bk FRM Scheme	247	161	141	549
	EA Total					549
Cheshire/Mid Mersey	LLFA	Cheshire/Mid-Mersey Quick Win Projects	100	100	100	300
	LLFA Total					300
Cross Partnership	EA	Support for Local Authority Project Delivery - C&L	177	177	177	531
Cross Partnership	EA	Support for Local Authority Project Delivery - GMMC	162	162	162	486
Cross Partnership	EA	Support for Awareness and Engagement - C&L	115	115	115	345
Cross Partnership	EA	Support for Awareness and Engagement - GMMC	115	115	115	345
Cross Partnership	EA	Support for Managing Land Sustainably - C&L	100	100	100	300
Cross Partnership	EA	Support for Managing Land Sustainably - GMMC	100	100	100	300
Cross Partnership	EA	Support for Partnership Officers - GMMC	90	90	90	270
Cross Partnership	EA	Support for Partnership Officers - C&L	60	60	60	180
Cross Partnership	EA	Innovation and Change Fund (Currently unallocated)	150	0	0	150
Cross Partnership	EA	Innovation and Change Fund (Currently unallocated)	150	0	0	150
Cross Partnership	EA	Support for North West RFCC	30	30	0	60
Cross Partnership	EA	North West RFCC Floods Conference	5	0	5	10
	EA Total					3,127
Cross Partnership	LLFA	Strategic Coastal Monitoring Programme (SMP Co-ordinator)	50	50	0	100
	LLFA Total					100
Cumbria	EA	Appleby Flood Risk Management Scheme	1,500	0	0	1,500
Cumbria	EA	South Ulverston Integrated FRMS	0	0	300	300
Cumbria	EA	Poaka Beck, Dalton in Furness	0	250	0	250
Cumbria	EA	Harrington, River Wyre	0	150	0	150
Cumbria	EA	Ennerdale Bridge, Croasdale Beck	0	128	0	128
Cumbria	EA	Coniston (FRM exceedance flow routing and RR/NFM)	0	100	0	100
Cumbria	EA	Lyth Valley Drainage Investigations	88	0	0	88
Cumbria	EA	High & Low Lorton	0	50	0	50
	EA Total					2,566
Cumbria	LLFA	Cumbria Quick Win Projects	100	100	100	300
Cumbria	LLFA	Beetham Surface Water Flood Alleviation	0	55	0	55
Cumbria	LLFA	Greenbank, Ambleside Surface Water Flooding	0	10	0	10
	LLFA Total					365
Greater Manchester	EA	River Roch, Rochdale & Littleborough FRM Scheme	1,500	500	500	2,500
Greater Manchester	EA	Irwell Vale to Chatterton	1,100	0	0	1,100
Greater Manchester	EA	Greater Manchester Culvert Refurbishment Package	0	0	500	500
Greater Manchester	EA	Hindley Group	0	0	450	450
Greater Manchester	EA	Alder Forest, Eccles	0	400	0	400
Greater Manchester	EA	River Irwell, Kearsley	396	0	0	396
Greater Manchester	EA	Common Lane Bk, Leigh	0	87	0	87
	EA Total					5,433
Greater Manchester	LLFA	Greater Manchester Quick Win Projects	100	100	100	300
Greater Manchester	LLFA	Stockport Rd, Romiley	120	0	0	120
Greater Manchester	LLFA	Partridge Way, Chadderton, Oldham	85	0	0	85
Greater Manchester	LLFA	Dobcross New Road, Oldham	75	0	0	75
Greater Manchester	LLFA	High Street Lees, Count End	0	0	75	75
Greater Manchester	LLFA	Heywood Surface Water Management Programme	0	0	75	75
Greater Manchester	LLFA	Longford Brook Flood Alleviation Scheme	50	0	0	50
Greater Manchester	LLFA	Medlock Road, Oldham	0	15	0	15
	LLFA Total					795
Lancashire	EA	Fleetwood & Cope Brook Scheme	0	1,770	0	1,770
Lancashire	EA	River Calder at Whalley	0	0	577	577
Lancashire	EA	River Calder, Padiham	300	0	0	300
Lancashire	EA	Pegs Pool and Wardleys Pool, Hambleton	300	0	0	300
Lancashire	EA	Wyre Investment Readiness Project	45	45	45	135
	EA Total					3,082
Lancashire	LLFA	Beetham Surface Water Flood Alleviation	100	100	100	300
Merseyside	LLFA	Crosby Marine Lake to Formby Point Coastal Scheme	0	0	1,000	1,000
Merseyside	LLFA	Meols Parade Coast Protection, Wirral	0	447	113	560
Merseyside	LLFA	Merseyside Quick Win Projects	100	100	100	300
	LLFA Total					2,160
	Grand Total		7,610	5,667	5,200	18,477

NORTH WEST REGIONAL FLOOD AND COASTAL COMMITTEE FINANCE AND BUSINESS ASSURANCE SUB GROUP MEETING

7 JULY 2023

FCRM CAPITAL & ASSET MAINTENANCE PROGRAMME REFRESH AND 2023/24 ADDITIONAL FUNDING

Recommendations:

The Regional Flood and Coastal Committees (RFCCs) are asked to:

1. Note the latest capital programme position.
2. Note the process and principles of how we propose to invest potential additional funding this financial year, as requested by the Secretary of State.
3. Support the annual refresh of the capital and asset maintenance programmes during 2023/24.

Headline messages:

- No decisions have been made on reprofiling the capital programme or revising the properties better protected target.
- As agreed with the Environment Agency Board, we are continuing to progress the strengthening and improvement changes identified which are solely in our gift to implement.
- This year's annual refresh of the capital programme will be for the fourth year of the programme (financial year 2024/25). This Committee meeting provides an opportunity for RFCCs to review any proposed new projects or changes to the existing programme.
- The refresh process to prepare next year's programme (2024/25), and the key role RFCCs play at each of the Committee meetings, is set out in appendix A.

1.0 Introduction

1.1 This paper provides an update on the latest position of the FCRM capital programme, a short update on our strengthening activities, and details of potential additional investment for 2023/24 following the request from the Secretary of State (SoS).

1.2 It also provides an update on the refresh process for next year's programme (2024/25). The RFCCs continue to undertake an important role in the annual refresh of the capital and asset maintenance programmes. The cycle of activities is set out in appendix A.

2.0 Latest delivery position – capital & asset maintenance

2.1 Since the start of this programme in April 2021, and in partnership with other Risk Management Authorities (RMAs), we have better protected around 60,000 properties from flooding and coastal erosion, through the delivery of over 210 schemes. The Environment Agency's cumulative corporate target for 2022/23 was 60,000 properties.

2.2 Our target for high consequence assets at required condition for 2022/23 was 94.2%. Our end of year position is 94.5% of assets at required condition meaning we exceeded our target.

3.0 Capital programme – latest position

3.1 Work is continuing to determine the impact of inflation, the Frequently Flooded Allowance, and the strengthening programme of work on the overall target of properties better protected which can be achieved.

3.2 We know that the original target of 336,000 properties better protected is unachievable within the 6-year programme period, predominantly due to resources and skills shortages, high levels of inflation, a slower than planned start to the programme due to the Covid pandemic, and the impact of the Frequently Flooded Allowance. Revised targets will need to be approved by the Secretary of State (SoS). We are already seeing the impact on affordability of several key projects.

3.3 No decisions have been made on reprofiling the capital programme or revising the properties better protected target. We are also awaiting an update on the proposed measures being considered to strengthen the programme – including changes to the Government's current partnership funding policy. We hope to be able to provide an update by the end of July.

4.0 Update on strengthening activities

4.1 As agreed with the Environment Agency Board, we are continuing to progress the strengthening and improvement changes identified which are solely in our gift to implement. Many of these changes are based on feedback from RFCCs. We are still awaiting feedback on Defra's proposals to the SoS to seek approval to change the partnership funding policy, and on any scope to reprofile the capital programme.

4.2 Following approval by the EA Board we are implementing changes to the FCRM assurance and approvals thresholds, including the Financial Scheme of Delegation (FSOD). The changes will make local EA teams (Area Directors and Area Flood and Coastal Risk Managers/Operations Managers) responsible for the assurance and approval of projects less than £3m in value – for both EA and RMA projects.

4.3 This more risk-based approach to assurance and approvals will improve programme delivery confidence by empowering and enabling local teams to assure a greater proportion of the programme. We are also working on new and updated guidance that will simplify the business case process for both the Environment Agency and other RMAs.

5.0 Updated inflation guidance

5.1 New and updated inflation guidance for all Risk Management Authorities has now been published. This is available on the recently relaunched SharePoint page: [Supporting Flood and Coast Projects - Strengthening the Programme](#). This updated guidance makes it clearer what project teams need to do to ensure they use the best cost information and can demonstrate value for money. It explains when they can apply for additional funding if inflation pressures prevent projects from progressing.

5.2 This simplified guidance has been reissued from 2022 to make it easier for all Risk Management Authorities to use. It is just one of several improvements available to all Risk Management Authorities from mid-June and will continue to be added to throughout the year.

All these activities have come out of recommendations from the RMA Task and Finish group, and suggestions from across EA teams, RMAs, and RFCCs.

6.0 Possible additional funding for 2023/24

- 6.1 Based on feedback from the EA and Regional Flood and Coastal Committees (RFCCs) through the previous local choices process we agreed to increase the capital funding allocation for 2023/24 from £800m to £875m. This £875m programme was then consented by the RFCC Committees in January and approved by the EA Board in February. There is a possibility we may have an additional £79m to spend during 2023/24.
- 6.2 The EA and other RMAs are struggling with skills, capacity, and resourcing pressures to deliver the current programme. This additional funding creates further challenges, but also opportunities. For example, it may help cover additional costs created by high levels of inflation or could help us increase spend on asset maintenance activities. Our current level of asset maintenance investment has been raised as a key concern by several RFCCs. We are currently undertaking further detailed deliverability assessments with local EA Operational teams, delivery partners and other RMAs.
- 6.3 There is a high risk of underspend against any additional funding. We will continue to work with Defra to manage budgets and it is expected that there will be some flexibility to manage annual budgets with Defra and HMT. Some of our proposed opportunities are dependent on capital funding (CDEL) being switched to resource funding (RDEL). Decisions now will also have impacts further into the programme as most proposed opportunities will require funding beyond 2023/24.
- 6.4 Areas we are currently proposing to use this funding include:
- Additional funding for Environment Agency asset maintenance – including covering inflation costs, and decommissioning
 - Additional funding for other Risk Management Authority routine asset maintenance, and support to the capital programme
 - Additional funding for other Risk Management Authority refurbishment of end of life assets
 - Additional funding for natural flood management

These are all subject to change, and subject to Defra, SoS, and HMT agreement.

- 6.5 All these proposals come with a degree of associated risk. Key risks include deliverability and ability to scale up (both within the EA and RMAs, and within our supply frameworks), availability of appropriate projects, and continued rates of inflation.
- 6.6 We are currently working with Defra on exploring how we could address the issue of increasing funding gaps on major capital projects due to inflation or partnership funding gaps.
- 6.7 We will take these proposals through the appropriate governance channels to seek support and approval, including continuing to fully engage with RFCC Chairs and Committees as these proposals become fully formed.

7.0 Annual refresh of the 6-year capital programme

- 7.1 This year's annual refresh of the capital programme will review and endorse the fourth year of the programme (financial year 2024/25). It will also review future years to improve confidence and create a stable programme. The programme must be realistic, deliverable, and achievable. Supplier frameworks who design and build our flood schemes should be engaged throughout the refresh process to understand project deliverability, timing, costs, and resource needs. This applies for projects sponsored by any RMA, whether planning to use Environment Agency frameworks or other delivery routes.

- 7.2 The July Committee meeting is the opportunity for RFCC members to review any proposed new projects or changes to the existing programme before it is submitted to the National Portfolio Management Office to create a nationally prioritised programme. This is a key step in the development of the capital programme and RFCCs are asked to discuss and support the annual refresh.
- 7.3 The majority of the allocation for the first 3 years of the capital programme has been created using a prioritisation method based on partnership funding score. We will follow the same prioritisation approach during this next refresh cycle.

8.0 Annual refresh of the asset maintenance programme

- 8.1 The annual refresh of the asset maintenance resource programme will follow the standard timeline. This will allow an indicative maintenance allocation for 2024/25 to be brought to the October RFCC meetings.
- 8.2 The difficulty of getting assets to their required condition and maintaining them there is compounded by an ageing asset stock, the increasing frequency and severity to which they are impacted by flooding and the increasing number of assets to be maintained. As with the capital programme, inflation will impact our ability to carry out the work necessary to get our assets to their target condition. We are currently determining the scale of this impact, but we expect this to negatively impact our ability to hold asset condition between 94-95% until 2025.
- 8.3 Where assets are below their required condition, this identifies that work is required. This does not mean that they have structurally failed or that performance in a flood is compromised. If the performance of an asset is reduced, we will take action to ensure that flood risk is effectively managed until the asset is fully repaired or replaced. It should however be noted that without an increase in investment in the next Spending Review round, we would expect a rapid and unsustainable deterioration in asset condition in future years beyond 2025, in turn leading to a greater risk of flooding to communities which benefit from them.

9.0 Carbon

- 9.1 Flood risk schemes are an important way to help communities adapt to climate change and also reduce potential carbon emissions from the clean-up and rebuild after flooding. We have estimated that those projects completed in the last two years will avoid ~ 270,000tCO_{2e} their asset life. When monetised this is equivalent to £66m of carbon damages avoided. Looking at the planned investment over the full 6 years of the programme we estimate projects could avoid between £300m - £500m of carbon.
- 9.2 Flood risk schemes do though typically use a lot of carbon intensive materials such as concrete and steel and whilst our projects also avoided carbon, this cannot form part of our accounting toward net zero. We expect our carbon emissions to peak this year at 205,000tCO₂. From this year onwards, our emissions will fall as we introduce a range of improvements to our carbon management system. These include:
1. Trialling the use of challenging but realistic carbon budgets on our programme so that project and programme teams can begin to explore how carbon emissions can be treated in the same way we manage financial budgets.
 2. Ensuring business case appraisals apply measures of whole-life carbon net impact to appraise options in achieving a minimised emission project objective.
 3. Incentivising our supply chain to reduce carbon in line with agreed decarbonisation plans that set out ways to quickly deploy low carbon technology for the assets programmed for delivery.
 4. Aligning specifications for key material types used across client infrastructure organisations.

5. Developing robust carbon monitoring and reporting procedures to allow us to account for carbon absorption associated with habitats created through our projects.
- 9.3 We are tracking the carbon performance of our schemes at project, programme and portfolio levels against the respective carbon budgets set this year for all Environment Agency projects to 2026/27. Data from last quarter based on completed carbon calculators show that emission forecasts for projects are on average 14% above budget. This places a great onus on those projects in the design stage or earlier to close this gap, where there is opportunity to select lower carbon materials or make different asset option choices.
- 9.4 The implementation of carbon budgets as part of the Environment Agency's carbon management system is proving to be a powerful tool, enabling carbon performance to be monitored and managed across the portfolio. We recognise, however that a significant amount of carbon from the investment programme will sit within other RMA projects. We are in the early stages of considering how carbon performance of an RMA project should and could be monitored. RMAs are able to access our carbon guidance and tools via the following link: [Supporting Flood and Coast Projects](#).

10.0 Recommendations

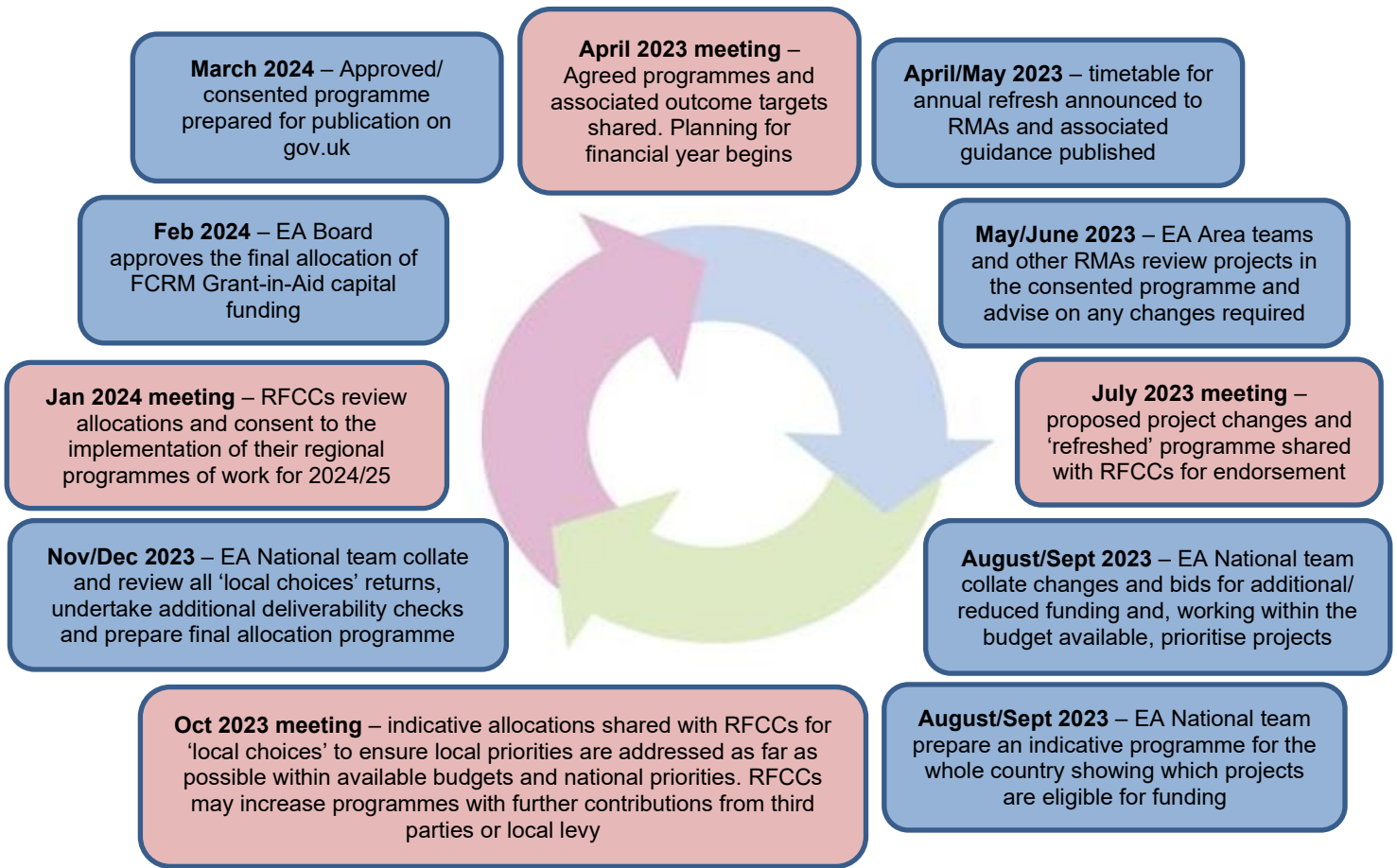
- 10.1 The RFCC Committees are asked to:
 1. Note the latest capital programme position.
 2. Note the process and principles of how we propose to invest potential additional funding this financial year, as requested by the Secretary of State.
 3. Support the annual refresh of the capital and asset maintenance programmes during 2023/24.

Dan Bond
Deputy Director Portfolio Management Office
21 June 2023

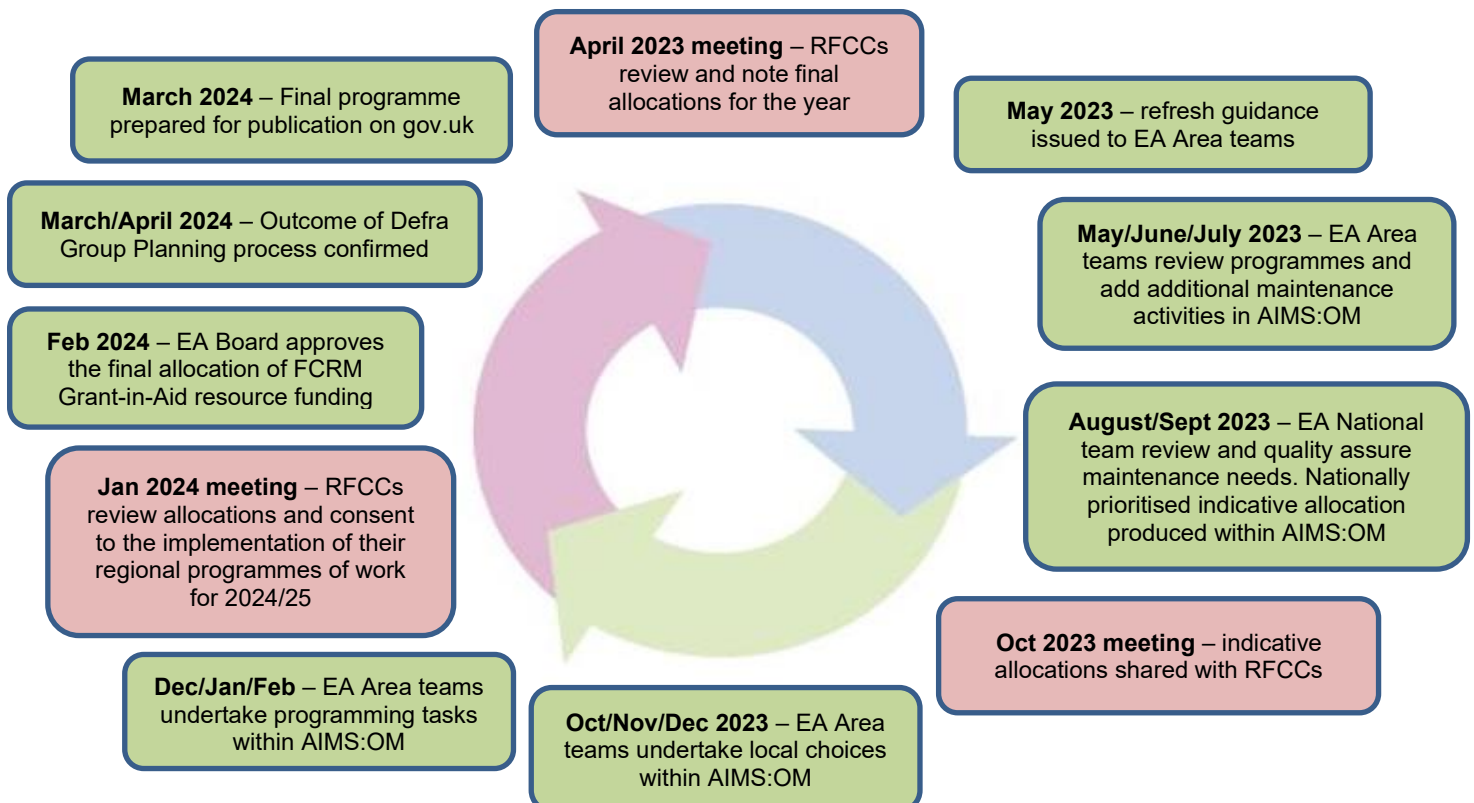
Appendix A: Process for allocating funding during 2023/24

Appendix A: Process for allocating funding during 2023/24

Annual process for allocating capital funding during 2023/24



Annual process for allocating asset maintenance resource funding during 2023/24





NORTHWEST REGIONAL FLOOD AND COASTAL COMMITTEE

21 JULY 2023

FLOOD RISK MANAGEMENT PLANS UPDATE

RECOMMENDATION: The RFCC is asked to note the content of this report for the Northwest, Solway Tweed and River Dee FRMPs.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

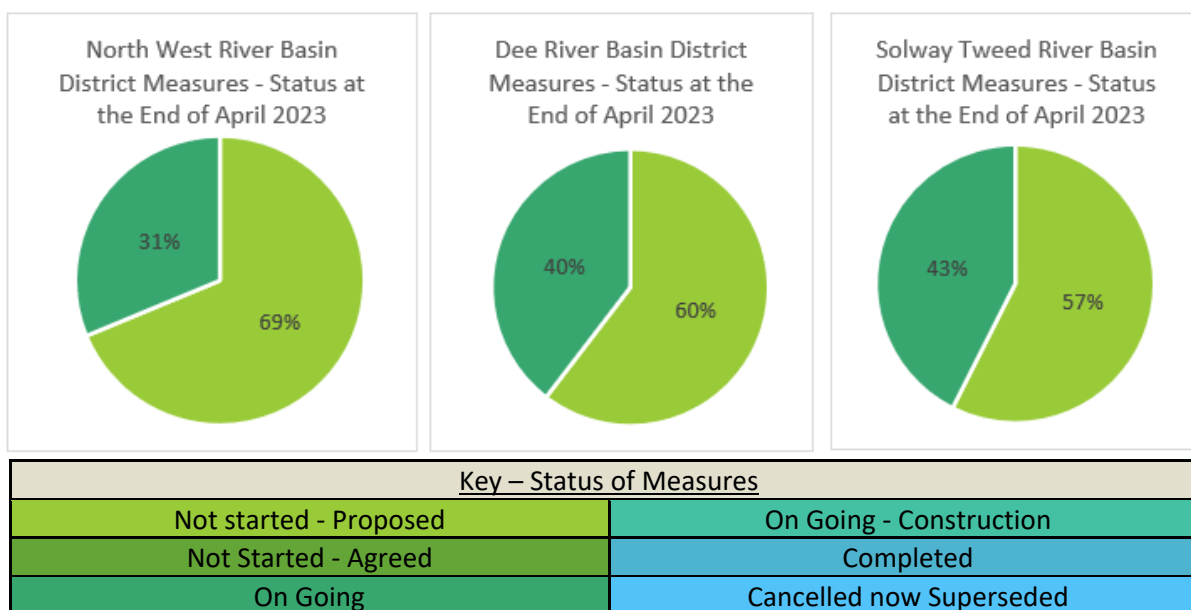
Since the Flood Risk Management Plan (FRMP) briefing provided to the RFCC in April 2023, the NW Virtual FRMPs group has:

- Finalised a delivery plan to ensure delivery of FRMP measures
- Held workshops in Autumn 2022 and identified a list of **theme & measure leads**: Theme Leads would oversee reporting by FRMP theme, and Measure Leads would report on specific measures
- Rolled out the process for reporting on FRMPs to River Basin District Theme & Measure Leads
- Hosted drop-in sessions to provide tips and guidance on reporting to Measure Leads
- Submitted data to the national team through updating the Environment Agency’s [Flood Plan Explorer](#) (FPE) mapping tool, which is available to view by the public
- Liaised with LLFAs in connection with their Flood Risk Area measures.

2.0 REPORTING ON FRMPs

All the River Basin District measures were updated at the end of April on to the Environment Agency’s [Flood Plan Explorer](#) (FPE) mapping tool.

INITIAL REPORTING APRIL 2023- RBD MEASURES



INITIAL REPORTING APRIL 2023 - Flood Risk Area's (FRA's) measures

- The 15 LLFA's with specific FRA's are at various stages of reviewing & implementing their measures, with support from the Environment Agency.
- There will be some National recorded training events for LLFAs to help with uploading status updates into FPE. LLFAs will be granted access to the FPE in July.
- FRA's measures were not required to be updated this April. LLFA's will be encouraged to make some updates in October with the aim that the bi-annual reporting should be as up to date as possible.

ONGOING REPORTING

- Each quarter the Virtual FRMP team will update changes in the status of the River Basin District measures in the FPE tool.
- This information is fed up from the Measure Leads to the Theme Leads who also provide the FRMP team with context about how the measures are being implemented, along with any issues and success stories.
- Twice yearly in this report we will provide a case study demonstrating a success or issue within a FRMP theme, as below.
- The new chair of the FRMP board was updated at a board meeting in June.

3.0 MEASURE CASE STUDIES - Natural Flood Management Theme (NFM)

NFM Common Lane Flood Risk Management Project GMMC

This is a partnership project working with Wigan council and Lancashire Wildlife Trust on Bickershaw Nature Reserve, upstream of a community at risk.

The interventions arose from a series of historic flooding events which put 44 properties at risk.

Conventional approaches were prohibited due to various reasons and so Natural Flood Management (NFM) became the natural fit. Collaborative and partnership working with Wigan Council and Lancashire Wildlife Trust identified opportunities upstream of Bickershaw Nature Reserve to create and enhance wildlife ponds (increasing attenuation), create boulder dams, multi-stage ponds and wetland features. Providing multiple benefits.

Benefits include:

- Reduced risk to 44 properties (from very significant to significant)
- Improved 7Ha of reedbed habitat
- Created 5Ha of pond habitat
- Daylighted 0.1km of stream

As well as habitat and flood reduction benefits, the project achieved 20% Biodiversity Net Gain. Enhanced wetland areas which will act as carbon sinks to sequester carbon over future years. The works have also contributed towards the Governments environment benefit legacy (25YEP) targets.



Figure 1: raised footpaths with newly installed culverts for water passage.



Figure 2: Digger in-situ creating wetland features.

4.0 RECOMMENDATION:

The RFCC is asked to note the content of this report for the Northwest, Solway Tweed and R Dee FRMPs.

Drainage and Wastewater Management Plan

Publication E-Newsletter 31st May 2023

AGENDA ITEM 6

Introduction

A changing climate, more extreme weather events and a growing population in the North West present challenges for how we manage your used water over the long term. We need to plan to reduce impacts on our wastewater services and the experience customers have.

We have developed a 25-year Drainage and Wastewater Management Plan (DWMP), which will set out our long-term approach for sustainable drainage and wastewater management across the North West and how we intend to continue to provide great water for a **stronger**, **greener** and **healthier** North West.

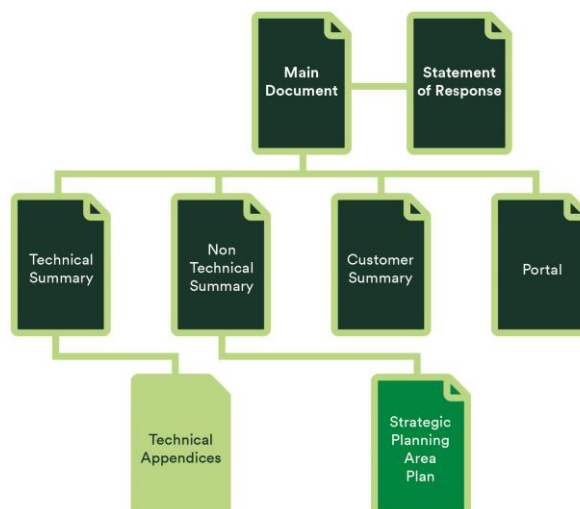
A **stronger** North West
Proactively protecting our service against future challenges like climate change.

A **greener** North West
Reducing water wastage and protecting and enhancing the North West's nature and ecosystems.

A **healthier** North West
Providing additional social benefits to North West communities

Our **final DWMP publication** is now available for you to read. All the documents can be found on our website.

Click [here](#) to access our DWMP



Changes between draft and final DWMP publication

We would like to thank everyone who has contributed to the development of the DWMP since we began the journey in 2018.

When we published the draft DWMP in June 2022, customers, stakeholders and regulators were invited to provide feedback via a formal consultation process. Since then, we have reviewed the comments made and taken them into account where possible within the final publication. We have also carried out further optimisation of our preferred plan to put forward our best value plan.

What's next?

This was the first iteration of the DWMP and subsequent submissions will be a statutory requirement. The DWMP is not a static programme and will be continually reviewed to ensure that new and emerging risks are captured. We look forward to continuing to work with stakeholders to identify and develop partnership opportunities to deliver benefits across the North West.

The framework for the next iteration of DWMP is still being developed by regulators which will then need to go through government. We will be supporting the development of the next United Utilities Water business plan for investment cycle 2025 – 2030 which you will be able to find out more about in autumn 2023.

NORTH WEST REGIONAL FLOOD AND COASTAL COMMITTEE

21 JULY 2023

NORTH WEST AND NORTH WALES COASTAL GROUP CHAIR'S REPORT

RECOMMENDATION: The RFCC are asked to note the content of this report.

This has been another busy period for the Coastal Group, which has seen the development of a major programme of coastal works and improved links across coastal managers and the wider coastal community, including education, infrastructure, and research.

June saw the Flood & Coast conference at Telford opened by EA Chair Alan Lovel stressing the importance of building and maintaining strong defences and that nature-based solutions must also play a role in managing flooding and climate change. He raised the importance of working with partners in delivering the FCERM Strategy Roadmap, including the use of innovative nature-based solutions in combination with other measures, such as traditional engineered flood and coastal defences. This is a message the coastal group have been pursuing for a number of years culminating in the Our Future Coast innovation resilience project which is building community resilience through co-operation through scoping, design and understanding.

In this report, we will cover the progress the North West & North Wales Coastal Group have made towards improving the lives and resilience of our coastal communities and how we are helping to deliver the Roadmap through positive practical action.

SMP - Refresh: Progress Update

- **Work Package 7 - improving the interface with the planning system.**
- The following documents are now on the North West North Wales Coastal Group Website.
 - Guide 1 - A General Introduction to Coastal Management.
 - Guide 2 - An Introduction to Shoreline Management Plans.
 - Guide 3a - Planning for Coastal Management (a "how to" guide).
 - Guide 3b - A Review of the Designation and Application of Coastal Change Management Areas.
 - Guide 4 - An Introduction to Coastal Processes.
 - Local authority leaflet template "Local guide to the SMP"
 - Review of Coastal Change Management Areas.
 - [Shoreline Management Plans – North West Coastal Group \(mycoastline.org.uk\)](https://mycoastline.org.uk)
- **Work Package 8 – updating the Shoreline Management Plan action plans.**
 - The SMP Action Plans are currently undergoing a National Review.
 - The Environment Agency have suggested improvements and will follow up with groups on an SMP basis.
 - The yearly update of SMP Action Plan is due in October 2023 and the updates will coincide with the suggested improvements and amendments from the EA.
 - The Action plan data will be uploaded to the SMP Explorer site (work package 10 below).
 - The yearly updates and improvements will remove jargon and acronyms so that it is easily understandable by the general public. The updates will also confirm progress on SMP actions, identify future actions, establish triggers for action, and identify additional future monitoring requirements to support SMP delivery.

- **Work Package 10 – SMP Explorer**
- The EA have been developing an interactive digital platform called SMP Explorer that will host Shoreline Management Plans and National Coastal Erosion Risk Map (NCERM) Data.
- The aim of doing this is to:
 - Help make the SMP management approaches more accessible, consistent, and well understood,
 - and to increase use of SMPs and NCERM data across a range of stakeholders including Coastal Managers, elected members, Local Authority Planners, landowners as well as communities at risk.
- The draft SMP Explorer site has been available to test by members of the North West SMP Group. This has provided North West SMP members with opportunities to familiarise themselves with the SMP-Explorer site, opportunities to run demonstration sessions with elected members and planning officers.
- Public Launch December 2023.

NCERM2 risk mapping.

The aim of the project is to improve and communicate our understanding of erosion risk to a range of receptors using updated projections. Making the NCERM2 predictions and data more accessible and transparent. Jacobs, together with Royal Haskoning DHV and the Channel Coastal Observatory, have been commissioned to develop NCERM2, with work being undertaken in two phases.

1. The first phase will identify and assess the potential for improvements throughout the NCERM2 methodology. The technical advisory group TAG met on 3rd Oct allowing progression to Phase 2, following agreement to any recommendations.
2. Phase 2 will include implementing the proposed methodology improvements and collecting the data required to provide a new update for the English coastline. The timetable for NCERM2: Data collection Oct-Dec, NCERM national Run January 2023 onwards with final publication in Dec 2023.

The progression of the SMP-R and NCERM2 will provide greater clarity and evidence to address many of the issues of managing our coastline. However, there are still many issues related to coastal management, such as:

- Issues of “fairness” when considering the preferred shoreline policy and in particular when considering changes in the current policy.
- No clear pathways to transition in policies, in particular to realignment policy.

SMP - Refresh: task groups update

The 5 strategic task groups that have been set up under the SMP-Refresh have been meeting regularly and have been successful in bringing together wider partners to challenge the way we are working on the coast.

Protected Sites task group - Linkages with the national habitat creation programme are currently being explored, linked to the delivery of SMP policies and actions. Natural England and The EA are investigating the SMP actions involving coastal squeeze and have suggested updates to the SMP actions.

Temporary Lead: Laurence Browning, Laurence.Browning@naturalengland.org.uk

Coastal Evidence task group

- CERMS monitoring is continuing.
- CERMS planned survey programme [Map](#)
- Record of what data has been collected by the CERMS programme [Map](#)

Lead: Paul Wisse, paul.wisse@sefton.gov.uk

Communications & Engagement task group

A comms and engagement plan has been produced.

Exploring better use of the NW Coastal Group Website to share and disseminate information more widely.

Lead: Caroline Salthouse, caroline.salthouse@nwcoastalforum.org.uk

Coastal Infrastructure task group

A detailed database of key infrastructure contacts across the NW area has been produced.. A series of consultant supported local projects are running across England. Local engagement products are being addressed through the work with Wilson Sherriff in 8 local areas. The project in the NW will focus on engaging with Infrastructure Providers, regulated Industries, and larger landowners.

Lead: Gapped following retirement of Anthony Lane: a replacement is sought following the excellent work undertaken by Anthony.

Planning and Regeneration task group

A series of guides have been produced as part of the planning interface project. The guides along with a project report will be made available via the coastal group website.

Lead: Len Harris, len.harris@wyre.gov.uk

Our Future Coast

The North West Coast's Flood and Coastal Resilience Innovation Programme (FCRIP), supported by Defra.

Board Meeting 6 June

- Review and update of progress
- Ginny Hinton NE, Appointed Vice Chair
- Helen Jay NT joins the Board
- Site visit to Formby Sand Dunes – gained a real understanding of the myriad of issues at the site.

Engagement

- 2 new Task Groups formed:
- Millom Marsh Task Group – 12 April
- Fluke Hall / Pilling Preesall Tasks Group – 22 May
- Successful first meetings including Parish Councillors and Farmers

Outcomes

- Risk that the community does not engage is reduced
- Terms of Reference agreed, collaboration and joint decision making
- Issue mapping complete
- Next steps scope brief for studies being prepared.
- Marlan Radar moved to Roa Island (not yet deployed)
- Site delivery and scoping ongoing
- Draft grant agreements for site leads ongoing.
- On site testing of Saltmarsh Citizen Science tool with Lancaster University.

Consultation Officers

- Bea Beggs, Engagement Officer South left in April. Recruitment complete for replacement – Nicola Parkinson joining LWT in July
 - Joseph Earl at Morecambe Bay Partnership Joseph@morecambabay.org.uk

Centre of Coastal Excellence

- We are currently compiling a list of expertise that we have in the North West and any gaps that we would need in the Centre of Coastal Excellence.
- Identify training requirements across the group
- Provided a list of the current programme of works as detailed below :
 - Little Bispham to Bispham Coast Protection
 - Anhorn to Cardurnock Coastal Erosion
 - Oldside Landfill Workington Coastal Erosion Study
 - Workington Former Steel Works Site Coastal Erosion Scheme
 - Harrington North Shore Coastal Erosion Protection
 - St Bees Coastal Erosion Protection
 - St Annes Seawall
 - Hightown Coastal Protection Investigation
 - Askam in Furness Tidal Flood Risk and Erosion Study
 - Newbiggin A5087 Coast Road Coastal Erosion
 - West Shore Park Managed Realignment Study
 - Meols Parade Coast Protection, Wirral
 - Solway Firth Erosion Study
 - Stubb Place and Eskmeals Coastal Erosion Protection
 - Morecambe Coastal Strategy
 - Seabees re profiling
 - Ravenglass Tidal Gate Replacement
 - Lytham to Warton tidal embankment
 - Glasson Dock Gate
 - Starr Hill Sand Dunes Environmental Works
 - Hesketh Outmarsh East Managed Realignment contract.
 - Mersey Estuary/Liverpool Bay Managed Realignment Viability Study
 - Roa Island Defence Replacement/Improvement
 - West Kirby Flood Alleviation Scheme
 - Wallasey Embankment, Wirral
 - Wyre Beach Management Scheme

In total 15481 will be better protected from sea flooding and 8520 from coastal erosion. A major contribution the overall national delivery targets.

Flood and Coast 23 Telford

The Flood and Coast event took place at Telford on the 6-8 June 2023. It provided an opportunity to showcase many areas of best practice with a theme of Nature Based Solutions.

Mark Lloyd CEO of the River's Trust discussed how nature is disappearing faster than ever before, much of which is driven by pollution, drought and a lack of natural habitat. In our consideration of solutions to tackle the rising risks of coastal and fluvial floods we could

make a significant contribution to mitigating climate change, if we adopt nature-based solutions, rather than pouring carbon-hungry concrete. An aim very close to the heart of the Our Future Coast innovation project. [Mark Lloyd opens CIWEM Flood and Coast Conference... | The Rivers Trust](#)

The North West was well represented with exhibitions from Lancaster University and several references to the Wyre NFM scheme. As chair I was also privileged to present on Delivering Nature Based Solutions - How coastal management must evolve beyond traditional hard engineering methods, and instead, foster community engagement to implement nature-based solutions through collaborative, positive action.

Coastal Issues

- NW Coastal Conference – A key themes paper has been produced, for the very successful conference.
- (IECS) is a EU research project called MARBEFES, in which the Irish Sea is one of the research areas. The Coastal Group are participating in the research.
- The North West has the honour of hosting Coastal Practitioners 2024 – A steering group has been established and locations are being investigated to showcase the NW Coast.
- The Coastal Group Network & LGA SIG New Ways of Working will be discussed at the Coastal Group Network Chairs Meeting on 19 July.

The Coastal Group Network says goodbye to Bryan Curtis this month, he has led the coastal chairs with a high degree of dedication and considerable effort. His contribution is significant and his achievements substantial. A true legacy, Stuart Rowe will be stepping into those big shoes and I wish him every success.

Carl Green

Chair North West and North Wales Coastal Group

North West Regional Flood and Coastal Committee



July 2023 update from United Utilities

Recommendation: The Regional Flood and Coastal Committee is asked to note the content of this report and provide any further comments

1. Introduction

The UUW Flood Risk Partnership Manager has agreed with the Chair to produce a quarterly report from United Utilities Water (UUW) to better inform the Committee of any packages of work they may find relevant. The FRPM role is currently vacant until September, so in the meantime and for further details on any of the topics discussed below, please contact the DWMP team at DWMP@uuplc.co.uk.

2. Flooding Summary

Below is the summary of the number of properties impacted by sewer flooding between the 18 March 2023 and the 30 June 2023. This is unverified data and so the number are likely to fluctuate until the regulatory data is signed-off for our full year FY24 regulatory reporting for Ofwat. 'Exceptional weather' refers to incidents where properties flood due to a storm in excess of 1 in 20.

Strategic Partnership	Internal Hydraulic (not Severe weather)	External Hydraulic (not Severe weather)	Internal Hydraulic severe weather	External hydraulic severe weather
Cheshire	0	0	0	0
Merseyside	0	1	0	0
GMCA	0	2	6	5
Lancashire	0	3	0	1
Cumbria	0	0	0	0

3. Drainage and Wastewater Management Plan (DWMP) update

The final DWMP was published on 31 May 2023 and is available on our corporate website (<https://www.unitedutilities.com/corporate/about-us/our-future-plans/Our-long-term-plans/>). The plan outlined within the DWMP enables activities that protect the environment, support economic growth through providing infrastructure for local development and address the pressures posed by climate change, population growth and development in the North West.

The DWMP is not a static programme, so as part of the DWMP planning process moving forwards, we will use the foundation that we have built during cycle 1 of the DWMP to identify areas for enhancement and further development in conjunction with any new frameworks and guidance.

Reviews will be conducted to understand any material changes and how factors may have changed over time such as:

- New planning applications, growth forecasts, progress towards delivery of interventions and planned outcomes;
- Whether the future risks identified are occurring earlier than previously assessed, and any changes to programmes of work which could affect stakeholders; and
- Further work to improve / facilitate partnership working, such as greater standardisation of data to allow more integrated planning.

The DWMP is embedded into our planning processes to ensure consistency and alignment with planning for both the short term and long term, and to adapt to changes in customer priorities and needs. This approach will allow us to continually review identified risks, when they may materialise (at a faster or slower rate than expected) and the proposed mitigation and interventions. Continued stakeholder engagement will be crucial to inform of any changes to on-going programmes of work and the identification of any new risks or opportunities relevant to specific areas of the North West.

This is the first time that we have produced the DWMP and the publication marks the end of the first iteration of plan (cycle 1). Since then, the team have been analysing other water companies’ DWMPs and drawing upon lessons learnt across the 5 years of development. Additionally, the DWMP is a core element when developing our proposal for the Price Review 2024 which will be available in autumn 2023. This will shape our business plan for the next investment cycle (2025-2030).

4. Place-based Planning

Place-based Planning is a key capability within our Catchment Systems Thinking (CaST) as it requires the alignment of outcomes and development of plans across multiple stakeholders to achieve a resilient catchment. Place-based Planning recognises that addressing risks of climate change and a growing population cannot be achieved in organisational silos, and therefore seeks integrated long-term planning, within a specific geography, between multiple stakeholders to maximise the opportunity to deliver synergistic interventions with multiple and greater benefits than would otherwise be achieved. UuW have been piloting this approach in three North West catchments including the Upper Mersey, Eden and Wyre. A webpage has been developed where further details on the Place Based Planning activities can be found - <https://collab-uu.co.uk/place-based-planning/>

4.1 Upper Mersey catchment update

The pilot phase for the Upper Mersey concluded in May 2023 after 18 months of working with catchment stakeholders to build plans and objectives in each sub-pilot group. A knowledge share event took place in April 2023 which brought all the Upper Mersey stakeholders together to share the learnings from the pilots, and discuss and determine if the place based planning approach has been a success, and if so, how it will be embedded within the catchment as business as usual.

The outcome from that event was overwhelmingly positive with stakeholders noting a change of mood of how they felt about collaborative planning before and after the pilot.



The attendants unanimously agreed that the pilot in Upper Mersey had successfully achieved its main objective of facilitating more collaborative, and better coordinated planning and working. The group felt that one of the key to this success had been the pilots facilitating greater levels of communication and engagement across organisations.

The main barriers identified during the knowledge share event were funding, capacity and co-ordination, and from those capacity was noted as the largest barrier. Attendants felt that the organisations in the room had the right skills to plan in a place based way, but time and other commitments often stifled previous attempts. Reflection of the Upper Mersey pilot was that four different organisations took the lead for the 5 sub-pilots, which meant that the time commitment was not down to just one organisation or individual; which was agreed as a successful approach.

Overall over 50 learning points were captured over the course of the pilot and the conclusion from the group was that the five established sub pilots should continue to realise the benefits of place based planning.

Further to this it was also discussed that the pilot groups should report in to the overarching Integrated Water Management Plan (IWMP) for Greater Manchester, which at the time of the event was being developed, but since has been published - <https://www.greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk/what-we-do/planning-and-housing/integrated-water-management-plan/>. See section 6 for IWMP update.

A full lessons learned report on the Upper Mersey Place Based Planning Pilot is available to share with RFCC stakeholders if requested.

4.2 Wyre catchment update

The Fylde Hub, formed via Natural Course, comprises of representatives from UUW, Natural England, Environment Agency, Wyre Rivers Trust, and Ribble Rivers Trust. The hub continues to progress the four work streams highlighted in the table below. Local authorities in Blackpool and Fylde have been engaged in relation to the misconnections and wetlands/NFM work streams. It is anticipated that interventions identified in the wetlands work stream have potential to improve water quality in affected watercourses, help store rainwater where it lands and improve and improve biodiversity through extension of existing habitats and wetlands.

Wyre Rivers Trust now lead the Farmer engagement work stream with support from Natural England. This is ensuring that existing important research on soil health is aligned with ongoing farmer engagement with the Catchment Sensitive Farming team.

In relation to the Sampling and Monitoring work stream a funding bid has been submitted to carry out investigative monitoring on the Fylde Coast, including the rivers that flow into Blackpool, namely the Ribble and its estuaries and the Wyre, before, during and after the bathing season, in order to build a deeper understanding of the impact of various factors on faecal bacteria abundance and the decline in water quality.

This is an opportunity to:

- **Engage a diverse mix of residents in a citizen science campaign**, better connecting them to their natural environment, increasing their awareness of environmental pressures in their area and fostering a better understanding of the roles that they can play to improve the local environment; and
- To develop more reliable sampling strategies leading to more targeted and sustainable initiatives that improve coastal water quality and the **resilience of coastal ecosystems** as well as the avoidance of bathing water closure and potential reinstating of status where it has previously been lost.

Funding is being sought from Natural Course and Arup's Breakthrough Research Fund, with the hope that sampling will start towards the end of 2023.

The next step is to finalise a place-based delivery plan for the catchment outlining the range of possible interventions with discussions started on a range of possible funding mechanisms.

Work stream	Lead Organisation	Kick Off Session	Update
1. Sampling & Monitoring	Wyre Rivers Trust / Ribble Rivers Trust	✓	Funding bid submitted with aim of start towards end 23
2. Farmer/land owner engagement	Wyre Rivers Trust / Natural England	✓	Stakeholder workshop in July 23 to map out engagement and identify gaps
3. Misconnections	Environment Agency	✓	Draft process map produced. Local authority engagement required
4. Wetlands/NFM/SUDs	United Utilities	✓	Identified locations for further investigation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Main Drain (Marton Mere/Staining Nook) area - Engagement with Blackpool and Fylde Councils to progress options to extend natural habitat/wetland/Main Drain restoration and flood plain reconnection - Liggard Brook area – August 23 workshop planned with Fylde Council and partners to progress options.

4.3 Eden catchment update

The Cumbria Landscape Enterprise Networks (LENs) nature-based solution (NbS) project is progressing at pace. Kick started with funding via Defra Natural Environment Investment Readiness Fund (NEIRF) this partnership comprising the Environment Agency, UUW, Community Voluntary Sector, Nestle, Eden Rivers Trust and the Cumbria Innovative Flood Resilience (CiFR) project have identified four locations for further scoping as below.

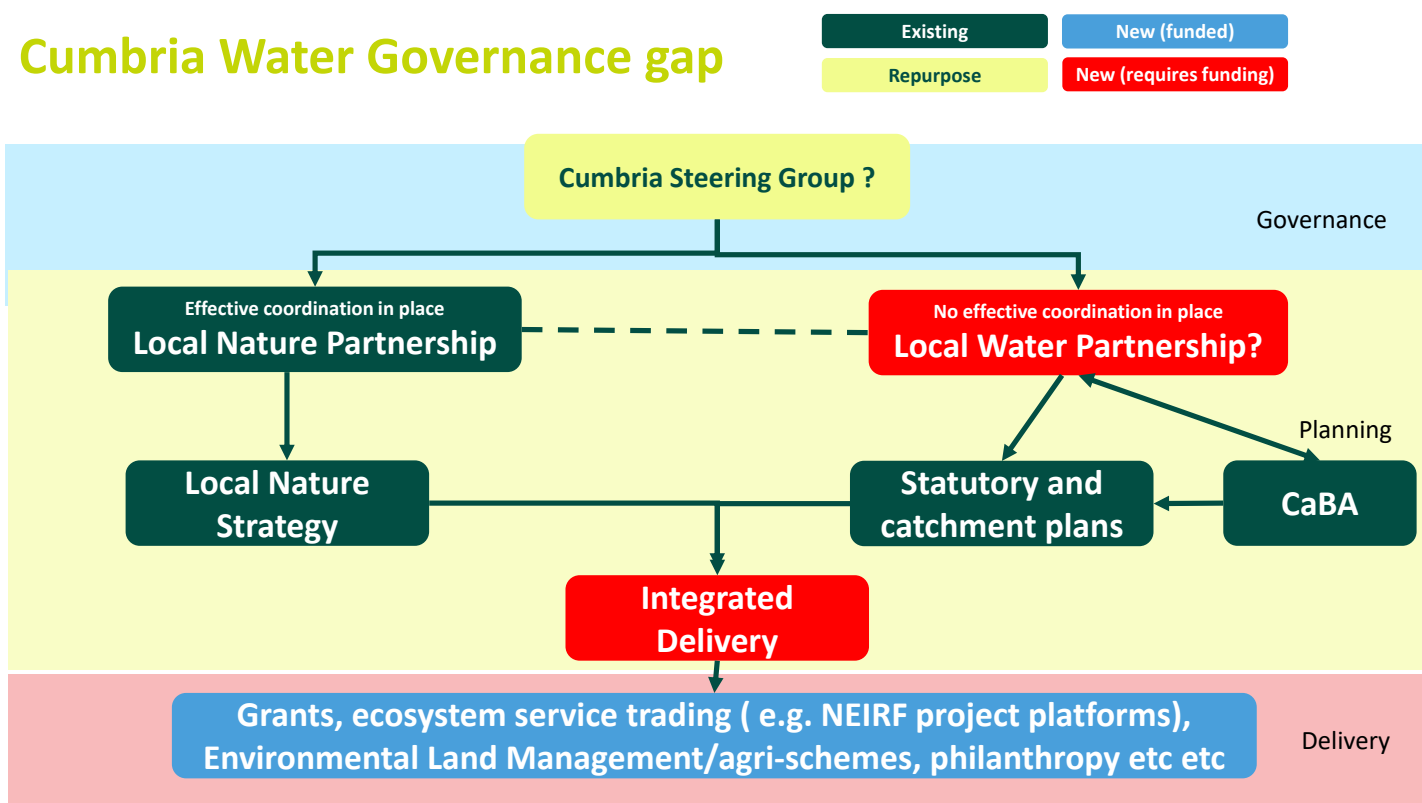
There are a number of trade opportunities via the collaborative procurement of agricultural and nature-based landscape solutions. These are all based on convergent business needs of the key demand-side stakeholders. An outline 'game plan' for each location is briefly headlined below. 3keel will act as intermediary (funded by CiFR), to help keep these moving:

1. **Dalston.** Immediate opportunities for CiFR and Nestle to explore NFM and Community Resilience alignment, along with CiFR research opportunities. Layered onto this should be opportunities for UU to unlock funding for Phosphorus and CSO solutions.
2. **Shap.** Early opportunity for UUW and CiFR to explore technical overlaps between UUW surface water/storm overflow and CSO needs, with localised NFM needs from Westmorland & Furness Council. Action around these could help galvanise wider stakeholder network opportunities identified in the area.
3. **Warcop.** Opportunities here pivot around Highways developments, but good potential for exploiting overlapping interests between CiFR (NFM) and UUW (Phosphorus and surface water flooding needs). Opportunity for Nestle/First Milk to help engage local dairy operators around regen ag solutions.
4. **Caldbeck.** Immediate UUW phosphorus management needs, in conjunction with CiFR linked research, which could be overlaid with Nestle resilient supply interests. Action on these to be cross-referenced for potential CiFR funding input, if there are sufficient localised NFM gains to be had.

4.4 Cumbria Water Governance

The development of Cumbria Water Governance and the ambition to ensure **integrated water management** is strategically aligned with broader nature recovery strategies across Cumbria is still in progress. Following agreement between Natural Course, the Environment Agency, UUW, The Rivers Trust and the four Cumbrian member rivers trusts, a new Catchment Coordinator role was created. The Natural Course funding element has been withdrawn due to programme time constraints and discussions are ongoing to try and secure alternative partnership funding to match UUW funding. The gap that exists and proposed structure is highlighted below.

Cumbria Water Governance gap



5. Green Recovery Funding

UUW made a successful bid for Green Recovery funding in 2020. The funding is only available for the delivery of blue/green infrastructure and will be in three areas across the North West; Fylde, Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) and Eden. The most desirable project areas will be those in areas with a high flood risk and those that are vulnerable to climate change. It is essential to align interests with other stakeholders and progress projects in partnership so UUW will be engaging with the areas identified for projects to be delivered by March 2024.

Two phases of Green Recovery Funding have been established. From Phase 1, we are currently in the process of reaching commercial and legal agreements to deliver the funding to successful projects. There are four SuDS projects going ahead from Phase 1 which are located throughout Greater Manchester. The four successful projects have been awarded a total of £2.041m and will increase the volume of sustainable drainage across Greater Manchester by more than 12,500 square metres. Partners include Bolton Council, Salford City Council, Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council and the Ignition Project. These projects will

benefit from £4.3M in leveraged funding, with £1.9M of funding already invested. This includes the Ignition FS1 package of work that requires partnership funding from the RFCC to deliver.

Following the Phase 2 deadline in December 23, we have evaluated in excess of 20 external applications 14 internal, with 6 external applications progressing to delivery thus far being awarded £2.132m targeted at improving our climate resilience position. 5 internal schemes are still under review, the learning to date is centred round how we can successfully identify schemes internally with potential SuDS opportunities that convert into deliverable schemes. The scheme deadline has not closed and we are still receiving potential external and internal schemes to review for constructability and to determine if they meet the green recovery benefits criteria. The scheme will stay open for as long as possible but eventually it will need to close to allow for adequate time to design and deliver projects.

Working in collaboration with external 3rd parties has enabled us to share knowledge outside of our organisation and learn from others how they are approaching SuDS schemes in their local areas. These types of schemes have driven benefits for our mutual customers whilst sharing the cost to deliver, providing efficiencies across the collaboration.

As this approach starts to deliver tangible results we move to taking that understanding and focussing on our own internal data to identify opportunities for SuDS across Eden, Fylde and Irwell.

The internal schemes we are looking at, enable us to understand how best to identify the SuDS opportunities moving forwards, confirm what further information we need to make these schemes succeed and ultimately provide benefits to our customers.

2023/24 will focus our efforts in delivering the SuDS schemes via external collaborative partnership approaches and identifying the most efficient route to identifying opportunities internally for further SuDS, NFM and hybrid schemes.

6. Greater Manchester Integrated Water Management Plan (IWMP)



Building on the foundations of the Trilateral Partnership it was agreed at a roundtable event held by the Mayor of Greater Manchester on the 30th September 2022 that an IWMP for Greater Manchester would

be developed. The IWMP will focus on all aspects of Greater Manchester water cycle and bring together various strategic plans into an overall framework and ambition for Greater Manchester.

The plan has been co-developed by the GMCA, Environment Agency and U UW, with the support of independent industry advisors (Stantec and Jacobs) and consultation with key stakeholders. It will ensure sustainable water management is applied holistically across Greater Manchester to enhance water quality, manage flood risk and increase biodiversity which benefits people, place and prosperity. Each of the three stakeholders provided equal financial contribution to co-fund the development of the IWMP and U UW provided continual internal resource in the development of the IWMP. The draft plan was approved by the Combined Authority on 30th June (attended in person by U UW and EA CEOs) and the final version final plan will be completed September 2023. The plan can be accessed from the GMCA website - <https://www.greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk/what-we-do/planning-and-housing/integrated-water-management-plan/>

7. RFCC Action 9 Update

U UW are leading the delivery of the action associated with the RFCC ambition 'managing water at catchment scale with nature'. U UW initially planned to trial an approach in Cumbria, however due to the high volume of regulatory submissions underway (PR24 submission year) we have been unable to make as much progress as hoped. Due to time constraints, we have opted (with agreement of the RFCC Chair) to re-frame our action to build on existing opportunities and initiatives. However, we still plan to promote a catchment action in Cumbria at a later date.

The action has been re-framed to focus on the Greater Manchester IWMP. The aim of this initiative is to better understand, capture and share what is required to successfully work collaboratively to develop a whole catchment water management approach which reduces flood risk and achieves a range of wider environmental benefits (water quality, soil health, biodiversity etc.). It will be focussed on a specific geographical area (Greater Manchester) and its river catchments, and will identify and work in conjunction with other water management initiatives already in place. Partners are expected to include U UW, GMCA, local authorities, Natural England, the Environment Agency, environmental non-governmental organisations, landowners, farmers, and communities.

The RFCC funding contribution will add an additional item to the Greater Manchester IWMP scope to enable lessons learned and knowledge transfer from the IWMP development process to other areas of the North West, and more widely across England.

U UW worked with Jacobs, a consultancy with a pre-existing knowledge base on integrated water management in the North West, to develop a scope document and costing for this action. This scope includes:

- Summary of the key learnings from the development of an IWMP in Greater Manchester; and
- Summary to include, but not limited to:
 - Recommendations on the key ingredients required to develop an IWMP at catchment scale (or wider) and what may be required to ensure longevity; and
 - Documented in a format/s which can transfer the knowledge to other interested parties in the England.

The cost for this action is being developed in line with the phase 2 IWMP deliverables, and is currently projected to be approx. £15k (subject to refinement and sign-off from RFCC). This work is anticipated to be completed by October 2023.

27 June 2022



Biodiversity net gain requirements

Interim guidance for delivering flood and coastal erosion risk management capital projects

Biodiversity net gain is an approach to development which means that habitats for wildlife must be left in a measurably better state than they were in before the development took place

Introduction

The UK Government is committed to tackling the climate and biodiversity crises. As part of this commitment, the [Environment Act 2021](#) establishes a legal requirement for all new development to provide at least 10% biodiversity net gain (BNG) as a condition of grant of planning permission under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (TCPA). Through the [Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill](#), introduced to Parliament in May 2022, commits to consulting on changes to the National Planning Policy Framework to make sure that the Environment Act's reforms - in particular the new duty to secure biodiversity net gain in association with development - are embedded fully in plan-making and decisions,

The BNG requirement is reflected in the [National Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Strategy for England](#) within measure 2.2.1: 'From 2021 risk management authorities will plan all flood and coastal defence projects and programmes to deliver biodiversity gain, in line with the government's mandate, and seek to encourage other environmental benefits.'

This note provides information for all risk management authorities (RMAs) responsible for planning and delivering flood and coastal erosion risk management projects in the 2021-27 capital programme, to ensure compliance with legal requirements for BNG. Information may be subject to revision on publication of the final BNG regulations (expected Summer 2022).

RMAs should check for any other requirements set locally through local plan policies, or other mechanisms (see 5 below)

1. BNG as a condition for planning permission – what is covered?

1.1 All new development must deliver at least 10% BNG, as measured by [the Biodiversity Metric](#) in order to secure planning permission under the TCPA. Development includes infrastructure projects such as FCERM schemes, so the mandatory BNG requirement applies to FCERM schemes where planning permission is required.

1.2 BNG must be additional to, and does not replace, other existing statutory or policy protections in place.

customer service line 03706 506 506

floodline 03459 88 11 88

incident hotline 0800 80 70 60

1.3 The resulting BNG must be maintained for a period of at least 30 years.

1.4 The Environment Act provides for a transition period of 2 years from Royal Assent for implementation of the BNG requirement. We should expect, therefore, that mandatory BNG will apply to planning applications submitted from November 2023 (exact date to be confirmed).

2. What does BNG mean for my FCERM capital project?

2.1 All FCERM projects should continue, as they have been, to maximise opportunities to deliver environmental benefits, regardless of whether mandatory BNG applies or not. This will support FCERM contributions to nature recovery and wider benefits for environment and society, in line with the objectives of the national FCERM strategy.

2.2 If you expect to submit a planning application after the mandatory BNG implementation date (expected to be November 2023), you must prepare now to comply fully with the mandatory BNG requirements of the Environment Act 2021. This means that:

- o the business cases must include costs and provisions for delivering at least 10% BNG
- o BNG provision must be in line with the requirements and processes to be set out in regulations which are expected in Summer 2022 (see 4 below). This note will be updated if required when the regulations are published.

2.3 Wherever possible, we encourage projects to seek to deliver BNG above the mandatory 10% level.

3. Funding BNG

3.1 The Partnership Funding policy should be applied to fund BNG. This provides three funding routes.

- a) Use of Outcome Measure 4 (OM4), which is the primary funding mechanism for environmental outcomes, including BNG. The full detail of OM4 eligibility is available in the [partnership funding guidance](#) and supporting guidance for OM4.
- b) Where BNG benefits do not qualify for funding under OM4, projects may claim for BNG benefits under OM1a. This will require you to value the benefits using the [FCERM economic valuation of environmental effects](#) supplementary guidance (an update to this guidance is planned for Autumn 2022).
- c) By seeking partnership funding contributions.

The full detail of OM4 and OM1a eligibility is available in the [partnership funding guidance](#) and supporting guidance documents.

3.2 Projects should use OM4/OM1a to fund BNG requirements. If OM4/OM1a does not attract enough to fund the mandatory requirement of at least 10% BNG, then the remaining costs of meeting 10% BNG must be met from core project funds.

4. How can we secure good biodiversity outcomes?

- 4.1 Engage early with ecological advisers so that they can identify the range of opportunities to build BNG into packages of measures for options appraisal. This will save time and money later.
- 4.2 Follow the mitigation hierarchy and avoid impacts on our highest value and threatened habitats.
- 4.3 Plan for environmentally coherent outcomes. The Biodiversity Metric is simply a tool to measure gains. The important principle is to incorporate good ecological outcomes into design first, and measure second.
- 4.4 Follow the rules of the Biodiversity Metric to effectively achieve mandated BNG (mitigation hierarchy, 'location hierarchy' and trading rules for habitat distinctiveness). The Biodiversity Metric should be used with appropriate professional advice and ecological knowledge.
- 4.5 BNG will require monitoring and maintenance, just as built assets do. Mandatory BNG must be monitored and maintained for a minimum period of 30 years.
- 4.6 Keep a record of BNG provision for all your projects and programmes. You will be required to submit this information as part of programme reporting later once a proportionate reporting approach has been established.

5. What are the mandatory BNG requirements?

The government published [consultation proposals for implementation and regulations for mandatory BNG](#) between January and April 2022. Responses to the consultation are being considered now and we expect Defra to publish regulations in summer 2022.

The summary points below reflect the proposals set out for consultation. We will update these details if necessary when regulations are published, The proposals set out that:

- any project submitted for planning permission after the mandatory BNG implementation date **must** by law deliver at least 10% BNG as measured by the Biodiversity Metric¹, and follow the requirements and process for presenting and submitting a biodiversity gain plan to the LPA for approval
- BNG should be delivered on-site, so that the benefits are felt where the impact of development takes place
- if it is not possible to deliver BNG obligations on-site, BNG should be delivered as locally as possible (note that the biodiversity metric includes strategic significance and spatial risk factors which place greater reward on habitat creation where it is strategically important and locally relevant)
- as a last resort, where it is not possible to deliver the required BNG on- or off-site, a developer will have to purchase 'biodiversity credits' from the government (note that the mechanism for buying credits is still to be established)

¹ Further consultation is expected on the Biodiversity Metric during 2022.

- BNG should be guided by local information and, when ready, by the Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) for the area (the LNRS responsible body will usually be the local authority)
- the three types of biodiversity units generated by the metric calculation (for area, hedgerow and river habitats) are unique and cannot be summed, traded or converted
- BNG must be maintained for at least 30 years, with all the necessary legal, landowner and other agreements relating to delivery and maintenance secured before the development/project can begin
- BNG proposals must be submitted to the local planning authority (LPA) in a 'biodiversity gain plan' (content to be set out in regulations)² and approved by the LPA before a development/project can begin.

6. Local plan policies and organisational commitments for BNG

- 6.1 RMA should note that a LPA can already set, as a policy requirement, its own BNG threshold through a local plan policy, which can be higher than 10%. Planning applications must by law be determined in accordance with local plan policies so, where a higher threshold is set locally, projects must comply with it, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 6.2 Environment Agency programme and project managers will be aware that our corporate eMission:2030 strategy sets an ambition to achieve 20%t BNG on Environment Agency operations and for environmental net gain to be a key element of our advice and influence in town planning. Other RMAs are not subject to these commitments.

As non-mandatory commitments, there is potential for flexibility in how we deliver them . An Environment Agency task and finish group has been established to assess and design our organisational approach. In the interim, all Environment Agency led capital projects should ensure they achieve mandatory requirements as set out in this note, while also striving to achieve as much as possible over and above this.

² Defra's consultation document includes a draft template for a biodiversity gain plan. The final template will be published with the regulations.

RFCC FCERM Update – June 2023

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1. Recent flooding and readiness

Localised flooding in May 2023

- Parts of England suffered from the impacts of surface water flooding as a result of localised intense thundery showers on 9-10 May 2023. Areas affected included Somerset, East Devon and Essex. At present, we estimate the numbers of properties internally flooded to be approximately 150 across all areas.
- A major incident was declared by Avon and Somerset Local Resilience Forum on 9 May. The most intense rainfall fell directly over North Cadbury, Galhampton, Woolston and Yarlinton between 14:00-16:00 GMT (accumulated rainfall totals exceeding 100 mm) where the Fire and Rescue Service evacuated a number of residents.
- Water levels in the River Cam responded quickly to significant rainfall across the catchment, and recorded river levels at our Weston Bampfylde gauge rose steeply and met Flood Warning criteria. The Flood Warning was automatically issued via our Flood Warning Service. The gauge recorded the highest ever recorded level (2.81m) on 9 May 2023 at 19:45.
- We worked collaboratively with partners, visited impacted locations, collected and shared valuable information, assessed impacts and causes, and provided guidance and support to affected communities. We inspected flood defence assets across the Wessex area to ensure they remained intact.

Industrial action and our flood warning service

- Like many public services, we are experiencing some of our staff taking industrial action. We will continue to deliver the flood warning service (FWS) through any period of reduced staff availability through automating all flood alerts and flood warnings.
- It is not possible for us to deliver the same level of service during periods of industrial action, as we are able when all our staff are available. Automation of the FWS has been developed as a mitigation measure. In periods where there is no industrial action, automation will be turned off and normal service levels will resume.
- Automating the FWS means users continue to receive messages and ensures we undertake our operational work, which includes putting flood barriers in place and closing gates. In response to public feedback, we have also made changes to the GOV.UK pages, helping users access the latest information available in addition to the warning messages. We have also put in place call back mechanisms for significant incidents where there is threat to life.
- As an innovative organisation we are always examining the use of emerging technology. If it improves the FWS we may look to explore how automation could be embedded to support our staff and benefit customers; this will require further research, investigation and engagement. Pete Dobson, our Service Manager in Flood Incident Management is happy to answer any questions you have on this: Peter.S.Dobson@environment-agency.gov.uk

Flood warning expansion project exceeds targets

- Our [Flood Warning Expansion Project \(FWEP\)](#) has closed after successfully delivering new flood warnings to over 78,000 homes. We exceeded the target set at the start of the project and helped the Environment Agency to fulfil an important FCERM strategy measure.
- FWEP was set up in 2019 with support from HM Treasury funding, its goal was to expand the flood warning service to reach all high flood-risk properties.
- More than 180 additional communities can now get flood warnings in many places which were hard to reach thanks to several teams adopting innovative ways of expanding the service to difficult places. The new monitoring techniques have been rolled out across all EA areas saving over 36 tonnes of carbon for the Environment Agency compared to traditional monitoring techniques. You can read our blog [here](#).

Emergency alert system

- The government's [Emergency Alert System](#) was launched by the Cabinet Office on 19 March 2023, and a UK-wide test message was sent at 15:00 on Sunday 23 April. Caroline Douglass supported the government's communications by being a media spokesperson.
- As the government's experts on public warning and informing for emergencies, we have been a core part of the cross-government project team for the last 3 years. Much of the thinking is based on the research and experience of our flood warning service and earlier Environment Agency trials using this technology.
- An emergency alert message is sent to mobile phones based on their location, enabling people to be warned if their lives are at risk in an emergency with instructions on how to respond. The new capability will complement some severe flood warnings where there is an immediate risk to life. We have a protocol for use agreed with the Cabinet Office, and our key duty staff have received the appropriate training on the process and system.

2. The way we work

FCERM capital programme and frequently flooded allowance

- We are now into our third year of the current 6-year capital programme. Since the start of this programme in April 2021, and in partnership with other Risk Management Authorities (RMAs), we have better protected around 60,000 properties from flooding and / or coastal erosion.
- We have also delivered many wider benefits, including 52 schemes that contain natural flood management techniques, better protecting 145,000ha of agricultural land, enhancing/improving 37km of rivers, and better protecting 3,100km of road and rail. We have also successfully secured nearly £350m of partnership funding.
- On 5 April 2023, Minister Pow announced the schemes that will receive funding through the Frequently Flooded Allowance (FFA). This is a ringfenced allocation of up to £100m. It aims to speed up the development and delivery of schemes in communities that have flooded twice or more in the last 10 years, by offsetting the partnership funding need.
- Over 53 projects will be allocated more than £26m through this first tranche of funding. Further details of the announcement and the list of projects to receive funding can be found

on [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk). Bids for the next tranche of funding will be managed through the current annual refresh round.

- Work is continuing to determine the impact of inflation, the FFA, and the strengthening programme of work on the overall target of properties better protected which can be achieved. The original target of 336,000 properties better protected is now unachievable within the 6-year programme period. Revised targets will need to be approved by the Secretary of State.
- As agreed with the Environment Agency Board, we are continuing to progress the strengthening and improvement changes identified which are solely in our gift to implement. We are still awaiting feedback on Defra's proposals to the SoS seeking approval to change the current partnership funding policy.

Property flood resilience campaign and framework

- On 22 May 2023, we launched a joint property flood resilience (PFR) consumer awareness campaign with Flood Re. The [“Be Flood Smart” campaign](#) highlights how property owners can incorporate flood resilience into their home improvements. The campaign is a key commitment in the [FCERM Strategy Roadmap](#), published in June 2022. It is also another step towards encouraging property owners to [‘build back better’](#) after a flood, a focus within the [FCERM Strategy](#). You can read our blog [here](#).
- A dedicated PFR demonstration centre was also opened at HR Wallingford, which was delivered as part of the government's £3 million investment into 3 PFR pathfinder projects.
- Working with Defra commercial and procurement services, we had to discontinue the procurement of a new PFR framework due to receiving fewer compliant bids than required to meet the minimum number of suppliers. The new framework will be re-tendered as soon as possible in a way that encourages more bidders to tender, and it is expected to be in place by the end of this year. Our existing supplier framework runs until December 2023 meaning delivery of PFR schemes on the investment programme will continue and not be affected.

Updated Thames Estuary 2100 plan

- On 17 May 2023 we published an updated [Thames Estuary 2100 plan](#) following a full review. A stakeholder event was held at City Hall in London to launch the plan to partners. Alan Lovell and Baroness Brown (chair of the Thames Estuary 2100 Plan advisory group) spoke at this event, outlining the plan's key messages. Please see link to a [video shared on social media](#).
- The plan sets out how we aim to protect more than 1.4 million people and £321 billion of property from both the existing risks faced from tidal flooding, as well as the growing risks that climate change will bring.
- The plan was launched in 2012 as the first adaptive flood risk management strategy of its kind. It set out a long-term approach to managing flood risk in the Thames Estuary and preparing “adaptation pathways” to allow greater flexibility due to the uncertainty of future climate change.

- The 10-year review of the plan has found that the rate of sea level rise in the estuary is accelerating. This means we will need to take action to raise flood defences upstream of the Thames Barrier 15 years earlier than previously planned.
- We have developed the updated plan in collaboration with a wide range of partners across the estuary, including the Greater London Authority, local councils, the Port of London Authority, the Wildlife Trusts and many more. The lessons learnt from the updated Thames Estuary 2100 plan will inform the [Adaptive pathways programme](#) which is also developing long term investment plans for managing flooding and coastal change to 2100 in other strategic locations including the Humber Estuary and River Severn.

FCERM strategy roadmap update

- Together with our partners, we are continuing to make good progress against the commitments outlined in the FCERM Strategy Roadmap. In addition to the flood warning expansion project, emergency alerts and PFR campaign launch, the Roadmap delivery successes at the end of Q4 in 2022/23 are:

Ambition 1 - Climate Resilient places

- We worked with Defra to draw on interim findings from the ‘Coastal Loss Innovative Funding and Finance’ project to share the learning on innovative financing mechanisms with other coastal groups.
- Together with Natural England, we submitted a report to Defra assessing progress in realising habitat compensation needs and restoration opportunities funded from FCRM investment.
- We worked with the Catchment Based Approach (CABA) to develop the existing online NFM asset recording tool to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of NFM projects.
- We worked with Natural England to support government in publishing statutory guidance for Responsible Authorities to draft Local Nature Recovery Strategies, with a view to ensuring RMAs play an active role in their production.
- The NFU are working with us to establish a rural flood resilience partnership. When launched the group will look at how farming practices can enhance flood resilience in rural areas, alongside sustainable food production.

Ambition 2 - Growth and infrastructure

- We completed a pilot in West Kent for collecting PFR data with Flood Re. The pilot involved developing and testing a methodology whereby a property can be scored according to how resilient it is to flooding, alongside the Flood Hazard Research Centre.
- Flood Re, working with the insurance sector, are phasing in a ‘Build Back Better’ scheme offering increased insurance pay outs for properties which have flooded so that resilience measures can be installed.

Ambition 3 - A nation ready to respond

- A further 9,515 properties were added to the Flood Warning Service during Q4.
- We managed a Net Zero Carbon Innovation Pathway Fund. This fund will enable the Environment Agency to work with its supply chain to trial and pilot innovative, low carbon products and solutions to the construction and management of flood and coastal risk management infrastructure.

Asset management strategy

- Our new asset management strategy is now ready to be launched in summer 2023. This follows a consultation with internal colleagues, Regional Flood & Coastal Committees (RFCCs), and approval by our governance boards. RFCCs received a summary of the consultation feedback.
- The strategy outlines our asset management ambitions for all of our infrastructure assets, (Flood & Coastal Risk Management; Water, Land and Biodiversity; Navigation; Air Quality monitoring; and Hydrometry & Telemetry).
- Our vision is to have safe, reliable and sustainable assets supporting a healthy natural environment and climate resilient communities. This will enable us to deliver multiple benefits using a system-based approach.
- The engagement has been wide reaching and extremely positive, with nearly 90% of the responses supportive of the strategy and vision.

3. Working with FCERM stakeholders

Rivercraft 2: the game engaging young people on flood risk

- On 25 April 2023 we launched Rivercraft 2 in partnership with Microsoft and developers BlockBuilders. Rivercraft 2 aims to engage young people on flood risk reduction, climate change and biodiversity.
- Rivercraft 2 is available on the Minecraft Education Edition and comprises three games on: nature-based solutions; farming, irrigation and drought; and sustainable drainage systems. It follows the success of the original games, rolled out in April 2022, which is based on the £54.7 million flood risk management scheme in Preston and South Ribble. The original games have been played by around 27,000 young people and teachers in the UK.
- Rivercraft 2 has received industry recognition and is shortlisted for a Flood and Coast Excellence Award in the Excellence in Innovation category.

Improving public sector resilience

- Government departments are delivering the Greening Government Commitments (which include plans for climate adaptation and delivering nature recovery) and are looking for opportunities to deliver these in partnership.
- Working with Anglian Water and Ministry of Justice we have developed a draft for a place-based approach to use public estate in partnership with water companies to reduce surface water flood risk. This builds upon the SuDs in Schools initiative with water companies. An information paper on this is attached.
- This has been shared with government departments, and with water company leads. We are currently seeking your input as regional flood and coastal committee (RFCC) Chairs, through the conversations you have with your water company Surface Water Management Network leads. For the April 2023 edition of CIWEM's 'The Environment' magazine, Paul

Wyse (Environment Agency) published an article on '[How do we improve public-sector resilience?](#)'

Flood and Coast Conference 2023

- The Flood and Coast Conference runs from Tuesday 6 to Thursday 8 June 2023 at the Telford International Centre. It is convened by the Chartered Institute of Water and Environmental Management (CIWEM). We are leading the programme on the first day of the conference. The second and third days will be led by the Rivers' Trust and Association of SUDs Authorities (ASA) respectively.
- Caroline Douglass will chair the opening conference session of keynote speeches by Alan Lovell, Rebecca Pow (Defra Environmental Quality and Resilience Minister), and Carlene York (New South Wales State Emergency Service Commissioner), via live link.
- We are proud to host the Innovation Hub in the exhibition hall. This is an informal and interactive space to showcase our work on digital innovation such as Rivercraft, engineering excellence and community resilience and adaptation. We will also celebrate achievements with the Flood and Coast Excellence Awards and Women in FCRM awards on 7 June.

Natural flood management skills survey

- Between 2015-21 the Environment Agency funded 130 Natural Flood Management (NFM) projects through our FCERM capital programme, enhancing flood and coastal resilience, and enabling nature recovery. These included the 60 projects funded from the £15m NFM pilots programme.
- As part of our mainstreaming work, we want to upskill the workforce within the Environment Agency and our external partners, so that we can apply NFM techniques and approaches more effectively. In the coming weeks we will be sending out a short survey to gather thoughts on current NFM training provision and where and how it might be enhanced. If you would like to take part in this survey, please contact: NFM@environment-agency.gov.uk

Supporting flood and coast projects

- On 24 April 2023 we relaunched our Investment & Partnership Funding SharePoint site as [Supporting Flood and Coast Projects](#). The purpose of the site is to make it easier for all risk management authorities (RMAs) and other partners to develop projects that improve resilience to flooding and coastal change. This site is a one-stop shop for all RMAs.
- The relaunch marks the start of a programme of improvements that will simplify business case development and approval for smaller projects and make it easier to access funding. We will share the latest changes through this site over the coming months.

Collaborative delivery framework to continue

- On 13 April 2023 we [announced](#) that the collaborative delivery framework (CDF) has been extended to 2027. Launched in 2019, the CDF formed new supplier arrangements and partnerships to increase efficiency, generate value for money and underline the green legacy of the £5.2 billion capital investment programme.

4. Publications

Flood and coastal erosion risk management annual report 2021/22

- On 17 March 2023 we published our latest [Flood and coastal erosion risk management report for 2021/22](#). This annual report is a summary of flood and coastal erosion risk management work carried out by risk management authorities (RMAs) in England. It is submitted to Defra Ministers every year as a statutory report.
- The report describes the work undertaken by all RMAs to manage the risks from flooding and coastal erosion and to achieve the objectives of the National Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management (FCERM) Strategy for England.

Environment and historic environment outcomes valuation guidance

- The new [Environmental and Historic Outcomes Valuation Guidance \(EHOV\)](#) was published on 21 March 2023. This guidance shows you how to calculate the impact of your flood and coastal erosion risk management projects on the natural and historic environment. It also provides a tool to calculate a monetary value of the impact.
- EHOV is supplementary to the [FCERM appraisal guidance](#), and will help you identify, describe, quantify, and value impacts to include in your FCERM economic appraisal. It also contains a high-level valuation tool which will make impact valuation more accessible.

Water supply reservoirs - their role in flood risk management

- On 28 March 2023 we published an operating framework on [Water supply reservoirs: their role in flood risk management](#). The operating framework for water supply reservoirs and flood risk management will: help decide which water supply reservoirs can provide flood risk management benefits; enable consistent local decision making; support engagement between the Environment Agency, water companies and other partners.
- The framework ensures that, where possible, integrated decision-making leads to many benefits and aligns with adaptive planning principles. There is an [operating instruction](#) to assist our work.

Environment Agency newsletter

- On 11 May 2023 we launched our first Environment Agency Newsletter. This is a new quarterly publication for stakeholders, designed to provide an overview of the Environment Agency's work.
- Each issue will cover the latest news across all aspects of our work, including flood and coastal risk management, water, waste crime, and regulation. This issue focusses on our role as a Category 1 emergency responder. You can sign up to the newsletter [here](#). Please share this through your networks and encourage others to subscribe.

Horizons magazine - flood and coastal innovation programmes

- On 17 May 2023 we launched our new magazine [Horizons](#). This online magazine shares insights into innovative approaches to flood and coastal risk management updates from our projects in our three [Flood and Coastal Innovation Programmes](#).
- The magazine provides a discussion space for risk management authorities, community groups and partners. Project teams share their innovations and learning, introducing the reader to the 'what, where and how' of using new technology to achieve climate resilient places. You can sign up to the magazine [here](#).

FCERM research and development programme publications

- Our FCERM research and development programme is a collaborative programme using academic led research to provide information to flood risk professionals to manage flood risk. Here is some of the latest research published:

Scoping research to improve dam and levee breach prediction

- On 22 March 2023 the programme published an overview of levee and soil based dam breaches to identify future research needs. This scoping study aims to improve dam and levee safety through better breach prediction. It expands our understanding of breach processes and makes research recommendations based on best practice and findings from experts in reservoir and flood management sectors.

Identifying and managing risks arising from defence structure transitions

- On 22 March 2023 the programme published guidance on how to identify, assess and manage the effects of transition zones on the performance of flood defences. This will help flood risk management authorities prioritise improvements to reduce flood risk.

The Promoting Adaptation to Changing Coasts (PACCo) project

- As the impacts of climate change continue to be felt around the world, coastal communities are especially vulnerable to the increasing risks caused by rising sea levels and extreme weather events. To help communities adapt to these challenges by joining forces with nature, the Promoting Adaptation to Changing Coasts (PACCo) project - a pre-emptive climate adaptation, habitat restoration, and infrastructure improvement initiative - has published a free-to-access, practical how-to guide. This details the key elements to consider when delivering similar much-needed schemes.

FCRM Business and Stakeholder Management team

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June 2023

RFCC FCERM Update – June 2023

Supplementary items

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The way we work

Strengthening the FCRM capital investment programme improvements

- We have made changes to simplify business case development, assurance and approval processes to strengthen delivery of capital projects – these changes apply to all RMA projects
- The improvements focus on speeding up appraisal and business case development for smaller projects below £3 million - these projects make up most of our capital investment programme.
- All project sizes will benefit from:
 - clearer guidance on inflation
 - understanding how to take a strategic approach to manage all sources of risk.
- The changes are part of our ongoing programme of improvements to strengthen delivery of flood and coastal resilience projects. They will help achieve the ambitions in the National FCERM Strategy.
- Improvements include:
 - single stage business case, and local assurance and approval, for projects below £3m to increase efficiency and local decision-making
 - improved business case templates for FCERM projects for sustain (projects with no need to change FCERM approach) and legal obligation (projects to fulfil a legal obligation) projects below £3m
 - a simple tool to help projects choose the right appraisal approach.
 - updated partnership funding guidance with a more pragmatic strategic approach to tackle flooding from multiple sources that will enable more surface water projects.

- updated guidance on inflation to make it clearer what project teams need to do to ensure projects use the best information and demonstrate value for money. This replaces and consolidates guidance released last year.
- transition arrangements so project teams know when they must use the new guidance and take advantage of the benefits but also minimise disruption to existing projects.
- the new [Supporting flood and coast projects SharePoint site](#) to provide guidance and resources for all risk management authorities.
- For more information you can [join a webinar](#) on the 17th or 20th July where we introduce the improvements. You can also visit the new [Supporting Flood and Coast Projects site](#) where you can find the tools and guidance and watch our short [introductory video](#).

Working with FCERM stakeholders

New national flood risk assessment (NaFRA2): review of new flood risk data

- We are developing a new national flood risk assessment to meet changing needs and provide:
 - an improved assessment of current flood risk and, for the first time, an indication of future risks due to climate change, to guide investment and development planning
 - a wide range of flood risk data for a range of scenarios to plan for, respond to, and adapt to flooding
 - better and clearer information to help our customers and partners understand flood risk and take action to build resilience.
- We are combining New National Models (NNM) for rivers, the sea and surface water flooding with local flood models to create an improved and updated version of our national mapping products. We will share these products through our existing digital services on gov.uk and provide data that can be downloaded and used by anyone for free through Defra's Data Services Platform. We plan to make the following products available in August 2024.
- These will consist of flood maps, depths and velocities showing:
 - Flood Risk from Surface Water
 - Flood Risk from Rivers and the Sea
 - Flood Zones for the Flood Map for Planning
- To make these products as good as they can be, we are currently seeking local knowledge from LLFAs and coastal RMAs.

Review of the draft data for surface water flooding

- Last year, we invited Lead Local Flood Authorities (LLFAs) to review the first draft of the New National Model (NNM) of surface water flood risk. Following discussion with the ADEPT national flood group, in June we sent an invite to LLFAs to review the draft RoFSW data between September 2023 and January 2024, providing details about the task and the breakdown of the review period for each region. We have also asked LLFAs to confirm their contact details so that we could involve the relevant people.

Review of the draft data for coastal flooding

- We will also contact coastal Risk Management Authorities (RMAs) to give them an opportunity to participate in the review of the NNM of coastal flood risk, which will be used to improve RoFRS and FMfP. This opportunity is also scheduled during the period August to February alongside a review by Environment Agency local teams.
- The NaFRA2 project team is coordinating our work with the national review of Shoreline Management Plans and verification of Coastal Erosion Risk Mapping.

RFCC support

- RFCCs are asked to highlight the review of draft NaFRA2 data taking place and encourage LLFAs and Coastal RMAs to take part.

New national erosion risk assessment (NCERM2) and online platform for Shoreline Management Plans

- As we committed to in the FCERM Strategy the Environment Agency and coastal local authorities are working together through Coastal Groups to:
 - improve the national coastal flood and erosion risk maps to strengthen the evidence base for coastal investments and decisions
 - improve access and use of Shoreline Management Plans (SMPs).
- We are doing this through three separate but related projects: the National Coastal Erosion Risk Mapping version 2 (NCERM2) and new National Flood Risk Assessment (NaFRA2 – see separate briefing provided) will provide an updated and enhanced picture of risk at the coast. The SMP Refresh (SMP-R) aims to ensure SMPs are fit for purpose, meet the needs of coastal managers and planners, and can be more easily understood by coastal communities.
- To improve accessibility and use of SMPs the Environment Agency is working with key stakeholders through Coastal Groups and smaller sub-groups covering each SMP to develop a new web-based tool for SMPs called 'Shoreline Management Plan Explorer'. It aims to bring coastal management to life through map-based data visualisation and make SMP management approaches and action plans clearer, more accessible, and easier to update. Users of this information will include risk management authorities, Coastal Groups, planning professionals, consultants, and the public.
- The Environment Agency are also updating the full National Coastal Erosion Risk Map (NCERM) dataset based on a further ten years of coastal monitoring data, the latest climate change evidence and technical input from coastal leads in local authorities. The update will include coastal erosion predictions for England through this century and provide an updated assessment of residential and non-residential properties at risk, taking account of the latest coastal management approaches set out in SMPs.
- The SMP Explorer and NCERM2 will be used by coastal risk management authorities and the Environment Agency to inform local planning decisions for the coastline.
- We are working closely with coastal local authorities this year to test and develop the SMP Explorer site and verify the NCERM2 data.

How can RFCCs help?

- We plan to launch SMP Explorer in winter 2023/24. Please ask your local Coastal Group to:
 - engage with SMP discussions and implementation to better know your coast and keep it high on your agenda.
 - facilitate actions improving the relationship between SMPs and local planning.

FCRM Business and Stakeholder Management team

FCRMNC@environment-agency.gov.uk

July 2023

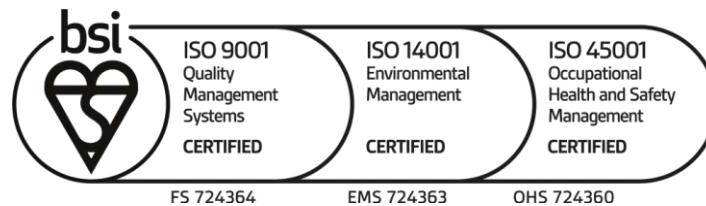
**RFCC ambition 2022 – 2025
Building Community Resilience**

Newground End of Year Report April 2022 – March 2023

A summary of the approach, achievements and learning from the programme

Introduction

The Newground Flood Team delivers the Flood Resilience Engagement Programme across the North West and is a part of Newground CIC, a social enterprise based in Blackburn, Lancashire. Any profits generated from their activities are reinvested into the charity ‘Newground Together’ which supports environmental and community projects across the North of England. Newground is proud to be certified to ISO 9001, ISO 14001 and OHSAS 1800, ensuring we deliver quality services in a safe and sustainable way. In February 2023, we had our recertification audits, and the auditor was very complimentary about the Newground Flood Team and the quality processes that are in place to deliver the flood resilience programme.



The Flood Resilience Engagement Programme can be split into 3 main areas:

1. Working directly with communities at risk of flooding and supporting the development of Flood Action Groups.
2. Working with key partners, these include the 5 partnership coordinators, the Environment Agency, United Utilities, and non-government organisation groups to develop content for campaigns, case studies and support multi-agency approaches to flood risk communities.
3. Developing and maintaining The Flood Hub website and associated social media channels.

Approach and Activities

The Programme for 2022/23 was different from the last 2 years, as we were no longer impacted to the same extent by the pandemic and this resulted in many more opportunities to directly engage with communities.

The approach is to work with communities and partners across the North West to build awareness of flood resilience, preparedness and capacity, in terms of skills and resources. We are flexible in our approach to ensure we can engage with all types of communities and support them in the most appropriate ways. The Flood Hub and associated social media channels provide another way to engage and encourage flood resilience.

Our main activities have included:

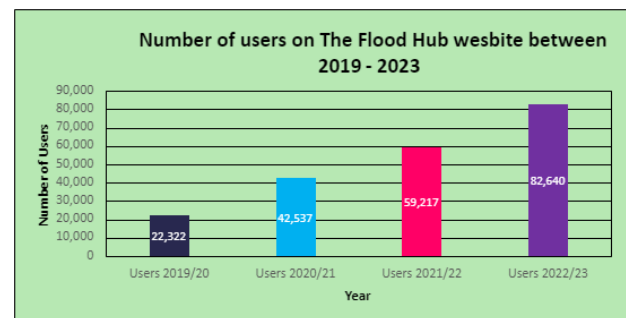
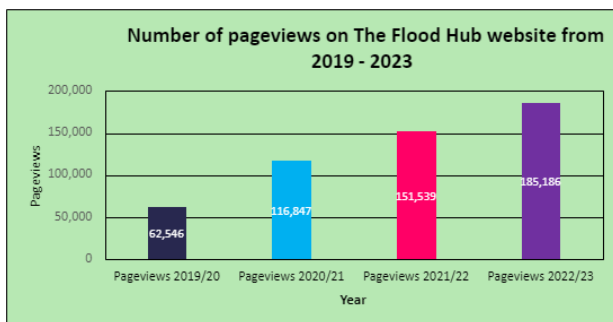
- Supporting existing Flood Action Groups and the development of new groups.
- Supporting partners with key messages through direct engagement and online campaigns.

- Raising awareness of flood resilience with elected members through Zoom, MS teams meetings and face to face in person meetings.
- Further developing the 'Flood Risk Management Schemes' section.
- Working with new and existing partners to create cases studies.
- Development of new resources for The Flood Hub.
- Proactive on social media with increased activity at times of heavy rain and flooding.

Project Theme: The Flood Hub - Increasing public awareness and education

In the last year, The Flood Hub has achieved 185,186 pageviews and 82,640 users. Pageviews on the website have seen a 22% increase and users have seen a 40% increase on last year's totals. *Figure 1* shows the increase in pageviews and users over the last 4 years. These results are particularly impressive as the summer of 2022 was the driest since 1976 and analytics for The Flood Hub throughout the summer months continued to track higher than any previous year. This is particularly encouraging as people are seeking and finding flood resilience information in dry periods.

Figure 1 Graphs to show total pageviews and users on The Flood Hub over the last 4 years

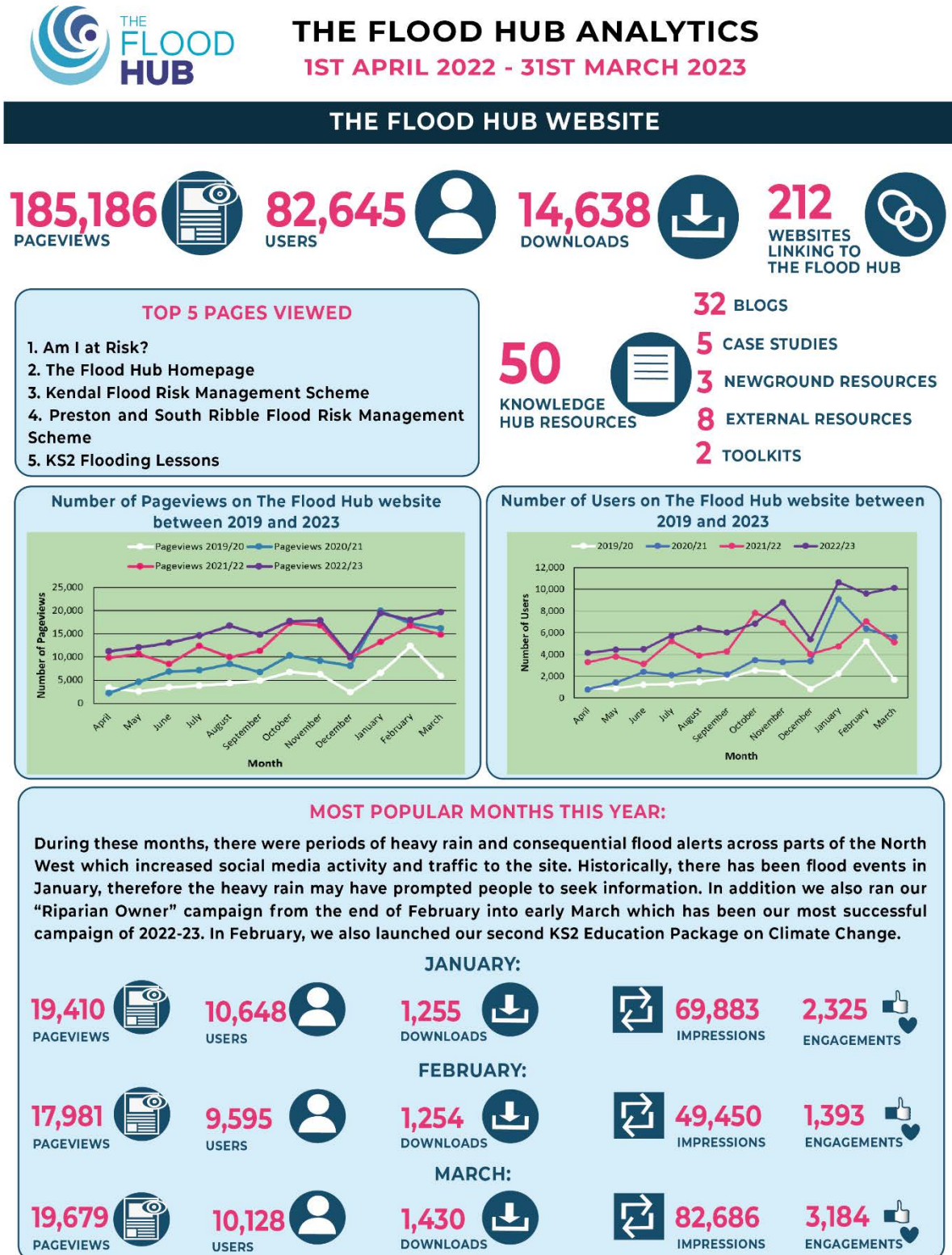


The Flood Hub now has 212 websites linking to The Flood Hub as a source of useful information. There are also over 200 people who receive The Flood Hub quarterly newsletter. Key work on The Flood Hub over the last 12 months has been:

- Improving accessibility
- Ensuring compliance with GDPR requirements
- Server upgrade
- Development of KS2 Climate Change lessons
- Development of the flood risk management scheme (FRMS) pages
- Planning, development and flood risk survey
- Landowners section updated
- Development of a blog section
- Several new resources added
- 7 campaigns delivered through social media

Full analytics for the website can be seen in *Figure 2*.

Figure 2 – The Flood Hub Analytics



Climate Change Lessons

In January, we launched our ‘KS2 Climate Change Education Package’. This lesson pack is made up of four lessons and is aimed at Key Stage 2 (ages 7-11), although the material can also be adapted for other age groups. The lessons aim to improve young people’s knowledge on climate change and each lesson pack contains a PowerPoint lesson, a lesson plan with teacher’s notes and resources such as worksheets or instructions which may be required for in-class exercises or homework. The topics covered in these lesson can be seen in *Figure 3*.

In the last year, the KS2 flooding lessons have had over 1000 downloads and we have seen increased website traffic to this section. It is hoped the Climate Change lessons will be as popular.

Figure 3 - The Flood Hub KS2 Climate Change lessons



Flood Risk Management Scheme (FRMS) pages

In the last year we have increased the number of FRMS pages on The Flood Hub, we now have:

- 6 proposed schemes
- 12 in progress schemes
- 5 completed schemes

These pages are regularly updated and analytics show they are used frequently by the general public (*Figure 4*)

Figure 4 - FRMS Analytics



FLOOD RISK MANAGEMENT SCHEME (FRMS) YEARLY ANALYTICS
1ST APRIL 2022 - 31ST MARCH 2023

49,059
PAGEVIEWS



4,800
DOWNLOADS*



PAGEVIEWS		DOWNLOADS	
Caldew	505	Caldew	23
Carlisle	1,961	Carlisle	105
Carlisle Phase 2	1,483	Carlisle Phase 2	122
Hambleton	751	Hambleton	30
Irwell Vale, Strongsrty and Chatterton	1,150	Irwell Vale, Strongsrty and Chatterton	200
Kendal	14,320	Kendal	1,958
Upper Kent	1,471	Upper Kent	138
Lancaster	943	Lancaster	50
Low Crosby (including engagement pack)	1,591	Low Crosby (including engagement pack)	135
Northwich	367	Northwich	n/a
Padiham	1,458	Padiham	184
Penketh and Whittle	1,374	Penketh and Whittle	101
Preston and South Ribble	7,375	Preston and South Ribble	656
Radcliffe and Redvales	1,157	Radcliffe and Redvales	130
Rickerby	485	Rickerby	94
River Irwell at Kearsley	340	River Irwell at Kearsley	n/a
River Mersey at Warrington	25	River Mersey at Warrington	n/a
Rochdale and Littleborough	3,914	Rochdale and Littleborough	300
Sankey Brook	3,363	Sankey Brook	149
Wallasey Toe Embankment Reinforcement Works	148	Wallasey Toe Embankment Reinforcement Works	n/a
West Kirby	4,056	West Kirby	391
Whalley	822	Whalley	34

* Due to an issue with Google Analytics during our server change, we do not have data for the number of downloads from FRMS pages for November, December and up until the 19th January.

Flood Risk and Planning Survey

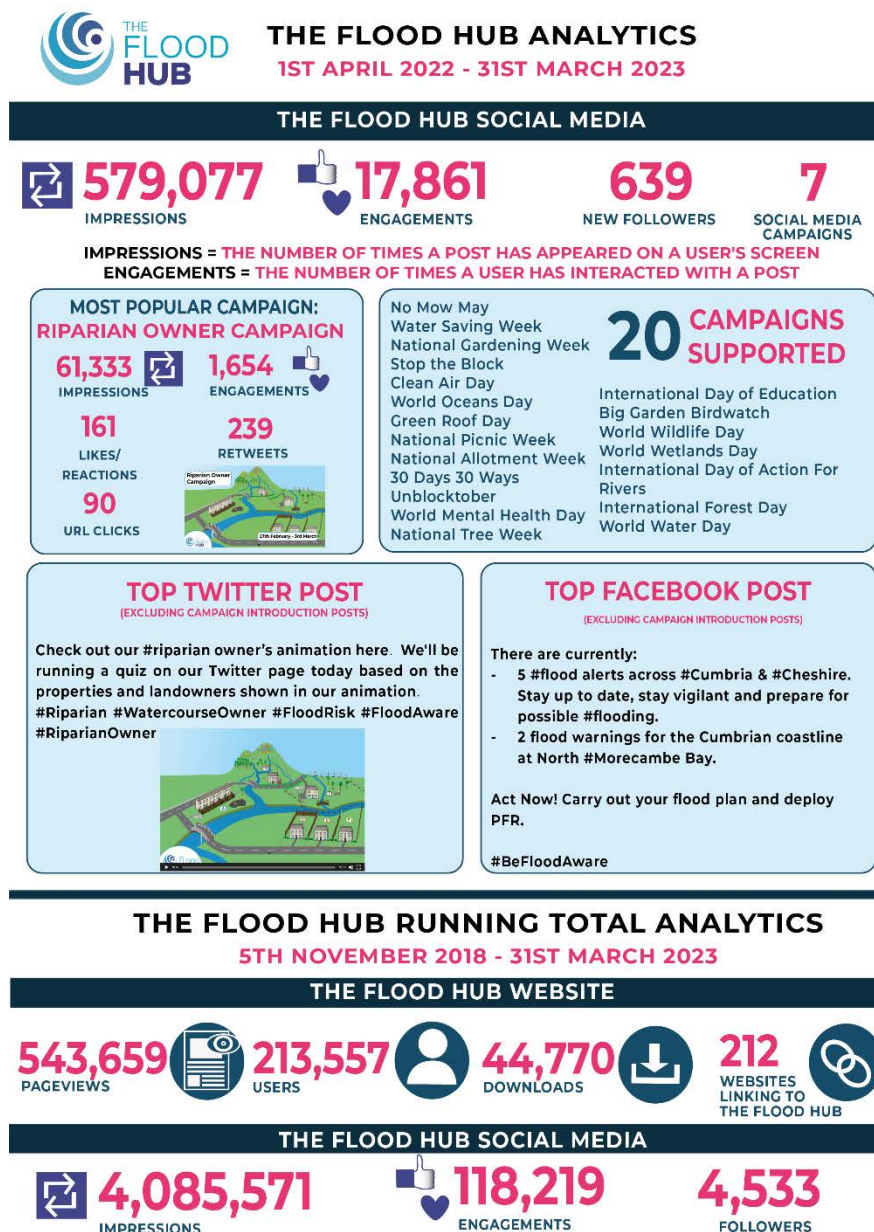
In December, we launched our ‘Planning, Flood Risk and Development’ survey, which we developed in partnership with Lancashire County Council. It ran for 2 months and the purpose of this survey was to gauge awareness and understanding from the public regarding planning, flood risk and development. We had 112 responses to the survey and the information that we have gathered will be used to help create new and informative content for The Flood Hub, as well as a future campaign that will be run to raise awareness and increase understanding of this topic. In summary, we found that quite a high number of respondees thought they had a good understanding of the topic but very few answered many of the

questions correctly (on average 30% answered correctly), therefore there is quite a lot of work on this required for 2023/24.

Social Media and Campaigns

Since 2019, The Flood Hub have produced flood facts and these are shared on social media on a Friday with the hashtag #Flood Fact Friday (#FloodFactFriday). Over time, several other organisations have joined in with flood facts on a Friday and use the same hashtag. These organisation include Watertight and the National Flood Forum. This is one example of proactive social media to increased knowledge and understanding of flood risk and resilience. During periods of heavy rainfall, social media is utilised to encourage preparedness. Full social media analytics can be seen in *Figure 5*.

Figure 5 – The Flood Hub Social Media Analytics

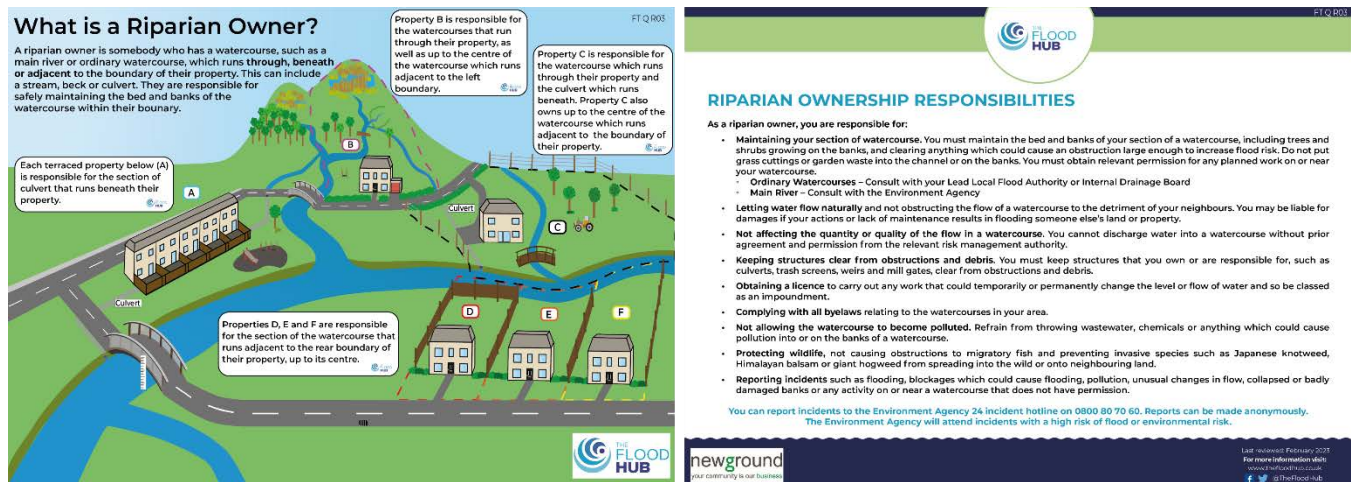


The Flood Hub have developed and hosted 7 campaigns on social media in the last year. *Figure 6* shows the different types of campaigns and the analytics for them. The most popular was the ‘Riparian Owner’ campaign. This was a new campaign for The Flood Hub and was developed as a direct result of engagement with communities who struggled to understand the topic. For the campaign, we developed a new animation, flow chart and resources like the ‘What is a Riparian Owner?’ and ‘Riparian Ownership Responsibilities’ (*Figure 7*). These can be found in the ‘Landowner’ and ‘Knowledge Hub’ areas of the website. The resources are also printed and have been distributed at events that Newground have supported.

Figure 6 – The Flood Hub campaigns and analytics



Figure 7 – Riparian owners resources



Project Theme: Flood Resilience Engagement - Supporting communities and individuals

Throughout the last year, The Flood Hub has received a total of 129 direct enquiries into the website, the majority being from the North-West, but with a few from other regions. There has been a good spread in the nature of the enquiries, including residents requiring help and advice in respect of flood risk issues, further support and information requests around PFR, flood scheme enquiries, individuals buying property with flood risk enquiries and enquiries from professionals, such as architects, who are in the process of submitting planning applications.

The Newground Flood Team have undertaken several partnership meetings with Lead Local Flood Authorities (LLFA)s and stakeholders around engagement and event support with The Flood Hub display stands and resources.

Some recent work in January and February saw the team provide support to Cheshire West & Chester Council with the delivery of a presentation on Property Flood Resilience (PFR) to residents in the Acton Bridge and Weaverham areas. In addition to the delivery, there was a further presentation to elected members on how The Flood Hub supports communities at flood risk, the team also supported the Northwich Multi Agency Drop-in Event, leading to further discussions around Cheshire wide promotion of The Flood Hub and flood resilient practice.

Also in February, the team supported with two resident drop-in sessions hosted by St Helens Council, with further follow-up support during a feedback session for elected members in March. Furthermore, the Newground Flood Team has supported Cumbria County Council with advice and guidance on PFR, Blackpool Borough Council with a community flood resilience drop-in session and the Environment Agency with the planning and delivery of the Community Engagement and Flood Resilience Workshop Event in March. The team has also supported partners in Cumbria with the Grasmere Community Engagement Drop-In Event and is supporting Cockermouth Emergency Response Group with a community engagement event format focusing on PFR and flood resilience and this is planned for May '23. *Figure 8* shows the display stand for The Flood Hub at a community event.

Figure 8 - The Flood Hub display stand



A summary of engagement support for the last year can be seen in Figure 9.

Figure 9 – Summary of Direct Engagement.

