

# NORTH WEST REGIONAL FLOOD AND COASTAL COMMITTEE

FRIDAY 20 OCTOBER 2023, 10:00AM

LOCATION: MERCURE NORTON GRANGE HOTEL, ROCHDALE

## AGENDA

<u>Time</u>	<u>Agenda Number</u>	<u>Item</u>	
10:00	1.	<b>Welcome</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Welcome, Chairman's Introduction, and Apologies for Absence</li></ul>	<b>For information</b>
10:05	2.	<b>Minutes of RFCC meeting 21 July 2023 and matters arising (Paper)</b> To approve the minutes of the last RFCC meeting and to receive an update on any actions and matters arising	<b>For approval</b>
10:10	3.	<b>Recent flooding incidents (Paper)</b> To share reports on, and to discuss, flood incidents across the North West in the last quarter	<b>For information</b>
10:25	4.	<b>Report from the RFCC Finance &amp; Business Assurance Sub Group (Papers)</b> To include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>2023/24 Programme Update</li><li>Indicative allocation and Local Choices for 2024/25</li><li>Local Levy Programme and Strategy Refresh</li><li>Business Plan update</li></ul> <i>Introduced by Neville Elstone, Chair of the RFCC Finance &amp; Business Assurance Sub-Group, and supported by Ben Robinson, EA Area FCRM Programming Manager</i>	<b>For decision</b>
10:55	5.	<b>Biodiversity Net Gain – Implementation update</b> To receive a further update on the BNG requirement coming in November 2023 and to understand what it means for flood risk schemes and Local Planning Authorities <i>Presented by Philip Carter (EA) and Dermot Smith (EA)</i>	<b>For information</b>
11:15	6.	<b>Local Levy for 2024/25 (Paper)</b> To discuss and agree the Local Levy to be raised in 2024/25	<b>For decision</b>
11:35 – 11:40		<b>BREAK</b>	

<u>Time</u>	<u>Agenda Number</u>	<u>Item</u>	
11:40	7.	<b>Surface Water Management</b> To receive an update on recent developments on surface water management, in anticipation of the expected Schedule 3 consultation <i>Presented by Laura Bigley (Lancashire County Council), Paul Shaffer (CIWEM) and Johnny Phillips (United Utilities)</i>	<b>For information and discussion</b>
12:10	8.	<b>Greater Manchester Integrated Water Management Plan – Approach and Learning (RFCC Business Plan Action ID9)</b> To receive a briefing on the approach being taken in GM to manage water in an integrated way, the learning already emerging and how this will be captured and shared. <i>Presented by David Hodcroft (GMCA), Dee Grahamslaw (United Utilities) and Helen Telfer (Environment Agency)</i>	<b>For information and discussion</b>
12:35	9.	<b>Flood Poverty – Project Findings and Recommendations (RFCC Business Plan Action ID8)</b> To receive a briefing on the summary findings from this RFCC-funded project, the recommendations to translate this into new approaches and shared learning. <i>Presented by Fran Comyn (Rochdale Council), Paul Cobbing (independent consultant) and Dr Paul O’Hare (Manchester Metropolitan University)</i>	<b>For information and discussion</b>
13:10	10.	<b>Any Other Business</b>	
13:15		<b>CLOSE / LUNCH</b>	

### **INFORMATION PAPERS**

Info item A	Update from the North West and North Wales Coastal Group	NW RFCC specific
Info item B	North West Flood Risk Data	NW RFCC specific
Info item C	Quarterly Update from United Utilities	NW RFCC specific
Info item D	Proposed RFCC meeting dates for 2024	NW RFCC specific
Info item E	Rochdale and Littleborough Flood Risk Management Scheme	NW RFCC specific
Info item F	National FCRM Update Paper	National EA

### **Future RFCC meetings**

19 January 2024 (Virtual meeting)

### **Future RFCC Finance & Business Assurance Sub Group meetings**

5 January 2024 (Virtual meeting)

### **AFTERNOON SITE VISIT**

Rochdale town centre – 15-20 minutes drive from meeting venue – car sharing to be co-ordinated.

We will meet at 2.15pm outside Rochdale Leisure Centre car park (near to the entrance sign at roadside). There is parking at the leisure centre but take care not to park in the contract/season ticket area. Alternative parking is available at Aldi supermarket nearby for 90 minutes which will be long enough.

The site visit will be a general walk and talk about the Resilient Roch project (part of the national Flood and Coastal Resilience Innovation Programme) and an opportunity to see some of the proposals, sites, and property types the project will be working on. It will also cover central area flooding and flood poverty issues. It will also include reference to the EA’s Roch FCRM scheme and interactions between the three projects.

The visit is expected to last around 45 minutes to return to cars for 3pm or soon after.

# **North West Regional Flood and Coastal Committee**

## **Minutes of the meeting held on Friday, 21 July 2023**

### **Present**

Adrian Lythgo (Chairman)  
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 Karen Shore (Cheshire Mid Mersey Strategic Flood Risk Partnership)  
Councillor Giles Archibald (Cumbria Partnership)  
Councillor Philip Cusack (Greater Manchester Partnership)  
Councillor Tony Brennan (Merseyside Partnership)  
Chris Findley (EA Appointed Member – Development and Sustainable Investment)  
David Shaw (EA Appointed Member – Planning and Design)  
Carolyn Otley (EA Appointed Member – Working with Communities)  
Suzana Ilic (EA Appointed Member – Coastal)  
Carl Green, Chair of the North Wales and North West Coastal Group  
Paul Barnes, RFCC member  
Anthony Morley, Merseyside Strategic Flood Risk Partnership  
Mike Clough, United Utilities (UU)

### **Environment Agency Officers Present**

Nick Pearson, Area Flood Risk Manager (GMMC)  
Mary-Rose Muncaster, Area FCRM Operations Manager (GMMC)  
Pete Miles, EA Area Flood Risk Manager  
Sally Whiting, Senior FCRM Adviser (GMMC)  
Adam Walsh, FCRM Programming Manager (C&L)  
Jennifer Bridgeland, EA Senior Advisor  
Ian Counce, EA  
Crystal Orton, RFCC Project Manager  
Alex Brownhill, RFCC Secretariat Officer (GMMC)

### **Observers:**

Andrew Harrison, Cumbria Strategic Flood Risk Partnership  
Nick Rae, Westmorland and Furness Council  
Marcus Leigh, Lancashire County Council  
Clare Nolan-Barnes, Lancashire Strategic Flood Risk Partnership  
Lorah Cheyne, Lancashire Strategic Flood Risk Partnership  
David Boyer, Cheshire Mid Mersey Strategic Flood Risk Partnership  
Katie Eckford, Shoreline Management Plan Co-ordinator / Coastal Group Secretariat  
Sarah Wardle, Merseyside Strategic Flood Risk Partnership  
Anthony Swarbrick, EA  
Stuart Mault, EA  
Mia Mullender, EA  
Kerry Harmer, EA  
Fran Clarkson, EA  
Gary Hilton, EA  
Sarah Fontana, Senior LA Capital Projects Adviser (GMMC)

## **24 (01) Welcome, Chairman's Introduction & Apologies for Absence**

Adrian Lythgo opened the meeting, thanked Members for joining and welcomed the new members of the committee following the local elections.

Adrian briefly referred to apologies received from Ian Crewe and Carol Holt from the Environment Agency, Councillor Richard Silvester, Councillor Ian Moncur, Councillor Elizabeth Grey, Councillor Daniel Barrington, Councillor Laura Crane, Neville Elstone, David Harpley, Stewart Davies and Perry Hobbs.

Adrian welcomed: Mary-Rose Muncaster, EA Operations Manager, who is formally representing Ian Crewe for the meeting; Anthony Morley from Knowsley representing the Merseyside Partnership; Andrew Eden from the Environment Agency who will be remotely presenting the Resilience and Adaption item; Mike Clough from United Utilities who will be presenting the DWMP item; Crystal Orton, the new RFCC Project Manager working on the Paving over Front Gardens Project; Ian Counce from the Environment Agency presenting on the Preston Scheme; and Alex Brownhill, the Secretariat for today's meeting.

Adrian asked for agreement for the meeting to be recorded for minute taking purposes. There were no objections.

Adrian highlighted his quarterly Chair's update circulated on 27 June 2023, some items of which will be covered in the agenda. Adrian referred to the information papers circulated: the Coastal update; United Utilities' quarterly update which includes different catchment updates; and the Building Community Resilience ambition report; and the interim guidance note on Biodiversity Net Gain for capital projects.

Councillor Giles Archibald raised a question on whether all the documents mentioned are stored in one place. Sally Whiting responded that on the Flood Hub website we currently provide the minutes, the slide packs and full meeting packs and this is an open public website. We are in the process of creating an RFCC Sharepoint site for the core membership and this will be available in the coming months.

No Declarations of Interest have been received.

## **24 (02) Minutes of the RFCC Meeting held on 21 April 2023 and actions and matters arising**

Adrian Lythgo reported on a couple of inaccuracies in the draft minutes raised by Carolyn Otley relating to community group work in Cumbria and scheme Local Levy allocations. These will be amended. The minutes were proposed by Councillor Tony Brennan and seconded by Councillor Suzana Ilic.

There was one matter arising around provision of interim guidance on Biodiversity Net Gain which has been circulated and completes an action from the last meeting.

## 24 (03) Flood Incidents Update

Adrian Lythgo highlighted that it is one of the core roles of the RFCC to understand flood risk across the North West and we partly do this by reference to formal Section 19 flood reports and also by intelligence from each of the sub-regional partnerships on occurrences of flooding locally.

Adrian asked the sub-regional partnerships to summarise any flood impacts experienced in the last 3 months.

For **Lancashire**, Councillor Jane Hugo advised that there had been no incidents in Blackpool. In Blackburn with Darwen, on 19 June there was widespread flooding across the borough. There had been no thunderstorm warning prior to the event. 71 properties were flooded, 30 internally and another 41 externally. On highways, 67 locations flooded mainly caused by the drainage network reaching full capacity resulting in surcharge of sewers and the highways drainage network. There were two road closures. On 25 June similar events occurred - less intense but still significant.

Lancashire County Council (LCC) reported, on 11 June, 95 confirmed properties flooded of which 37 were internal, including eight commercial premises, and 50 externally flooded. Some of the properties flooded are managed by social housing landlords and some have incurred extensive and expensive damage. Some have been flooded on two or more occasions previously and the affected residents are very distressed. LCC knows of a further 88 properties notified as flooded where the impact is currently unclear. They have recently contacted 700 addresses to invite responses from any affected. All the roads flooded cleared naturally overnight on 12 June. Highways officers continue to work to investigate whether this has affected highways drainage. No major defects had been identified by 20 June. LCC were notified by Network Rail of one incident of the rail service being impacted by the flooding caused by an obstruction in a watercourse which was cleared. United Utilities (UU) reported that their monitors did not show any storm surges in their sewers meaning that the rainfall did not enter the sewers as quickly as it fell onto the ground. On 12 June, other Lancashire impacts included internal flooding of a commercial premises in Chorley, internal flooding to a home in Clitheroe (not repeat locations), and two homes with external floodings in Leyland and Warton nr Carnforth, both known to be repeat flooding locations.

On behalf of the **Greater Manchester** Strategic Partnership, Councillor Tricia Ayrton reported that on 12 June in Higher Folds, Wigan, 13 properties internally flooded due to surface water and sewer flooding and a known issue with a UU outfall. A Section 19 investigation will be undertaken. At Astley, Wigan, on 12 June, one property confirmed flooded internally, due to surface water and sewer flooding. UU are to carry out investigatory works. A total of 167 reports of flooding, many of which cover multiple properties as yet unconfirmed – 27 with internal flooding. At Radcliffe in Bury on 18 June, there were three confirmed internal properties flooded, one suspected internal flooded and five unconfirmed flat cellar floodings, all from surface water flooding. In Altrincham, Trafford, one residential and six non-residential properties flooded from sewer/surface water drains. There was also some flooding to garages in Bowden from the surcharged highway network. Having viewed the rainfall radar at various sites in the borough, the

rainfall was in excess of the drainage network capacity by as much as 42.95 mm falling in 30 minutes. The Committee was asked to note that these numbers may change and may not all be surface water flooding. Investigations are still being undertaken and information from residents and businesses are being collated. In Urmston, Trafford, ten residential properties flooded from sewer/surface water/private drains. In terms of infrastructure impacts, there is a possible structural issue with Longford Brook culvert at Woodhouse Primary School in Urmston. The Council is going to undertake a survey and inform the Environment Agency. In terms of environmental impacts, there was a lot of foul sewage flooding at various properties and businesses throughout the borough.

On behalf of the **Merseyside** Strategic Flood Risk Partnership, Anthony Morley advised that two large flood events had been experienced during this quarter, on 11 May and 12 June, both affecting Liverpool. These were short but high intensity events with associated internal flooding in basements and garages at three dwellings and highway flooding. A Section 19 investigation will now be undertaken.

Adrian gave the update for **Cheshire Mid Mersey** as Cllr Karen Shore had been delayed and would arrive later in the meeting. There was internal flooding to four properties in Wheelock and Wistaston (near Crewe) and external flooding to a property in Macclesfield with surcharge from drainage systems in Elworth and Castle Green.

For **Cumbria** there were no properties flooded despite bad weather and significant rainfall.

Adrian remarked that all of the flooding reported had been from surface water flooding caused by intense rainfall and run off, and sewer discharge. Increasingly this is the pattern with inundations leading to flooding anywhere, making it harder to predict and plan for. This demonstrates the impact of climate change.

Members were thanked for their contributions and there were no further comments.

## **23 (04) Resilience and Adaption**

Adrian Lythgo gave a brief introduction about the presentation to be given by Andrew Eden of the Environment Agency who joined the meeting remotely to talk about the work on resilience and adaptation being co-ordinated by the Environment Agency at the national level. Adrian highlighting the important focus on adaptation in the national FCERM Strategy adopted by parliament.

Andrew presented a talk on Adaption Pathways and was keen to get a better understanding of the need in our area.

Andrew Eden provided an overview of what is adaptation, adaptation pathways – what they are and why should we care, the adaptation pathways programme, the four adaptation pathway pilots, and planned improvements. Key messages included:

- Adaptation is the process of adjusting to current or expected effects of climate change.
- The National Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management (FCERM) Strategy

provides a clear vision for a national resilience to flooding and coastal erosion today, tomorrow and to the year 2100.

- Climate change is inherently uncertain and there is a need to be flexible.
- The current approach tackles current and future risk, is precautionary, economically inefficient, and inflexible with limited capacity to adapt. An adaptive approach manages uncertainty, is agile to climate impacts making effective investment at the right time.
- The FCERM Strategy has adaptation to climate change as its basis – we are moving to a more adaptive model.
- Detail: the approach allows for better decision-making under uncertainty – more scenarios.
- Long term, cost effectiveness: adaptive approaches can help us make more effective, less costly, investment decisions, by avoiding too little/too much investment at the wrong time.
- External: more partners are pursuing adaptive approaches and climate risk assessment (Local Authorities, Water and Sewerage Companies, businesses).
- New Tools and guidance - Adaptation pathways programme and process, and system enhancements. Collaboration and sharing across FCERM Directorate and Operational teams.
- We will drive innovation. We are investing £200 million to test and develop new ways to create a nation resilient to flooding and coastal change.
- £150m Flood & Coastal Resilience Innovation Programme – 25 local authorities delivering resilience actions.
- £36m Coastal Transition Accelerator Programme.
- £8m Adaptation Pathways Programme (2021-2027) – four EA teams developing adaptation pathway plans with local partners. Investment strategies for managing flooding and coastal risk in a changing climate to 2100 and beyond.
- Programme communication - links to these are:  
[Adaptation Pathways – Welcome to the Knowledge Hub \(sharepoint.com\)](#)  
[Flood and Coastal Resilience Fund/Engage Environment Agency \(engagementhq.com\)](#)
- Thames Estuary 2100 – launched 2012. Monitors sea level rise, 300 km of river bank, fixed assets, defence raising, barriers and storage.
- Humber Strategy 2100+ - Understanding tidal flood risk now and in the future. Agreeing a range of strategic approaches, Implementation.
- South Yorkshire & West Yorkshire – South Yorkshire using adaptive pathways to determine optimum timing and type of investment. West Yorkshire are using adaptive pathways to reduce flood risk to Garforth.
- River Severn Partnership – Largest river with 600,000 people living along the length of the river. Dovetails with Severn Valley Water Management Scheme.
- Snapshot of highlights and learning – Adaptive Pathways Benefits Toolkit, Adaptive economic analysis, Collaborative decision making tools (Humber, Yorks); Using AP to align flood and coastal investment with other partners; Costed and optimized investment strategies and/or plans informing future capital programme pipeline.
- Opportunities for mainstreaming: (Under EA control) FCERM Strategies guidance, living draft of Adaptation Pathways Guidance, AP EngagementHQ site, Research and alternative methods to ‘value’ adaptation; (In EA influence) shaping of future Strategic Flood Risk Planning replacement, defining role of EA in place-shaping and local strategic plans; (outside of EA influence) Timing of future Strategic Flood Risk planning replacement.

Adrian Lythgo invited comments and questions, for Andrew Eden to respond to together. Suzana Ilic asked about triggers, the setting of triggers and approaches, and what adaptation pathways means for the risk authorities and their resources?

Cllr Giles Archibald commented on the speed of the ice melt of the polar icecaps, and the rising sea levels, and asked how much do we tell our residents about these dangers, as people are still building in areas less than 10ft above sea level and buying properties that could be washed away with rising levels?

Chris Findley asked about the uncertainty around modelling, and how that affects long term planning/investment. When do you invest in an enhanced Thames barrier?

On triggers, Andrew Eden commented that we have to monitor what has changed. There are a range of 10 indicators of change within the Thames Estuary and a 10 year major review recently completed has shown climate change is worse than thought. We now have to bring forward decisions on plans for the Thames barrier and are ensuring the right governance is in place.

On how much we tell residents, it is about openness generally, and openness with the data, mindful of the risk. We may need to increase restrictions on development in potential flooding areas.

The Thames Barrier underlines the importance of the adaptation pathway approach. We must keep investment decisions under constant review.

Adrian thanked Andrew for his presentation and Members for their contributions.

## **24 (05) Report from the RFCC Finance & Business Assurance Sub Group**

Adrian Lythgo reminded Members that the papers and draft minutes of the Sub Group meeting were in the papers distributed.

Adam Walsh presented the North West investment programme update.

Reporting on outcomes from the 2023-24 programme, Members heard the North West target is forecasting (at mid-May) to better protect 4,839 properties from flooding, against our unofficial target of 3,598. The actual to date so far is 38.

Total capital funding available for the North West is £108.5 million. This includes £95 million of FCRM Grant-in-Aid (FCRMGiA), £8.15 Million of Local Levy, and £12.56 Million of Partnership Funding contributions. Forecasts at mid-May 2023 show the North West is expecting to draw down £112.495 Million this year. This is £3.953 million more than allocated but at this time of year we normally like to see an over programme in the region of £15-20 million. The over programme is about ensuring we spend the allocated funding. As of the end of May we have spent £8.5 million.



On the Local Levy, Adam advised the current allocation for 2023/24 is £9.557 million. This is up from the £7.55 million approved by the RFCC in January 2023 as it now includes the £1.56 million re-profiled from 2022/23 into this year and a Local Levy contribution of £1 million to the Penketh and Whittle scheme approved by the RFCC at its April 2023 meeting.

Adam presented the graphs illustrating the Local Levy income and expenditure scenario. Since the last meeting a review of the programme has identified some scheme allocations that can be re-profiled or released.

The RFCC has had a sizeable reserve of Local Levy funding for several years - £11.1 million at the start of this financial year. The size of the programme last year, this year and next year significantly exceeds the annual income meaning the amount of the reserve funding is expected to reduce rapidly - something that the RFCC were keen to see. Based on allocations, the reserve is expected to drop to just under £6 million this year to under £1 million at the end of 2024/25. Once the reserve is essentially drawn down, this will constrain the programme to the annual income raised, currently £4.4 million, with a minimum reserve of 5-10% of annual income (ie £220K - 441K) to meet the RFCC's Local Level Strategy commitment. As it currently stands, the indicative programme from 2025/26 is not affordable and requires review.

Sally Whiting gave a briefing on the Local Levy Strategy to familiarise the new members of the committee. The Local Levy Strategy was published in September 2020 and sets out key principles for how the committee will use the fund. Since 2020 we have had the National Flood Risk Strategy published, we have refreshed our own committee business plan in line with this Strategy. With the expected reducing Local Levy reserve as well, it is time to refresh the Local Levy Strategy. Sally reported that most of the principles still feel right. The Strategy will be re-circulated and we will be looking for comments and feedback in the coming months.

Adrian Lythgo added that there was a clear request from the Finance and Business Assurance Sub Group for engagement with councillors, specifically in this process.

Sally provided an overview update on the RFCC Business Plan Overview. We have now started implementing a reporting tool for monitoring progress and spend which needs more embedding and refinement but has provided outputs for the first time, so she is happy to receive feedback. There are 22 projects currently supported by the RFCC, though not all requiring Local Levy investment - sometimes the RFCC is playing a supporting or sponsoring role. Of the 22 projects, 14 are on schedule (green), six are behind schedule (amber) and two are not progressing (red).

With regards to the spend forecast, the committee approved just under £1.4 million investment in the business plan for this financial year. The current forecast is just under £1.3 million and an underspend of £115K. We are identifying the indicative need for the next two financial years which is in greater detail in the papers provided.

Sally went through three proposed changes to the RFCC Business Plan programme, providing brief details on each, along with the Finance and Business Assurance Sub Group's recommendations to approve these.

- The Sub Group approved within delegated powers from the RFCC, an increased Local Levy contribution for the 'Building Community Resilience' ambition, from £230 thousand per year to £249.55 thousand per year.
- The formal closedown of Action ID11 – 'Evidence gathering – Effectiveness of Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) advice on planning applications'. The RFCC approved this change.
- The inclusion of support for a Highways SuDS Design Guide requiring a Local Levy contribution of £20 thousand in 2023/24. The RFCC approved this change.

In relation to Local Levy contributions to capital schemes, Nick Pearson, EA Flood Risk Manager for Greater Manchester, gave a brief overview of the Sub Group's recommendation to reappropriate the Local Levy contribution for the Rochdale and Littleborough Flood Risk Scheme, to the Littleborough element only. Previously the committee had agreed to £5 million Local Levy contribution to a joint scheme for Rochdale and Littleborough. In order to allow continuation of the work now, the project review group are looking to approve a reappropriation of the £5 million to the Littleborough element of the scheme. This is the largest scheme in the GMMC area and will protect 1000 residential properties, 200 commercial properties and benefits of £500 million.

Adrian Lythgo asked if there were any further questions and ask if the Committee were happy to approve the reappropriation, reiterating that it is not an increase in Levy contribution.

Adam Walsh went on to brief on the EA Maintenance Programme for 2023/24. In terms of resource funding across the NW we currently have £21,604 million allocation which covers maintenance, staff costs and revenue projects. Both EA areas are currently forecasting an overspend on maintenance activities in the region of £100-300K. This will be formally reflected in the data in the coming weeks.

Some of the top risks affecting the North West programme are:

- Framework changes
- Resources
- Inflation
- Cost of materials
- Biodiversity Net Gain legislation
- Internal resource due to churn

Adrian added that there was a request from the Finance and Business Assurance Sub Group to collate a more formal update on resource pressures from both the EA and across the partnerships, which we have undertaken to do and will feed back to the Sub Group.

Adrian summarised the recommendations from the Sub Group, which were approved by the RFCC, as below.

**Resolved:**

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

- Noted the current/future position of the Local Levy Programme and latest spend forecast.
- Endorsed the ongoing refresh of the scheme-specific allocations in the future years of the Local Levy Programme.
- Supported the subsequent initiation of a refresh of the Local Level Strategy.
- Noted the Sub Group's approval of an increased Local Levy contribution for the 'Building Community Resilience' ambition, within delegated powers from the RFCC.
- Approved the formal closedown of action ID11 – Evidence gathering – Effectiveness of Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) advice on planning applications.
- Approved the inclusion of support for a Highways SuDS Design Guide requiring a Local Levy contribution of £20 thousand in 2023-24.
- Approved the reapportionment of Local Levy contribution to the Littleborough element of the Rochdale and Littleborough FRM Scheme.
- Noted the progress on delivering the 2023-24 capital and resource programme.
- Noted the risks to the North West Programme in 2023-24.

There were no further comments or questions.

## **23 (06) Strategic Flood Risk in the North West**

Adrian introduced the item as having two parts, the first led by Jennifer Bridgeland of the Environment Agency on the Flood Risk Management Plans (FRMPs). Jennifer is a Senior Flood Risk Adviser in Greater Manchester and part of the virtual Flood Risk Management Plan team for the NW.

Jen's presentation included these key messages:

- 1<sup>st</sup> cycle of FRMPs were completed 2021 - this is 2<sup>nd</sup> cycle of FRMPs (2021-2027).
- FRMP2's were published in December 2022 and are now available to view via [Flood risk management plans 2021 to 2027 – GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/flood-risk-management-plans-2021-to-2027)
- Workshops were held in Autumn 2022 and identified a list of theme and measure leads.
- Since April the FRMPs team have finalised a user-friendly delivery plan which will support delivery of FRMP measures and which is being rolled out to relevant staff.
- Process rolled out for reporting on FRMPs to River Basin District Theme and Measure Leads.
- Drop-in sessions hosted to provide tips and guidance.
- Data submitted to EA National team via [Flood Plan Explorer](#) (FPE) mapping tool.
- Liaison with RMAs on their relevant measures.
- Reporting overview: FRMP team are reporting on two types of measures: River Basin District (RBD) and Flood Risk Area (FRA).
- We are reporting on FRMPs for three River Basin Districts (North West, English Dee, and Solway Tweed).
- First reporting nationally on FRMP2 was end of April 2023 – FRA measures were not reporting on this occasion.
- National reporting will be biannual (April & October) and will be uploaded to Flood Plan Explorer (FPE) which is accessible to the public.
- Status of measures will be updated biannually by area FRMPs teams and LLFAs

(FRA measures)

- Initial reporting April 2023 – represents a benchmark at the start of the FRMP2 implementation. More measures have already started and in October 2023 we expect statistics to show many more will be ongoing.
- The 15 specific Flood Risk Area leads are at various stages of reviewing and implementing their FRAs. LLFAs will be granted access to FPE this summer and will be able to update the status of their measures. National will roll out recorded training events for LLFAs to help. LLFAs will be encouraged to update measure status in October so that the reporting is as up to date as possible. We have asked our FCRM colleagues for ideas on how we can support LLFAs after the national roll-out.
- At the June FRMP Board we updated the Chair on progress, agreed our updated Terms of Reference and structure, and discussed our risk register. The Board agreed to support the delivery plan roll-out, reporting structure and continuation of resource.
- Next steps – reiteration of training, virtual Theme and Measure Lead quarterly meetings, 6 monthly reporting to RFCC.
- Next national FRMP report - October 2023. Annual report to Defra - March 2024.

Adrian introduced the second part of the item on the Drainage and Wastewater Management Plan (DWMP) presented by Mike Clough, United Utilities Drainage and Wastewater Manager. Perry Hobbs was due to co-present the item but had to send his apologies.

Through his presentation, Mike Clough explained that the DWMP is a long-term strategic plan that sets out how United Utilities intends to maintain a robust and resilient drainage and wastewater system in the North West over the next 25 years and will be reviewed every 5 years. This iteration (Cycle 1) is non-statutory, the next iteration (Cycle 2) will become statutory under the Environment Act 2021. The DWMP framework will have four items set out by the regulators, improving long term planning approaches to address unprecedented future challenges. These will be in alignment with one another and provide consistency across the industry. They will also provide greater transparency and line of sight to customers and stakeholders, driving industry wide improvement.

Mike provided an overview of the DWMP development process which covered:

Understanding Risk:

- Strategic Context - Where do we want to be?
- Risk Based Catchment Screening - What is our current risk?
- Baseline Risk & Vulnerability Assessment - What is our future risk?
- Problem Characterisation - How difficult will it be to reduce the risk?

Developing the Plan:

- Options Development - How could we reduce risk?
- Programme Optimisation - What's the best way to reduce risk across the region?
- Plan Production - Final Plan published 30 May 2023

The key considerations of the DWMP are: Population growth, Climate change, Technological change, Cultural change, Commercial change, Legislative change, Regulator expectations, and Customer expectations.

The planning objectives are to: provide excellent wastewater services, reducing their impact on the environment; protect, restore and improve the natural environment of the NW through their actions; and sustainably reduce the risk of sewer flooding in the NW.

The final DWMP adaptive planning estimate is £21.8 billion (2025-2050), broken down as:

- £16.5 bn storm overflows
- £3.9 bn wastewater treatment
- £1.4 bn optimized plan

Adrian invited questions for Jen or Mike on their presentations.

Cllr Giles Archibald raised the question that United Utilities had been asked for data on flooding events that have caused pollution at Windermere. Data was not available, and asked for this to be looked into.

Cllr Giles Archibald then went on to ask about how the Shoreline Management Plans align and integrate with the Flood Risk Management Plans? Jen answered to say that one of the themes in the FRMPs are the coastal measures and they have worked in conjunction with the Coastal Group who maintain the Shoreline Management Plans (SMPs). Carl Green added that they are refreshing the SMPs and reviewing all the climate change scenarios. The SMP is a policy for the management of the coastline for the next 100 years and is a long-term plan. However it is a non-statutory plan, unlike the FRMP which is a statutory plan.

Cllr Stephen Clarke raise a query to United Utilities about the issue with storm outlets on the Flyde coast. The Fleetwood outfall is currently not working and the beaches can't be used due to pollution being caused. The whole of the Fylde coast has been polluted and the storm outlets are putting sewage into the sea. Mike Clough said the issue had been due a burst outfall pipe from an untreated effluent works which took the sewage out to sea. He believed that the beaches were now open again after significant emergency works. It was caused by a mechanical failure in the system rather than a design fault with very serious consequences.

Paul Barnes expressed that he is alarmed that the Drainage and Wastewater Management Plans have been positively accepted by Ofwat and don't take into account the vast majority of customers approach to what has happened with their environment. It has been raised that rainwater is not being able to access the sewage system. Rainwater should not be going into the sewage system; it is the neglect of Ofwat and EA for not holding the water companies to account for years. He stated that we pay for rainwater to go down the drain to be treated and it's on the watch of Ofwat and the EA and not the entire blame of United Utilities. Adrian added that the regulatory position is both complex and part of the solution going forward.

Cllr Susana Ilic commented on what has come out from the FRMP and the Delivery plans about collaboration and co-ordination of the two plans. Jennifer Bridgeland replied that the FRMPs were written in collaboration with risk management authorities and United Utilities.

There were joint workshops, the plans were written together and sent out for consultation to all risk management authorities and signed off. There is also collaboration within the Delivery Plans process, where Jennifer, Mike Clough and Pete Miles (lead EA Area Flood Risk Manager) sit on strategic and tactical liaison groups between the EA and UU and where delivery of these measures are jointly discussed.

Adrian added that as a Committee we have a responsibility to look at all the different plans and try to make sense of them, focussing on flood risk and where we should be putting our money, and at a North West level, look at the processes and make sure they are aligned.

Carolyn Otley raised a query about the Ambleside FRA within the Delivery Plan. Jennifer replied to say that she would need to speak to Cumbria and Lancs colleagues and follow up on this.

## **24 (07) Presentation on the Preston Flood Risk Management Scheme**

Adrian Lythgo introduced Ian Counce, EA FCRM Adviser, providing the presentation on the Preston Flood Risk Management Scheme which would be informative for Members including those who are unable to attend the walk around the scheme after the meeting.

Ian Counce explained that he has been covering the scheme for the last few months. The EA looked at starting to build the scheme back in 2010 at Broadgate and Riverside and the scheme was then expanded. Key messages included:

- Scheme planned to cover 5 areas with estimated £54.7m budget (funding gap of £10-15m to finish the scheme).
- Area 1: Broadgate and Riverside, Area 2 Lower Penwortham, Area 3 Frenchwood and Fishwick Bottoms, Area 3 & 4 Walton-le-Dale, Area 5 Higher Walton.
- New defences will reduce the flood risk for c.5000 homes and businesses.
- The scheme will have pre-cast walls appropriate for the existing buildings and landscapes, glass panels to maintain views, raised embankments, including use of Redi-rock; and will include four flood gates.
- Some of the social and community benefits include: inclusive design with opportunities for the public to access open green spaces; 0.35 ha wetland habitat at Ribble Sidings; three new community sports pitches at Archbishop Temple High School; enhancements to Broadgate Gardens with fruit trees, ornamental shrubs, amenity grassland, seating area and riverside viewing platform; and improved entrance to Avenham and Miller Parks.
- Scheme construction and sustainability – scheme target 75% (“excellent”) against overall EA sustainability target of 60% (“very good”). To date Areas 1 & 2 have achieved 78% for the design stage assessment.
- Sustainability example: Root wads – sustainable method to reuse trees, trunks and root plates driven into the bank to enhance habitat niches/refuges for fish.
- Key Facts summary: 5 km of defenses will be constructed, c16k trees to be planted, 120+ people working on the scheme, c25 educational sessions to be delivered in local schools.

Adrian Lythgo thanked Ian for his presentation and said he would be happy to take any questions during lunch. Adrian informed the Committee that had seen the scheme early in its development.

## **23 (08) Any Other Business**

This agenda item was provided as part of Any Other Business but for timely management of the meeting agenda, was brought forward to earlier in the agenda.

Crystal Orton introduced herself and explained that she is the new Project Manager recruited to help deliver the RFCC's Business Plan, specifically working on the Paving over Front Gardens project.

For today's meeting, Crystal presented some slides to summarise the key messages from Day 3 of the Flood and Coast Conference in June which focussed on SuDS.

Key messages included:

- Defra will carry out a regulatory impact assessment on the implementation of Schedule 3 later this year and consult on this.
- Implementation of Schedule 3 will remove the automatic right to connect to a public sewer.
- Schedule 3 will not include retrofit of SuDS.
- Building control legislation is out of date and will need to be updated.
- Greater focus on retrofitting SuDS in urban environments to improve 'liveability' and climate resilience.
- Greater focus on rainwater harvesting.
- A need to see SuDS as living systems that need to be connected and not cut off by developments and create wildlife corridors so biodiversity can thrive.
- There needs to be less artificial lighting near SuDS schemes, as they disrupt breeding and feeding patterns in wildlife.
- SuDS need to provide access to surface water for wildlife to prevent dehydration.
- We need to start SuDS implementation now and show brave leadership, small scale retrofit projects need to be captured and shared across all risk management authorities and added into mapping and modelling.
- Development of travel plans will create more 'spongification' of town and cities.
- Focus on water quantity, amenity and biodiversity.
- Highlight on groundwater flooding as this is the least monitored, least forecast, least funded and largely silent risk. A lot of the maps are outdated and poor quality. We need more organisation cross-collaboration.

There is a recently released report from Wales on their experience of Schedule 3 there which was implemented in 2019.

Other SuDS projects were referenced during the session as shown in the slides. The full slide pack was distributed to everybody in the pack.

Adrian Lythgo thanked Crystal for her contribution and for doing her presentation earlier than planned. Adrian advised that the RFCC expected to have a substantive session on Schedule 3 at the next meeting in October. As relevant RFCC Sponsors, Adrian invited Members David Shaw or Chris Findley to add any remarks. David Shaw highlighted a lack of joined-up thinking from government specifically referencing how Biodiversity Net Gain

fits with SuDS. Chris Findley added that the introduction of these changes is going to be a complex issue for planning authorities.

Cllr Clarke raised a question around the Schedule 3 right to connect and what the future management is going to be and who will be responsible for SuDS maintenance? Adrian replied that in the North West, United Utilities will take them on if SuDS are designed to their standards. What it looks like after full implementation of Schedule 3 we will have to see and return to. Paul Barnes commented that retrofitting of SuDS needs to take a priority over fitting of SuDS to new developments and that cost needs to be passed to the planners of developments. Cllr Archibald queried the 25% of ground water overflow, asked if this is a national figure, and if there is a number for this area? Crystal replied to say that she would double check the figures as she believed the data was based on the south, but she would come back with an answer.

As a further point of AOB, Adrian Lythgo advised of an opportunity being created for female Members, as following some recent changes in RFCC Chairs, all the 13 sitting Chairs are male. As a group Chairs understand the need for diversity, and would welcome female RFCC members to join the RFCC Chairs for the next four meetings until recruitment can make permanent appointments. Adrian asked any interested female Members to speak to him for more information.

The next RFCC meeting will be held on 20 October and will be a face-to-face meeting. The following two meetings will be virtual meetings.

Adrian thanked Members for attending and closed the meeting.



**North West RFCC  
Quarterly Flood Incident Report  
July – September 2023**

This report is a compilation of the flood incidents reported by the five sub-regional partnerships for the period July – Sept 2023.

**Cumbria Partnership**

There were no flood incidents reported in the Cumberland Council area.

In Westmorland and Furness, there have been 6 flood events impacting 15 communities between 9 July 2023 and 20 September 2023. This has resulted in internal flooding to 31 residential properties and 9 non-residential properties, and external flooding to 9 residential properties and 2 non-residential properties.

Issues with drainage systems have been cited as the main source of flooding except for the flood event on 20 September 2023 where Brampton Grange and Rosgill communities were impacted by fluvial flooding.

Flood impact to infrastructure is limited to minor issues with highways and there are no known or suspected environmental impacts. There were no significant impacts on the environment.

<b>Community impacted</b>	<b>No of residential properties (Internal/ External)</b>	<b>No of non-residential properties (Internal/ External)</b>	<b>Main source of flooding</b>
09/07/2023			
Penrith	1 internal	1 internal	Issues with drainage and surface water unable to drain away
14/07/2023			
Ulverston	1 internal		Issues with drainage systems
12/08/2023			
Augill	1 internal		Surface water runoff from highway and fells
14/08/2023			
Kirkby Stephen	1 internal	4 internal	Issues with drainage / sewer systems
10/09/2023			
Appleby	2 internal 1 external	1 internal	Combination of ordinary watercourse, drainage issues
Barrow	1 internal		Issue with drainage systems
Bolton	2 internal	1 external	Issue with drainage system
Calthwaite	1 external		Issues with land drainage
Croglin	1 unknown		Unknown in this event but surface water previously
Kirkby Stephen	2 internal 1 external		Issues with drainage systems
Newbiggin, Temple Sowerby		1 internal 1 external	Unknown

Penrith	2 internal 2 external		Issues with drainage / sewer systems
Ulverston	12 Internal 4 external	2 internal	Issues with drainage / sewer systems
20/09/2023			
Bampton Grange	5 internal		Main river flooding
Rosgill	1 internal		Main river flooding
<b>TOTAL</b>	31 internal 10 external 1 unknown	9 internal 2 external	

### Lancashire Partnership

Community impacted	No. of residential properties (Internal/External)	No of non-residential properties (Internal/External)	Main source of flooding
Blackburn with Darwen (19 <sup>th</sup> June)	30 Internal and 41 External		Heavy downpour of rain in a short timeframe. The drainage network reached full capacity resulting in surcharge of sewers and highway drainage network.
Blackburn with Darwen (25 <sup>th</sup> June)			
Preston City Council	Internal flooding to properties in the vicinity of Catforth Road. Flooding to highway at Lytham Rd/ Seymour Road and Black Bull Lane/ Queen's Drive. Circa 10 – but this hasn't been confirmed.		Highway
Wyre Council	6 properties confirmed but believe there to be more. (September report)		Mainly highway flooding but reports of internal flooding (residential).  The pumps were operated in Preesall and Churchtown following the

			pumping plans following the heavy rainfall – great feedback from residents as it helped prevent flooding.
Fylde Council (Lancashire County Council Update)	12 June - affecting the Fylde area (118 confirmed flooding properties – 57 internally flooded to residential properties and 8 internally to business / commercial properties). 23 July affecting the Central / South Lancashire area (55 confirmed flooding properties - 9 internal flooding to homes, 4 internally flooded commercial/ business premises, plus countless highway flooding including cars stranded/ occupants rescued.		Highway

### Merseyside Partnership

**Sefton** have experienced multiple flood events occurred in July and August due to heavy rain. The criteria for a section 19 report has not been met on this occasion and Sefton have had initial discussions with other RMAs to establish what further investigations are needed.

**Wirral** has experienced a flood event in August which occurred due to heavy rain. Wirral are currently assessing if the criteria for a section 19 report has been met. Eastham and Bromborough areas were particularly impacted. Wirral are in discussions with UU and the Highways Authority to establish what further investigations are needed.

**Knowsley** experienced the vast majority of its flooding on the highway (both Key Route Network and non-KRN) and this was as a result of sheer volume of water. A few systems were jetted/cleaned but the majority of flooding cleared itself.

**Liverpool** had widespread flooding in different parts of the city in July and August and there are now five Section 19 investigations being undertaken.

### Greater Manchester

No incidents reported.

## Cheshire Mid Mersey

Cheshire West and Chester Council area saw flooding occurring on the 26<sup>th</sup>/27<sup>th</sup> August 2023.

<b>Community impacted</b>	<b>No of residential properties (Internal/External)</b>	<b>No of non-residential properties (Internal/External)</b>	<b>Main source of flooding</b>
Great Sutton/Ellesmere Port	5 properties		Main river

Internal flooding occurred to 5 properties on Kendal Drive due to surcharging of the Archers Brook culvert (main river) to the rear of the properties. Due to the number of properties involved, this has triggered a S19 report. Several other properties in the Great Sutton area also experienced internal flooding but were not connected to the issues at Archers Brook culvert.

The LLFA and the EA met with residents of Great Sutton, Ellesmere Port, on the 11<sup>th</sup> of September to discuss the flood event. The LLFA and EA provided details of follow up actions for all RMAs involved and responded to questions from residents. The ongoing recommendations of the previous Section 19 report were also discussed, and an update was provided to residents of ongoing flood risk developments within the area.

## United Utilities

This is the summary of the number of properties impacted by sewer flooding between 1 July 2023 and 28 September 2023. This is unverified data and so the numbers 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 a 1 in 20 return period.

<b>Strategic Partnership</b>	<b>Internal Hydraulic (not Severe weather)</b>	<b>External Hydraulic (not Severe weather)</b>	<b>Internal Hydraulic severe weather</b>	<b>External hydraulic severe weather</b>
<b>Cheshire</b>	0	11	0	0
<b>Merseyside</b>	26	98	39	13
<b>GMCA</b>	108	36	3	2
<b>Lancashire</b>	18	145	7	44
<b>Cumbria</b>	13	25	2	8

## NORTH WEST REGIONAL FLOOD AND COASTAL COMMITTEE

### Finance and Business Assurance Sub Group

### DRAFT Report of the meeting held on 6 October 2023

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

#### Attendees:

Neville Elstone (Chair)	RFCC Member – General Business and Assurance	
Adrian Lythgo	RFCC Chair	
Doug Coyle	Officer - Cumbria Partnership	Cllr
James Shorrocks	Blackburn with Darwen Council	
Cllr Stephen Clarke	RFCC Member - Lancashire Partnership	
Neil Thomas	Officer – Merseyside Partnership	
Cllr Tricia Ayrton	RFCC Member - Gtr Manchester Partnership	
Cllr Philip Cusack	RFCC Member - Gtr Manchester Partnership	
Cllr Richard Silvester	RFCC Member - Gtr Manchester Partnership	
Cllr Laura Crane	RFCC Member – Cheshire Mid Mersey Partnership	
Carolyn Otley	RFCC Member – Communities	
David Harpley	RFCC Member – Conservation/NFM	
David Shaw	RFCC Member – Planning and Design	

#### Support Officers/Observers:

Tony Cartwright	Officer - EA - FCRM Programming
Ollie Hope	Officer - EA – Area Flood Risk Manager (Cheshire & Merseyside)
Crystal Orton	Officer - EA – RFCC Business Plan Project Manager
Sally Whiting	Officer - EA - Senior RFCC Adviser
Adam Walsh	Officer - EA - FCRM Programming Manager
Andrew Harrison	Officer – Cumbria Partnership
Alison Harker	Officer – Cumbria Partnership
Marcus Leigh	Officer - Lancashire Partnership
Lorah Cheyne	Officer - Lancashire Partnership
Clare Nolan-Barnes	Officer - Lancashire Partnership
Claire Wyn-Jones	Officer - Merseyside Partnership
Jill Holden	Officer – GM Partnership
Francis Comyn	Officer - GM Partnership
Matthew Winnard	Officer – Cheshire Mid Mersey Partnership
Stephen Roberts	Officer – Cheshire Mid Mersey Partnership
Sarah Fontana	Officer – Capital Programme Co-ordinator (EA)

## 1. Welcome and apologies for absence.

Neville Elstone opened the meeting, thanked Members for joining and welcomed attendees. Adrian Lythgo had been delayed and would join the meeting as soon as he could.

Apologies were received from:

- Cllr Giles Archibald (Cumbria Partnership), today being represented by Doug Coyle.
- Cllr Elizabeth Grey (Merseyside Partnership), today being represented by Neil Thomas.
- Cllr Nick Mannion (Cheshire Mid Mersey Partnership)
- Cllr Tony Brennan (Merseyside Partnership)

Neville confirmed that Members were happy for the meeting to be recorded, purely for the purposes of minute taking. Neville gave a recap of the voting arrangements:

- That voting would be used for formal Sub Group recommendations.
- That we are not asking for a single nominated voter from each partnership. All members are entitled to vote from which we will take the consensus vote from each partnership.
- There are two independent members who also have voting rights - David Harpley and Carolyn Otley.

Neville reminded Members 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.

He moved Item 2 on the agenda to further along in the meeting for when Adrian would be available. No objections were received.

(Agenda item 2 was pushed back to further down the agenda.)

## 3. Investment Programme Update

Tony Cartwright (Environment Agency Programming) presented the update.

This included data on properties to be better protected from flooding this year which shows that against an unofficial North West target of 2,427 properties, the forecast figures from mid-August indicate that 4,379 properties are expected to be better protected.

On expenditure, Tony reported that the North West is expecting to draw down £115.4 million this year. This is £6.2 million more than allocated.

The total capital funding available to the NW RFCC 2023/24 programme is £109.2 million. This includes £94.7 million of central government FCRM GiA (Grant in Aid), £8.4 million of Local Levy, and £5.9 million of partnership funding contributions. Sources of partnership contributions include local authorities themselves, European Regional Development Funding, and other government departments such as the Departments for Education and Transport.

Actual spend to date (as of August 2023) was £24.7 million, which is up from the £8.4 million at the end of May. This means there is £90.7 million of the forecast remaining to spend. This breaks down into £67 million on EA-led projects and £23 million on Local Authority-led projects.

The Environment Agency resource funding for the NW currently totals £21 million. This includes staff costs, maintenance, and resource projects. Both areas are currently showing a forecast above budget, according to our reporting systems.

Tony reiterated the risks to the delivery of the programme which have been reported in previous meetings.

Neville then opened the meeting to questions.

Cllr Cusack asked a question about the risks to capital projects, whether they are quantified, and whether more information could be provided in the form of an updated risk register per project.

Ollie Hope introduced himself and asked Cllr Cusack to clarify that he was asking for information on risk to spend and delivery and whether this was for both EA and LA projects. Cllr Cusack confirmed that he was primarily interested in EA-led projects as he felt the information was available for LA projects.

Ollie explained that we haven't typically included that level of detail in the reports for the Finance and Business Assurance Sub Group, but acknowledged Cllr Cusack's view that they have greater visibility of risks on the LA projects, but less so on EA-led projects. He responded that the EA could potentially provide information on, for example, the top ten projects by spend, but advised that the volume of information necessary to provide this for all projects would mean the benefits would be lost.

Cllr Cusack confirmed that this would be useful for him, clarifying that he is keen to understand any trend analysis on risks and be clearer on the relative significance of different risks (e.g. contractors, material cost increases, project type). It is that kind of analysis that he currently can't see.

Adrian Lythgo apologised for being late and also responded to Cllr Cusack by highlighting that Greater Manchester is currently lacking a strategic flood risk management group which would normally be where more information on project risks for your sub region would be provided. He reported that he is aware it is something that the GM partnership is thinking about. He agreed that we can still look at trends at the full North West level but that individual project risk would tend to be looked at at sub regional level.

The Finance and Business Assurance Sub Group:

- Noted the progress on delivering the 2023-24 Capital and Resource programmes
- Noted the risks to the North West programme in 2023-24.

A slide was then shared showing a summary of the indicative funding allocation for 2024/25. Tony Cartwright reported that engagement with project leads to discuss and agree Local Choices is underway with submissions back to EA National at the end of October. Neville

Elstone stated that we hope to have much clearer information by the full RFCC meeting in two weeks time.

Adrian Lythgo provided some idea of scale by reporting that while the £104 million indicative allocation is slightly lower than in 2023/24, this level of funding for the North West is the second highest allocation of any region nationally.

#### **4. Local Levy Programme Update**

##### **Review of Local Levy scheme contributions**

Tony Cartwright (EA Programming Team) provided an overview of the review of Local Levy scheme contributions which was supported by the RFCC in July and which has been carried out over recent months. He reported that it had been confirmed that £1.6 million of allocations had been released due to schemes no longer requiring their Levy contributions or not progressing within the current programme timeframe.

As a result of assessing scheme confidence, it has been possible to identify a further £4.4 million where there is a low or medium confidence. These allocations will remain in the programme but it enables the team to provide a more realistic and nuanced view of the programme.

Following this review, the balance of Local Levy is now expected to reduce more gradually to around £3 million by the end of 2024/25, which gives us capacity for further investment within the programme.

Tony reported on the starting balance, allocation, forecast spend and resulting balance (as included in the report) and the updated income and expenditure scenario graphs. Tony highlighted that the current allocation for 2023/24 is £8.4million, which has reduced from the £9.5 million approved by the RFCC in July 23, due to the 2023/24 allocation for the Irwell Vale to Chatterton scheme having been reprofiled into 2027/28.

Adrian Lythgo reinforced that this clean-up of the Local Levy programme had been sanctioned by the RFCC at its last meeting and he highlighted that the confidence assessment had also been carried out in response to questions asked at the last Sub Group meeting in July on scheme confidence, with Members keen to understand whether schemes were fully funded and the extent to which Levy commitments were real.

##### **Local Levy Strategy Refresh**

Sally Whiting provided a reminder of the ongoing refresh of the RFCC's Local Levy Strategy which was last published in 2020. Having been endorsed at the last Committee meeting, she had recirculated the Strategy document and invited feedback and comment via a survey for members and risk management authority officers. She reported that there had been a fairly low number of responses to date and encouraged any further feedback. She also reported strong consensus in the responses that had been received.



Sally highlighted a short list of aspects which will be updated, considered or added. As part of this she provided some insights into the survey responses provided on these. On the 15% Levy contribution cap specifically, she reported strong support for retaining this at 15%, as well as retaining the threshold above which it applies. She also highlighted one suggestion coming out of the responses of whether we should set a maximum Local Levy scheme contribution by £value. This will be considered again through the refresh. Finally she reported that there would be additional clarity provided on how unused Local Levy allocations are managed and reallocated to other projects, and that this will be developed in consultation with RMA officers so that there is a very clear and transparent process for doing that. Another suggestion coming out of the responses related to how we review Levy funded resources, how much consistency of approach there should be, whether we should look to align the approved timeframes etc.

Sally confirmed that she will be working on the refresh of the Strategy between now and the January meeting and will be consulting Members and officers further to provide further opportunity for feedback.

Neville Elstone reiterated the importance of the strategy in setting the principles for guiding the Committee's decisions on Levy submissions, rather than trying to do that around specific cases. He also underlined Sally's request for any further feedback via the survey and set a deadline of 20 October.

There were no further comments or questions on the Local Levy Strategy refresh.

Neville then confirmed that there were no requests for Local Levy funding from schemes today but provided a heads up that the Preston scheme was exploring ways to fill a significant funding gap and could be coming with a Local Levy request in the future.

### **RFCC Business Plan update**

Sally Whiting provided an overview of progress and spend on the RFCC's Business Plan implementation. Referring Members to more detail provided in the report, she reported more projects as being actively underway now. Of the 22 live projects, 16 are progressing well, 4 are progressing but experiencing some issues currently, one is not currently progressing, and one is complete. The RFCC approved investment of £1.4 million in 2023/24 and the current spend forecast is just under £1.2 million, slightly down on last quarter now that more information on spend profiles is available.

Sally put forward two projects as now being complete for the Sub Group's endorsement.

Action ID19 was the completion of two natural flood management projects in Cumbria which had carried over from the previous Business Plan period. It has now been confirmed that one project completed right at the end of last financial year and the second was completed in August this year. The £39K that was allocated has been fully spent.

Action ID14 related to local authority capital project delivery challenges. Sally referred back to a National RMA task and finish group which gathered feedback from local authority officers on the challenges and frustrations they experience when delivering capital projects. There were a number of recommendations coming out of that work that were built into work programmes of

national teams and we are now seeing the outputs from some of that work leading to a lot of changes in procedures, guidance and forms. The rollout of these changes is being led and guided by the LA Capital Project Advisors that we have in place and the Capital programme coordinator who coordinates that team.

We had included this action in the Business Plan to see if there was anything else within the North West over and above that. However, with all of these national changes happening, and the need to follow those, the scope for us to do anything specific in the North West is very limited and it is necessary to allow the changes to embed first. Seeking further improvements is now a business-as-usual activity for the LA Advisor resource that we've got in place. It was acknowledged that some of the same frustrations are probably still being felt at the moment, but that we hope to see improvements being felt. It was therefore proposed to close down ID14 as a Business Plan action, becoming a business-as-usual activity.

Sarah Fontana, the Capital Programme Co-ordinator, was asked if she had anything to add. She concurs that these challenges have not all gone away or there is still more work to do through the ongoing support of the Advisors.

There were no further comments and there were no objections raised to the completion and close-down of these two projects respectively.

Sally Whiting then went on to introduce the first of two proposed funding changes on Business Plan projects – ID12 Paving over front gardens. She provided some background to the project's aims and highlighted that the cumulative impact of increasing hard surface areas in urban areas is something the Committee has been concerned about for some time. This is an issue we are seeking to raise awareness around and influence householder behaviour. The committee has supported this project.

The funding that this project currently has approved is solely for the Project Manager resource because at that stage we were yet to develop the project scope and plan. We have now done that with the core project group which heavily involves colleagues from Lancashire County Council, the Lancashire Partnership, and United Utilities. Sally reminded Members that the original concept for the project was the work of Laura Bigley at Lancashire County Council and Johnny Phillips at United Utilities, who remain involved.

Sally highlighted the key project deliverable of a show feature garden at the Royal Horticultural Society (RHS) Tatton show next year, based on a front garden setting, and set alongside educational and promotional activities, and some primary research.

For these deliverables the project are seeking the RFCC's support for an additional £30K of Local Levy funding, with United Utilities hopefully matching that with another £20K for the garden deliverable. Sally then handed over to Crystal Orton, the Project Manager, to provide a few more details.

Crystal introduced herself and said she was looking forward to working with the Committee on this project about which she feels passionately. She reported that a project plan had been developed to identify a realistic scope for the two-year project from the broad potential scope. Subject to approval from RHS, the show feature garden will be going ahead next year. She

touched on the engagement the project has had with the RHS, and with private companies who specialise in permeable paving products and who were aiming their businesses in that direction in response to things like Schedule 3. We are hoping for in-kind contributions of products and materials for the garden.

The aim is to take advantage of the extensive media opportunities that RHS Tatton attracts, raising the profile of the excellent work that the RFCC do as a partnership, and specifically on this issue around front gardens.

She also highlighted another deliverable of a permeable driveway catalogue, which will provide predominantly householders with a source of information on the availability, cost and maintenance requirements of alternative permeable products.

Neville Elstone commented on the clear passion that Crystal has for this topic and its need.

Adrian Lythgo asked Crystal to say a little bit more about RHS Tatton not being the end of the story and how we intend to use it as part of a wider campaign on this issue.

Crystal responded to this by remarking on the promotional opportunities that will arise from the RHS promoting all of the show gardens. She also informed Members about the expectation for the gardens to be relocated after the show, the location of which is still being explored, with our aim of ensuring that as many people as possible can benefit from the messaging of the project. This permanent location will be publicly accessible and will hopefully provide a learning opportunity for years to come. We also hope to provide research opportunities for students or independent researchers in terms of measuring surface water, infiltration testing, and runoff flows from the garden in comparison to sort of traditional paved impermeable driveway.

Crystal reported that we will be seeking to bring on board either a horticulture or a landscape architect student to work alongside the garden designer and she is engaging with land-based colleges such as Reaseheath and Myerscough. She aims to promote careers in the sector, given some of the resource challenges being experienced.

Crystal also reported that the project is also looking to explore featuring at the new RHS Urban Show that is due to take place in Mayfield Park in Manchester next year – the first of its kind. RHS are trying to target more urban areas, those gardening in smaller spaces or in social housing. This won't feature gardens in the same way as the Tatton Show but the project will be seeking to exhibit there.

Neville Elstone remarked that it is really good to hear about the legacy of the project, especially if you think about surface water predictions for the future.

Clare Nolan-Barnes offered Crystal an introduction to Paul Hodgson from Blackpool Council Parks team. He used to work for Kew Gardens and he's just delivered three of the quick wins through Levy funding. That would be done outside of the meeting.

Neville took the proposal to a vote from the Sub Group by exception. No objections were raised. He thanked Crystal for her contribution.

The Sub Group:

- Agreed to recommend to the RFCC additional Local Levy funding of £30K for ID12 'Paving over front gardens' project.

### **Capital Programme Co-ordinator Resource**

Ollie Hope introduced this proposal as the sponsor for this item as the Local Authority Capital Project Advisors and the Capital Programme Co-ordinator sit within the flood risk management teams in the EA.

Ollie referred Members to the additional detail provided in Appendix F of the paper and set the proposal in the context of a significant portion of the North West capital programme being LA-led projects, and the significant resource pressures that LAs are under. He reported that the RFCC agreed in 2017 to put in place Local Authority Capital Project Advisors who have been supporting LAs for some years now. Their focus is to strengthen business cases, help support LAs through project assurance, to strengthen partnership working. The RFCC also agreed to provide funding for a Capital Programme Co-ordinator resource around 18 months ago. The cost associated with this resource is £69K per year, with the total cost of this and the five LA Capital Project Advisors being £339K per year.

Ollie presented the proposal to keep the funding for the post going until 2027, in line with the team of Advisors. Within the EA this would require making the post permanent but the funding proposal relates to the period to 2027. He also informed Members that the costs had already been allowed for in the Local Levy programme.

Ollie referred to the five LA Capital Project Advisors by name to allow Members and officers to make clear connections to their local arrangements. He also set out some detail on what the Capital Programme Co-ordinator resource has delivered and achieved, referring to the significant number of changes coming nationally to be embedded, the turnover of staff in the Advisor roles requiring training and development, and co-ordinating training and capacity building for LA officers across the North West. The Co-ordinator is linked in with similar teams around the country who are funded in similar ways, to share best practice and training opportunities. She has also been providing a lead role on the RFCC Business Plan, specifically the Increasing RMA Capacity and Collaboration workstream.

A discussion involving RFCC Members and officers followed.

Cllr Stephen Clarke questioned the degree to which the benefits of the role are being felt in the Lancashire partnership as yet and asked for the matter to be deferred from today's meeting.

Claire Wyn-Jones, Principal Flood Risk Officer at Liverpool Council, expressed her support for the post and how useful they had found it the Advisors to be.

Doug Coyle asked about the reported permanence of the role and what this means for how the RFCC commits Levy spend. He made it clear he had no concerns about the position itself and was feeling significant benefit from the Advisor role in Cumbria and the co-ordination of those roles that sits behind that. He expressed that there is an increasing need for support for LAs which he welcomes.

Cllr Richard Silvester acknowledged he was new to the Committee and asked for confirmation that all the referenced posts sit within the Environment Agency, and then asked why the posts were not being funded by the EA.

Ollie highlighted the intention to explore other sources of funding (e.g. capital funding) to reduce the call on the Local Levy in the future. He also highlighted that there was work going on nationally to look at capacity and resource within the whole system, especially around surface water flood risk. Ollie also reported that this model of RFCC Local Levy funded resources to support LAs is replicated in a number of other places around the country, recognising that this is partly an interim measure in the hope of more sustainable resource funding levels in the future. Cllr Silvester asked to be provided with more information on how long it would take to explore the other sources of funding, and what has been put in place in other parts of the country. He also moved that the proposal be deferred until this additional information was available.

On Doug's question, Ollie clarified the internal EA requirement to make posts permanent if they extend more than two years, and to manage the risk, but that the funding proposal for the RFCC related to the period to 2027. Doug recognised the same as applying to the other Local Levy funded roles and was satisfied with this clarification.

Neville asked for any feedback or comments from the other sub-regional partnerships.

Matthew Winnard further emphasized the work the LA Advisors do in terms of developing business cases and supporting LAs is utilising the Quick Win funding, which is a key component of the Local Levy funding. He expressed that these are key roles which provide an important bridge between the EA and local authorities. Based on that he supports the proposal and supports what Ollie has said.

Neil Thomas representing the Merseyside partnership also commented via the Chat function stating he would like to add support for the role of the Capital Coordinators - they have really helped in getting projects delivered in Merseyside.

Neville Elstone then reflected the conflicting views that had been expressed and gave his recommendation that we need to take the matter away for further listening, consideration and sharing of views, rather than take a vote today.

Adrian agreed this was a sensible approach but expressed that we would need to bring it back as a proposal in January. He again reflected on the significant turnover of staff there has been in the Advisor roles and expressed that this could be a reason why the benefits of the roles are being felt variably across the region. He did therefore urge that we should listen to each other to pull out the shared experience and consensus.

Adrian also pointed out that it is partly down to this additional capacity supporting LAs that we are successfully securing significant sums of national government funding to the North West which without this capacity would be lower. It is therefore not unreasonable for Members to want to see further evidence of this, as well as the direct support work that has been reported by some officers. He therefore supported the deferment of the vote but stated that it cannot be deferred for too long as LAs across the North West need certainty on the level of support and resource they are going to have going forwards.

Neville agreed with the dependency between the additional capacity and successfully being able to secure significant investment into the North West.

Ollie Hope suggested that those partnerships with some reservations provide further feedback after the meeting and Neville encouraged further dialogue on the matter.

David Shaw asked if the matter should be raised at a national level more strongly if RFCCs across the country are needing to fill this resource gap. Neville agreed.

Doug Coyle suggested that the detailed list of activities being performed by the LA Capital Project Advisors and the Capital Programme Co-ordinator be set out, and implied an offer of support in developing this.

## **2. Feedback from the RFCC meeting on 21 July 2023 and actions since**

Adrian referred briefly to the resolutions from the full RFCC meeting on 21 July as set out on the slide.

In addition he wished to make particular reference to specific requests or queries that had been raised by Members, either as part of the Sub Group or RFCC meeting, and how they were being taken forwards. The first related to confidence and risks around scheme delivery and funding, and therefore the specific content of the programme information being provided. He wished to highlight that this had been partly actioned through the review of the Local Levy programme and the confidence assessment that has been applied, but that this work will continue and Members should expect to see further changes to the reporting.

The second point he raised relates to capacity in the system to take schemes forward and develop the future pipeline and the extent to which we're at risk of just not having the revenue resource we need to develop deliver the programme. There was a request at the last Sub Group meeting to get a better picture of this which is what led to the survey led by Sally Whiting, which will be picked up later in the meeting.

(Agenda items 5 and 6 were switched in order.)

## **6. Risk Management Authority resource pressures - Feedback**

This was a discussion item for the Sub Group which will not be taken forward to the RFCC at this stage.

No specific follow-on actions were agreed.

## **5. Partnership Co-ordinator Contribution Review**

This was a discussion item for the Sub Group brought in response to a request from one of the partnerships which raised a couple of matters of principle. The matter was deferred at the request of one of the sub-regional partnerships until a further discussion has taken place within that partnership on how the LA contribution to the cost of the role is shared.

## **7. Minutes, matters arising and actions from the last meeting**

The table of actions was presented with most actions being complete or meetings are being arranged to address them. Adam Walsh referred briefly to work going on to review the format

and content of information provided on the investment programme which Members will see in due course.

There were no comments raised in relation to the minutes from the last Finance and Business Assurance Sub Group meeting in July. The minutes were therefore approved.

## **8. Any Other Business**

Neville advised of some officer changes:

- The Area Flood Risk Manager for Lancashire is now being covered by job share between Fiona Duke and Mia Hanson, replacing Pete Miles who has moved on to an Environment Manager role in Cumbria.
- Cumbria have appointed a Partnership Co-ordinator Alison Harker, who started this week.
- Claire Wyn-Jones is now the new Principal Flood Risk Engineer at Liverpool City Council.

Neville welcomed and wished them luck in their new roles.

There were no other AOBs raised.

Lastly, Neville reminded Members of the annual Levy vote coming up at the full RFCC meeting in two weeks' time, and he looks forward to catching up with people in person and getting out in the afternoon find out more about work that has been going on in Rochdale – bringing it back to the point raised earlier about action being absolutely vital.

Neville thanked everyone for their time and contributions to the meeting.

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

6<sup>th</sup> October 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.

<b>The FBASG are asked to:</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Note the progress on delivering the 2023-24 capital and resource programmes.</li> </ul>



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

#### 2.1. Overview

			
	<b>Properties to be better protected</b>	<b>Partnership funding</b>	<b>Efficiency savings</b>
<b>National Overview</b>	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	£14.745 million Flood Defence Grant-in-Aid efficiency savings accepted in Q1
<b>North West Overview</b>	4,379 properties forecast to be better protected in 2023-24	Approximately 10% of the North West Programme is made up of partnership funding	£1.364 million Flood Defence Grant-in-Aid efficiency savings accepted in Q1

#### 2.2 2023-24 Programme

What outcomes are we delivering?

		<b>* North West Target</b>	<b>North West Forecast</b>	<b>Actual to date</b>
		3,598	4,379	495

*\*No official North West RFCC target. Targets are split by Area.*



2.2.1 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 1,171 in Greater Manchester, Merseyside and Cheshire, and 2,427 in Cumbria and Lancashire. Forecast figures at mid-August 2023 indicate the North West will better protect 4,379 properties from flooding this year. See Appendix A.

2.2.2 **Are we spending the funding we have secured?**

	<b>Capital funding available</b>	<b>Capital forecast</b>
	<b>£109.220 million</b>	<b>£115.433 million</b>

2.2.3 The total capital funding available to the North West RFCC 2023-24 programme is £109.220 million. This includes £94.777 million of central Government FCRM GiA (Grant in Aid), £8.457 million of Local Levy and £5.986 million of Partnership Funding Contributions. Sources of partnership contributions include Local Authorities, European Regional Development Funding, and other government departments such as the Department for Education and the Department for Transport.

2.2.4 Forecasts at mid-August 2023 show that we are expecting to draw down £115.433 million this year. This is £6.213 million more than allocated.

2.2.5 North West actual spend to end of August 2023 was £24.723 million (up from £8.477 million at the end of May 2023) against a budget of £109.220 million, and a forecast of £115.433 million. This means there is a remaining £90.710 million forecast remaining to spend/claim.

2.2.6 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
- Framework changes

**What level of efficiency are we demonstrating?**

2.2.7 Total value of accepted efficiency claims in Q1 was £1.364 million. This is still a relatively low number of submissions overall compared to live projects, however several claims have been submitted during Q2.

Scheme	RMA	Efficiency Value (FCRMGiA)
Preston & South Ribble FRMS	Environment Agency	£802,288
River Roch, Rochdale & Littleborough FRMS	Environment Agency	£348,961
Penketh and Whittle FRMS	Environment Agency	£184,967
Alt Breach Repair and Maghull Review	Environment Agency	£15,992
Threlkeld Urgent Culvert Repair Works	Environment Agency	£12,282

**£1,364,490**

## 2.3 Indicative funding allocation for 2024-25 Programme

Below is a summary of the results of the Annual Refresh for the North West FCRM Capital Investment Programme. The allocation includes:

- Schemes (Capital Maintenance (CM) / Defence (DEF))
- Property Level Protection (PLP)
- Additional GiA funding i.e. Other Government Department (OGD) / Asset Replacement Allowance (ARA) / Frequently Flooded Allowance (FFA).

We are currently going through the annual Local Choices process; more information surrounding the feedback on the indicative allocations and Local Choices return will be included at the full RFCC meeting.

*North West RFCC	Expenditure Bid (£k)	Expenditure Indicative Allocation (£k)	Properties to be better protected (Max properties - Bid)	Properties to be better protected (Max properties - Allocation)
2024-2025	127,258	104,163	1,299	1,723

## 3. 2023-24 EA Resource Maintenance Programme

3.1 Environment Agency Resource funding for the North West currently totals £21.055 million. This includes staff costs, maintenance, and resource projects.

3.2 Both Areas are currently showing a forecast above budget according to the reporting system.

### 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	11,457	12,385	-928
Greater Manchester, Merseyside & Cheshire	9,598	10,965	-1,367
EA Total FCRM GiA Resource	21,055	23,350	-2,295

## Appendix A

## Properties better protected – 2023-24 forecasts (and targets for info only)

Scheme Name	Partnership	2023-24 Forecast	2023-24 Target
Wyre Beach Management Scheme	Lancashire	1760	1,896
Radcliffe & Redvales FRM Scheme	Greater Manchester	430 *	0
Lower Risk Debris Screen Programme - GMMC	Cross Partnership	314	0
Manchester Restoration of Open Channels of Ordinary Watercourses	Greater Manchester	309	386
Lower Risk Debris Screen Programme - GMMC	Cross Partnership	302	0
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	58	71
Appleby pumping station capital maintenance	Cumbria	51	0
Lumb Brook, West View, Rossendale	Lancashire	50	47
Brecon Road Scheme, Blackburn	Lancashire	44	22
Flimby Surface Water Alleviation - RMA Scheme	Cumbria	34	31
CL Culvert Refurbishment Programme	Cross Partnership	32	40
Lentworth Drive at Burrow Beck	Lancashire	32	40
Golburn Clough, Greenfield, Oldham	Greater Manchester	28	0
Salerno Drive - Culvert Investigation Works	Merseyside	24	0
Churchill Ave Culcheth Culvert Renewal	Cheshire	24	30
Greystoke Surface Water Flood Alleviation	Cumbria	20	19
Ravenglass, Cumbria - Surface Water	Cumbria	20	19
North Road, Holme Village Flood Alleviation	Cumbria	17	0
Etterby Terrace, Carlisle	Cumbria	16	0
Warwick Bridge PFR scheme	Cumbria	16	0
Fitzgerald Drive, Darwen	Lancashire	15	0
Lenham Gardens Surface Water Allievation Scheme	Greater Manchester	13	0
Woolston Park FRM Scheme	Cheshire	13	0
Beetham Surface Water Flood Alleviation	Cumbria	13	12
Abbots Mead Industrial Estate, Chester	Cheshire	12	0
School Lane, Staveley - Surface Water Risks	Cumbria	12	0
Greenbank, Ambleside Surface Water Flooding	Cumbria	7	0
Grant Close, Westbrook FRM Scheme	Cheshire	6	0
Lower Screens Programme 2022-2023	Cross Partnership	6	0
Badgers Rake Lane, Little Sutton	Cheshire	5	4
Adder Hill Great Boughton	Cheshire	3	0
		<b>4,379</b>	<b>3,175</b>

\* Claimed

Partnership	Number of schemes forecasting properties better protected in 2023-24	Total 2023-24 Forecast	Total 2023/24 Target (for info only)
Greater Manchester	5	845	467
Merseyside	2	269	0
Cheshire	7	284	309
Cumbria	12	324	227
Lancashire	5	1,901	2,005
Cross-Partnership	5	756	167
<b>Total</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>4,379</b>	<b>3,175</b>

**North West RFCC Meeting****Meeting Date: 20 October 2023****Item no. 4****Appendix A:** FCRM allocation principles**Appendix B:** Indicative FCRM GiA capital allocation by RFCC**Appendix C:** Process for allocating and approving funding for 2024/25**Appendix D:** Additional resource GiA to support Asset maintenance in 2023-24**Paper By: Director of Portfolio Management and Assurance****Title: 2024/25 FCRM grant-in-aid (GiA) allocation****Recommendations**

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

1. Consider the indicative FCRM GiA capital allocation funding for 2024/25 (Section 3, Appendix B).
2. Discuss local priorities for investment and where relevant, consider local choices.
3. Note the ongoing discussions to reset the capital programme (Section 3).
4. Note the timescales for sharing the indicative 2024/25 asset maintenance resource allocations, and the expected real-terms reduction to funding (Section 4).

**Headline messages:**

- The October RFCC Committees are an important step in ensuring local choices and priorities are considered in the capital allocation.
- Our current **budget** for 2024/25 is £1,022 billion. Our current **allocation** is £931 million. The difference is expected to be allocated through various options to reset and strengthen the delivery of the programme. It is likely RFCC Committees will receive more money than has currently been allocated at this stage of the process.
- We would particularly welcome the RFCC Committees continuing **support** in:
  - Increasing the number of projects, we are investing in to help build confidence and deliver the higher end of our revised properties better protected target (see Section 3.14).
  - Helping to ensure other RMAs, particularly Local Authorities, remain on track and flag any concerns as soon as they arise (see Section 3.15).
  - Locally promoting and strengthening the development of a robust pipeline of future projects (see Section 3.16).
- We are currently expecting our total allocation for asset maintenance activities to be lower than that allocated in 2023/24.

## 1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This paper is the first formal stage of allocating Flood and Coastal Risk Management (FCRM) capital and resource grant-in-aid (GiA) for the next financial year – 2024/25.
- 1.2 The process for allocating and approving capital and asset maintenance resource funding for 2024/25 is set out in Appendix C.

## 2.0 Latest capital and asset maintenance programme delivery

- 2.1 As of end Q1 (July 2023) – capital programme:
  - We (EA & RMAs) have completed 6 schemes so far this year (2023/24), better protecting 1,877 properties.
  - We (EA & RMAs) are forecasting to deliver 31,000 properties better protected during 2023/24, against an EA corporate target of 28,000 properties.
  - Since April 2021 we (EA & RMAs) have better protected 61,228 properties from flooding and coastal erosion in total.
  - Our collective delivery forecasts (EA & RMAs) show a £45 million (6%) over-programme for 2023/24 compared to allocations, which for this time of year is a relatively weak position.

There are many other wider benefits being delivered through the capital programme which are not included here. Targets around these and what can be delivered are all being discussed around the ‘reset’ of the programme (see below).

- 2.2 As of end Q1 (July 2023) – asset maintenance resource programme:
  - The Environment Agency’s corporate key performance indicator (KPI) for asset condition for 2023/24 has increased to 94.5% of EA high-consequence assets at required condition. Our current performance rate is at 93.8% with the third-party asset condition for high consequence assets being at 90.6%.
  - Overall, we are seeing a declining trend in asset condition, caused by multiple factors include funding, resources, data quality and delivery approach.
  - Asset inspections are impacted by available resources in Area teams. Over Q1 of this year, performance has dropped slightly to 96.1%, against a target of 97%, although levels of inspections have kept up with historic inspection rates for this time of year.

## 3.0 FCRM GiA capital allocation for 2024/25

- 3.1 Each year we undertake a review of our capital and asset maintenance resource programmes to ensure we meet our annual budgets, prioritise our annual programmes, remain on track to achieve our targets and to accommodate changes. The allocation process is set out in Appendix C.
- 3.2 In building the indicative capital allocations, the allocation principles (see Appendix A), as approved by the EA Board on 7 October 2020, and Defra’s Partnership Funding Policy have been applied. RFCC Chairs were involved in the development of the allocation principles.

### Local choices

- 3.3 At the October Committee meetings, RFCCs are asked to review their indicative capital allocations and identify any changes to their regional programmes. This is referred to as the 'local choices' process. This is an important step to ensure local issues can be taken into consideration and we get the best possible outcomes from the programme both locally and nationally.
- 3.4 Any changes must ensure that the Committee's programme:
- (a) remains within budget, and on target to spend its indicative allocated budget
  - (b) secures or improves the number of properties better protected.

If additional contributions are identified, from third parties or local levy, RFCCs may be able to increase their programme and deliver more projects.

- 3.5 Following the RFCC Committee's returns, the Environment Agency's national Portfolio Management Office (PMO) will review these, and if they meet the required criteria and are within budget they will be included in the production of the final allocation. RFCC Committees will then see the final allocation again in January for their further review and in advance of seeking their consent to the implementation of the regional programmes of work.

### Capital programme reset

- 3.6 As you will be aware, there have been, and continue to be, ongoing discussions with Defra and the Secretary of State regarding reprofiling the funding and resetting the target for the capital programme in response to delays caused by the coronavirus pandemic, the impacts of higher than forecast rates of inflation, the impact of the Frequently Flooded Allowance and Biodiversity Net Gain policy. With the arrival of our new Chief Executive in July, this has enabled further fresh discussions and an opportunity to 'reset' the capital programme.
- 3.7 These discussions are ongoing, and we will keep the RFCCs updated as decisions are made. To ensure we continue to effectively manage the capital programme, and to ensure we continue to fully engage with RFCC Committees, we are continuing with the process to allocate funding. We expect outcomes of these discussions and final Secretary of State approval will be brought together through the final allocation approvals process during the autumn/winter.

### Funding profile and high-level allocation

- 3.8 In earlier discussions with Defra and Secretary of State we had proposed options including reprofiling the capital programme over a 7-year period to better support delivery and achieve our outcomes. The SoS has asked that we look to invest the full settlement by March 2027, so we are now looking to re-invest £462 million back into the programme across the remaining years to spend the full £5.2 billion investment. Some of this re-investment for the current financial year – including £25 million to support asset maintenance which is covered in a separate paper, see Appendix D. A further £25m has been announced for projects using nature to increase resilience to floods. The Environment Agency will establish and deliver the programme with expression of interest now open until 10 November 2023.

- 3.9 Our current **budget** for 2024/25 is £1,022 billion. Our current **allocation** is £931 million. The difference is expected to be allocated through various options to reset and strengthen the delivery of the programme (part of the ongoing discussions mentioned above). It is likely RFCC Committees will receive more money than has currently been allocated at this stage of the process.
- 3.10 Of the £931 million, £758.7 million is allocated directly to RFCCs through this indicative allocation process – see appendix B for the regional breakdown. There is currently a £5 million difference due to a small number of projects being reviewed for eligibility. This will likely be resolved through the local choices process.
- 3.11 The remaining amount of the £931 million allocation is national or cross-cutting investment which at this stage is not allocated to specific RFCCs. This is in-line with the approach taken in previous years.

Table 1: Indicative capital GiA allocation for 2024/25 against elements of the programme. Allocation for 2023/24 is shown for reference only.

Programme	2023/24 (£m)	2024/25 (£m)	Allocation
Programme to meet legal obligations associated with flood risk management works <sup>1</sup>	9.7	23.5	In RFCC indicative allocation
Small scale capital projects <sup>2</sup>	50.6	64.8	In RFCC indicative allocation
Frequently Flooded Allowance (set aside)	15.0	18.3	In RFCC indicative allocation
New and replacement schemes (including ARA and OGD)	626.0	652.1	In RFCC indicative allocation
Recondition schemes for assets below target condition	30.0	30.0	Not in RFCC indicative allocation
Capital salaries for staff supporting, developing and delivering schemes	48.0	45.0	Not in RFCC indicative allocation
Flood & Coastal Resilience Innovation Programme	47.4	46.5	Not in RFCC indicative allocation
Secretary of State approved spend on NFM (£25m in total)	-	4.0	Not in RFCC indicative allocation
National once and FCRM Portfolio (including Fleet and IT invest to save)	48.3	46.8	Cross-cutting/ National
<b>TOTAL ALLOCATION (to RFCCs in indicative allocations)</b>		<b>758.7</b>	
<b>TOTAL ALLOCATION (all)</b>	<b>875.0</b>	<b>931.0</b>	
<b>Potential fund to support strengthening of the capital programme to be agreed with Secretary of State</b>		<b>91.0</b>	
<b>BUDGET (subject to capital programme reset discussions)</b>	<b>954.0</b>	<b>1,022.0</b>	

- Includes Water Framework Directive, Sites of Special Scientific Interest, Eel Regulations, Salmon and Freshwater Fisheries Act and reservoir works.
- Small scale capital projects for coastal monitoring, flood risk mapping, repairs to Environment Agency owned bridges, flood forecasting, flood warning, carbon reduction, hydrometry and telemetry assets, and strategies. Includes incident management programme.

ARA = Asset Replacement Allowance; OGD = Other Government Department; NFM = Natural Flood Management

Properties better protected forecast

- 3.12 With the £931 million allocation for 2024/25 we expect to better protect a maximum of 27,110 properties in 2024/25. See Appendix B for the regional breakdown by RFCC. The number of properties better protected in any given year is not solely dependent on the money being invested but also when projects complete construction.
- 3.13 We have faced a range of pressures since the £5.2billion settlement was announced in March 2020, including high levels of inflation, the Covid pandemic, industry-wide resource pressures and the introduction of policy changes such as Biodiversity Net Gain and the Frequently Flooded Allowance. This has reduced what is achievable overall from 336,000 properties better protected by March 2027 to a revised forecast of 200,000 properties better protected.
- 3.14 To build confidence in delivering the 200,000 we need to increase the number of projects we are investing in and provide support to projects with cost pressures through the re-investment of the £462 million (as noted in section 3.8). We would welcome the RFCC Committees continuing support with this.
- 3.15 The capital programme is also back end loaded with a number of schemes delivering in the final year of the programme. Other Risk Management Authority led projects are also an increasing proportion of the properties better protected delivery in the second half of the programme. Again, we would welcome the RFCC Committees continued support in helping to ensure other RMAs, particularly Local Authorities, remain on track and flag any concerns as soon as they arise.

Capital programme pipeline

- 3.16 As part of the annual refresh cycle, Area teams and other RMAs have reviewed projects in the consented programme. This year, project bids have exceeded available funding although the number of projects in the programme has not changed. This illustrates the extent of inflation on the programme and is in line with our modelled predictions.
- 3.17 We know our pipeline of future schemes for the remainder of this programme and into the next long-term investment programme is currently weak, as efforts and resources have gone into delivering the current programme. We would welcome the RFCC Committees continuing support in locally promoting and strengthening the development of a robust pipeline of future projects.

Prioritisation approach

- 3.18 In building the capital allocation, the allocation principles (Appendix A), as approved by the EA Board on 7 October 2020, and Defra's current Partnership Funding Policy have been applied. The hierarchy for allocating capital funding for 2024/25 is:
- Approved moderation cases based on health and safety or statutory grounds, and time-bound partnership funding contributions.
  - In construction by 1 April 2024 (sub-ranked by adjusted partnership funding score high to low).
  - Remainder of programme ranked by adjusted partnership funding score (high to low).



- 3.19 The hierarchy for allocating capital funding is designed to complement the allocation principles approved by the EA Board. Where bids for funding exceed the available budget each year, the lower ranked projects are deferred in time until they are affordable. A review is also carried out to ensure the scale of the allocation is deliverable given resource pressures and other constraints.

#### Deliverability

- 3.20 We are following the same approach as last year and build in an additional step to review deliverability of local programmes with Area Directors and Framework Directors alongside the RFCC Committee's 'local choice' process during October. This was a welcomed and valuable step last year to ensure the allocated programme is deliverable with the resources we (and other RMAs and our framework suppliers) have. The guidance for submitting revised bids as part of the refresh process this year also explicitly asked project teams to consider deliverability within the supply chain.

#### Partnership funding

- 3.21 The total partnership funding contributions required to deliver the programme is around £2.3 billion, taking into account the initial impacts of inflation. This is for all schemes, including those forecasting to deliver outside the current 6-year programme. Table 2 below shows the breakdown of secured partnership funding to date. Of the total unsecured partnership funding, £450 million is required to deliver schemes which are better protecting properties by March 2027.

Table 2: Partnership funding secured.

<b>Total partnership funding need</b>	<b>£2,315m</b>
<b>Funding secured through other Grant in Aid:</b>	
- Asset Replacement Allowance	£240m
- Other Government Department funding	£400m
- Summer Economic Updated	£170m
- Frequently Flooded Allowance	£100m
<b>Total</b>	<b>£910m</b>
<b>Funding secured from other sources:</b>	
- Local levy	£163m
- Public funding	£274m
- Private funding	£128m
- Other sources, including IDBs	£20m
<b>Total</b>	<b>£585m</b>
<b>Total unsecured partnership funding</b>	<b>£820m</b>
<b>Total unsecured partnership funding associated with schemes better protecting properties by March 2027</b>	<b>£450m</b>

- 3.22 The Asset Replacement Allowance, Other Government Department funding and Summer Economic Update funding are fully allocated within the programme. Fully allocating the Frequently Flooded Allowance is dependent on Secretary of State decision on additional eligibility criteria.

### Surface Water schemes

- 3.23 We are aware of the challenges around developing and delivering surface water schemes and this summer have launched our strengthening delivery initiatives. So far this has included streamlining appraisal and business case approval for projects less than £3 million, updated guidance on taking a strategic approach that will enable more investment in surface water projects, and a bespoke template that greatly speeds up development and approval of Property Flood Resilience projects. Our revamped [supporting flood and coast projects](#) SharePoint site has been well received by practitioners from EA, other RMAs, and suppliers in providing information and resources. As part of the programme reset process, we will be asking RMAs to complete a short confidence assessment of surface water schemes that remain on the programme so we can support their delivery and stability of the programme overall. More detail to follow.
- 3.24 We want the next long-term investment programme to have a greater focus on resilience actions and surface water schemes in line with the FCERM Strategy. We will look to explore solutions that enable surface water schemes for the next programme.

### Carbon

- 3.25 This year we have used the prioritised capital programme to model 'indicative' emission forecasts and the net zero carbon required reductions on EA projects. We have been testing carbon budgets set by EA Area teams to optimise carbon reduction opportunities for individual projects that aim to achieve a national balanced budget in line with the overall net zero carbon required reduction.
- 3.26 The most likely gap between emissions forecast and Area budgets nationally is forecast at around 40% over the programme period up to March 2027. The largest projects will have the greatest opportunity to reduce this gap.

### Efficiencies

- 3.27 Projects have realised efficiencies that total £37 million so far in the current programme. This equates to 2.25% against a target of 10% of GiA spend for the whole programme. We are currently forecasting to achieve an additional £15 million to £30 million of efficiencies this financial year as realisations continue to increase.

### Key risks

- 3.28 All risks are being actively managed through a comprehensive risk register and risk management plan, overseen by the Environment Agency's national Delivery Portfolio Board. Key risks we are currently managing include:
- Higher than forecast rates of inflation and increased construction costs.
  - Lack of sufficient skilled people to deliver the programme and develop the pipeline.
  - Insufficient resource and skills across other RMAs to deliver the larger programme.
  - Securing sufficient partnership funding contributions in the current financial crisis.
  - Impact of spending £100m of GiA on the Frequently Flooded Allowance.
  - Changes in accounting for capital projects – capital (CDEL) reclassification.
  - Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) – new legal requirement coming into force from January 2024.

- Emerging safety concerns – Reinforced Aerated Autoclave Concrete (asset site inspections are currently taking place).
- Change to Environment Agency commercial frameworks and uncertainty caused by the transition arrangements for expired/expiring frameworks.

#### **4.0 FCRM GiA asset maintenance resource allocation for 2024/25**

4.1 FCRM maintenance funding is prioritised using the following approach:

- Maintenance obligations, including electricity costs and legal requirements.
- Ranking of other funding is based on a priority score.
- Adjustments made if required to ensure field team operating costs are covered.

4.2 Obligations are fully funded, with remaining needs ranked within the AIMS:OM (Operation and Maintenance) system using a priority score based on several factors – including benefit cost, asset type, and risk. A review is also carried out to ensure the scale of the allocation covers field team costs (including salaries) so that each Area can maintain its incident response capabilities.

4.3 As with the capital programme, during the summer months Area teams have been reviewing their asset maintenance activities and refreshing their programme for next financial year. The allocation process is set out in Appendix C.

4.4 Through these returns, we have seen a 20% cost increase in activities compared to 2023/24 due to inflation. Due to cuts in our resource budget from Defra group, we are also expecting our total allocation for asset maintenance activities to be lower than the £121m allocated in 2023/24.

4.5 Considerably less real term funding will mean significant impacts on maintenance delivery, with a detrimental effect on the number of assets at required condition. It is expected that the greatest impact will be seen within medium and lower consequence locations.

4.6 As per Section 3.8, there is some positive news. Following discussions around reprofiling our capital GiA allocations, HM Treasury have agreed that £25 million of funding for this financial year (2023/24) could be from resource funding and used to support asset maintenance. Further details on the proposal to invest this funding can be found in Appendix D.

4.7 As part of this work, we are also in discussions with Defra around enabling other RMAs to utilise the Asset Replacement Allowance (capital funding). Discussions are ongoing and could support future years capital delivery.

4.8 As with previous years, we will not know our full allocation for asset maintenance activities until the outcome of the Defra Group Planning process is confirmed, which is expected in March 2024.

## 5.0 Recommendations

The RFCC Committees are asked to:

1. Consider the indicative FCRM GiA capital allocation funding for 2024/25 (Section 3, Appendix B).
2. Discuss local priorities for investment and where relevant, consider local choices.
3. Note the ongoing discussions to reset the capital programme (Section 3).
4. Note the timescales for sharing the indicative 2024/25 asset maintenance resource allocations, and the expected real-terms reduction to funding (Section 4).

**Dan Bond**  
**Deputy Director, Portfolio Management Office**  
**02 October 2023**

**Appendix A: FCRM allocation principles – agreed by EA Board on 7 October 2020**

- 1. Invest to achieve our ambition of a nation ready for, and resilient to, flooding and coastal change.** This will be achieved by making the right allocation decisions to ensure places and infrastructure are resilient and can adapt to future flooding and coastal risks in a changing climate. Respond to government investment priorities including the 'Green Recovery' plan and 'levelling-up.'
- 2. Invest £5.4bn to better protect properties and infrastructure by 2026/27.** We will embrace a broad range of resilience actions, alongside protection measures which will provide better protection to over 336,000 properties and provide an 11% reduction in flood and coastal erosion risk nationally.
- 3. Support our carbon and sustainability ambitions.** Encouraging investment and delivery to support the UK's legally binding target to achieve net zero greenhouse gas emissions from across the UK economy by 2050. For the Environment Agency only – encourage investment to support our ambition to become a net zero organisation by 2030.
- 4. Invest to achieve a wider range of outcomes**
  - i. **Maintain our ability to warn and inform people** at high risk of flooding from the rivers or sea **and respond to incidents** to save lives and property.
  - ii. **Enhance the environment.** Continue to contribute to wider net environmental gain, creating and improving habitat and rivers alongside flood and coastal schemes, including delivery of nature-based solutions.
  - iii. **Benefit the economy.** Maximise efficiency savings and value for money.
- 5. Work in collaborative partnerships to deliver multiple benefits.** All Risk Management Authorities working collaboratively and with local 'catchment partnerships' amongst other partners, securing partnership funding and jointly realising innovative, cost-effective solutions with a range of benefits.
- 6. Build and deliver balanced programmes.** Work with Regional Flood and Coastal Committees to ensure the nation is resilient to future flooding and coastal risks. Promote and maintain an adaptive medium to long term pipeline of local investment need.
- 7. Provide appropriate funding towards statutory requirements and essential specialist services** that enable delivery of flood and coastal risk outcomes.

**Appendix B: Indicative FCRM GiA capital allocation by RFCC**

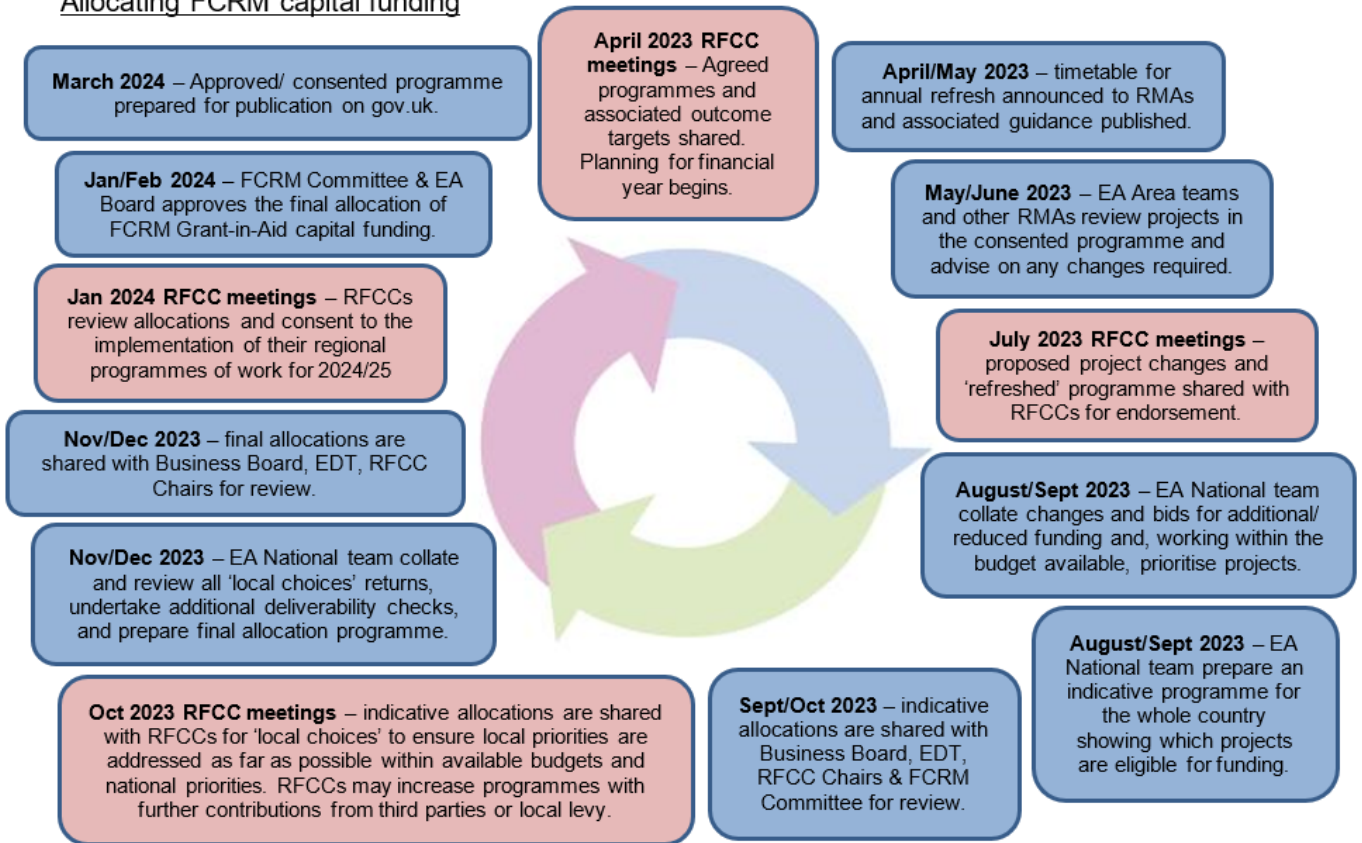
The following sets out the indicative allocations for each RFCC, and the target number of properties better protected.

RFCC	2023/24 allocation		2024/25 indicative allocation	
	£m	Max properties	£m	Max properties (CM/DEF/PLP Schemes ONLY)
Anglian Eastern	84.0	1,332	92.4	2,033
Anglian Great Ouse	12.9	1,213	12.4	84
Anglian Northern	47.0	4,929	56.5	3,788
North West	95.1	2,787	84.3	1,723
Northumbria	17.6	488	17.6	650
Severn and Wye	25.8	1,646	21.0	292
South West	34.7	1,892	41.8	1,714
Southern	103.7	9,648	73.0	6,103
Thames	86.2	3,364	104.6	3,925
Trent	44.8	1,526	52.8	1,267
Wessex	72.4	5,767	117.2	4,182
Yorkshire	90.2	4,708	80.2	1,349
<b>Total</b>	<b>714.4</b>	<b>39,302</b>	<b>753.8</b>	<b>27,110</b>

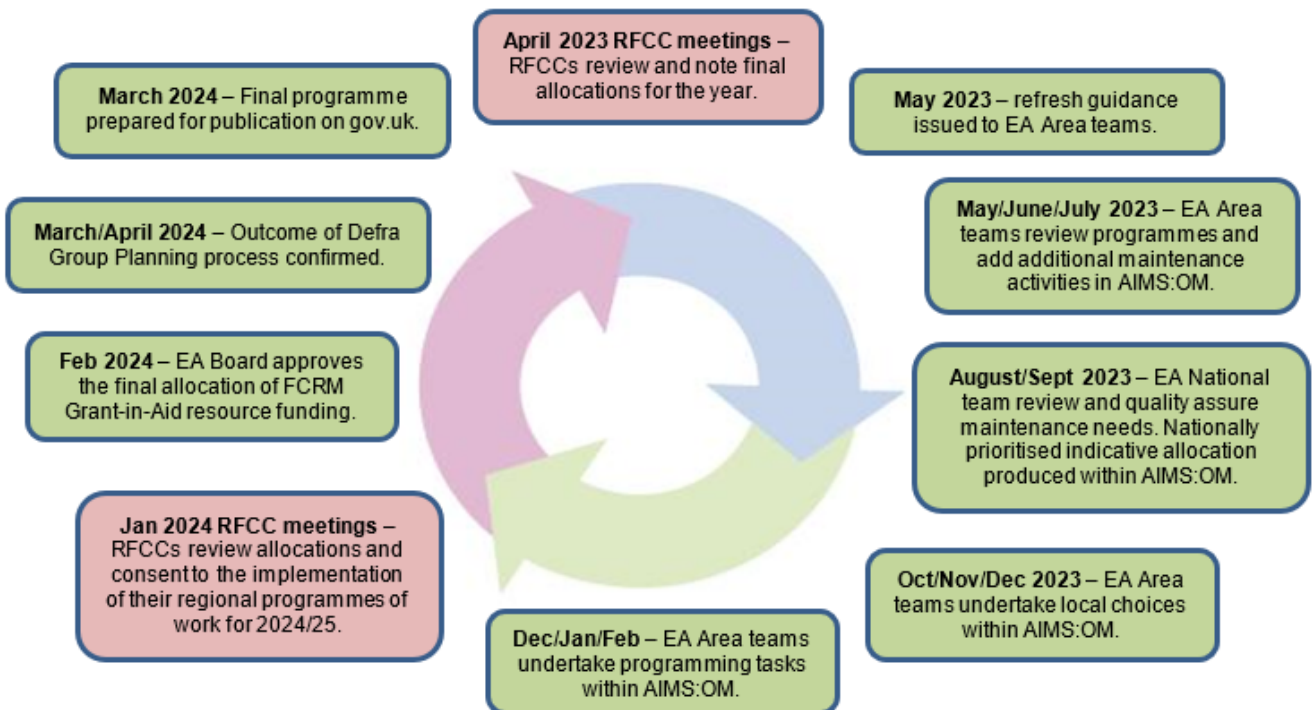
1. Numbers for 2024/25 include all scheme types and additional GiA funding (Other Government Department/Asset Replacement Allowance/Summer Economic/Frequently Flooded Allowance).
2. Properties figures have not been uplifted to account for non-residential properties and climate change impacts.
3. Currently £5m difference in total RFCC allocation which will be resolved through local choices.

**Appendix C: Process for allocating and approving funding for 2024/25**

Allocating FCRM capital funding



Allocating FCRM asset maintenance resource funding



**Appendix D: Additional resource Grant in Aid to support Asset maintenance in 2023-24  
Paper****RFCC Chairs Paper****Paper by: Director Portfolio Management & Assurance  
Subject: Additional In-Year Funding**

RFCC Chairs are asked to:

- 1 Note the proposed use of the additional resource (RDEL) Grant in Aid to support Asset maintenance in 2023-24.
- 2 Highlight any further proposals for the use of the funding in year

**1.0 Introduction**

- 1.1 In March, whilst discussing capital Grant in Aid (GiA) re-profiling, the Secretary of State (SoS) requested that we utilise £79m of the funding in 2023/24. The SoS set out how this should be spent, and this included funding towards nature-based solutions and towards resource funded asset maintenance.
- 1.2 Since March, plans have been developed and discussions undertaken with Defra and HM Treasury around the £79m and at the start of August, HM Treasury agreed that a total of £25m could be switched to resource funding.
- 1.3 This paper includes the proposal for the £25m resource investment. This funding has been provided with the intention of improving our overall asset condition following steer from the Secretary of State. The funding will also enable us to greater absorb the additional impacts of inflation.
- 1.4 RFCCs are being asked to note the proposed use of the additional funding, noting the risks in delivery, and highlight any additional work areas that they wish to be considered from the funding
- 1.5 This paper does not cover the Capital funding component of the £79m, and discussions are ongoing with Defra as part of the reprofile of the final three years of the FCRM Capital programme.

**2.0 Planned investment areas**

- 2.1 The proposals for investment include:
  - Increased Area delivered asset maintenance (see Annex A)
  - Nationally led works with funding towards:
    - Public Safety Risk Assessments
    - Specialised asset inspections (including RAAC concrete)
    - Eel Passage inspections
    - Tier 2 reservoirs risk assessments
    - National delivery support costs (for framework transition support to Areas and for nationally led improvements)



2.4 Funding for the decommissioning of selected FCRM assets has also been proposed; but the timing of receiving the funding has meant that these cannot be delivered successfully before the end of March 2024.

### **3.0 Current progress**

3.1 We are progressing the proposals with delivery teams and assessing deliverability, considering the limited time available this financial year as we are already at the end of Q2.

3.2 Environment Agency Area teams have investigated how much of the additional funding could be delivered through local maintenance programmes. Concurrently to the local delivery conversations, national operational teams are also starting to progress a range of activities on behalf of the local teams.

3.3 Alongside the increases to maintenance spend, we are progressing with conversations around amending the Grant Memorandum to allow the potential for non-EA Risk Management Authorities to claim resource costs that support the delivery of the capital programme. Further information on this will be provided within a separate paper.

### **4.0 Risks**

4.1 The additional funding has been received with the expectation that our asset condition position increases by 0.5%. This is a challenge, and a key risk is that this level of increase is not reached.

4.2 In addition, the timing of decisions has meant that delivery timelines are pressed to ensure spending is utilised by the end of March 2024. This funding cannot be carried over into future years and so does not impact on the figures provided within the 'allocation' paper also provided.

4.3 The summarised key risks are:

- Delivery capacity (internal EA teams and the supply chain with short lead in times)
- Reaching agreement on the ability in providing funding to Other RMAs (through the Grant Memorandum) and the capacity of the Other RMAs to then utilise that funding
- Expected to increase asset condition by 0.5%; but this is challenging

### **5.0 Summary**

RFCC Chairs are asked to:

1. Note the proposed use of the additional resource Grant in Aid to support Asset maintenance in 2023-24.
2. Highlight any further proposals for the use of the funding in year

**Dan Bond**  
**Deputy Director Portfolio Management Office**  
**14 September 2023**

**Annex A: Revised Area/RFCC Resource GiA Funding**

<b>Area</b>	<b>Opening Allocation</b>	<b>New Area Allocation</b>	<b>Increase</b>
Cumbria and Lancashire	6.5	7.1	0.6
Devon Cornwall & the Isles of Scilly	5.4	6.2	0.8
East Anglia	13.9	14.5	0.6
East Midlands	13.2	13.2	0.0
Greater Manchester Merseyside and Cheshire	5.2	6.0	0.8
Hertfordshire and North London	5.3	6.1	0.8
Kent South London and East Sussex	17.7	18.8	1.1
Lincolnshire and Northamptonshire	11.8	12.7	0.9
North East	2.9	3.0	0.2
Solent and South Downs	5.4	5.7	0.3
Thames	3.7	4.3	0.6
Wessex	8.1	11.7	3.6
West Midlands	7.3	7.8	0.6
Yorkshire	13.8	13.9	0.1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>120.2</b>	<b>131.0</b>	<b>10.8</b>

<b>RFCC</b>	<b>Opening Allocation</b>	<b>New RFCC Allocation</b>	<b>Increase</b>
Anglian Eastern	8.9	9.2	0.3
Anglian Great Ouse	5.0	5.3	0.3
Anglian Northern	11.8	12.7	0.9
North West	11.8	13.1	1.4
Northumbria	2.9	3.0	0.2
Severn and Wye	4.6	4.9	0.3
South West	5.4	6.2	0.8
Southern	11.5	12.2	0.6
Thames	20.6	22.6	2.1
Trent	15.8	16.1	0.3
Wessex	8.1	11.7	3.6
Yorkshire	13.8	13.9	0.1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>120.2</b>	<b>131.0</b>	<b>10.8</b>

# Report to the North West RFCC Finance & Business Assurance Sub Group

6<sup>th</sup> October 2023

## NW RFCC Local Levy programme

### 1. Review of scheme allocations

- 1.1. In response to the forecast of rapid reduction in the Local Levy balance over the next two years, since the last meeting a thorough review of future allocations has been undertaken. This has been carried out in conjunction with Programming teams, project teams and RMAs through the Local Authority Capital Project Advisors. This has focussed particularly on the next three financial years up to 2026- 27.
- 1.2. This review has identified some allocations which needed to be reprofiled beyond the current programme or which are no longer required. These projects have been removed or pushed back in the scenario beyond the current programme. This totals £1.657 million. The list is set out in Table A1 in Appendix A.
- 1.3. The review has also involved an assessment of confidence levels on the remaining schemes in terms of scheme feasibility, certainty of Levy funding need, and the amount of Local Levy funding likely to be required. There remains a degree of uncertainty generally which is unavoidable given how costs and funding contributions can change throughout scheme development, even once they are in construction. The programme and these confidence levels will be kept under review.
- 1.4. There is another tranche of schemes with only a medium/low confidence of the indicative Local Levy allocations in the scenario still being required, at least within the programme period up to 2027. These allocations total £4.43 million. These will remain in the scenario until further information is received but the lower level of confidence attached will help the Programming team to better manage this uncertainty and provide a more nuanced future view of the Levy programme for the Finance and Business Assurance Sub Group. Table A2 in Appendix A lists these schemes.

### 2. Current position 2023-24

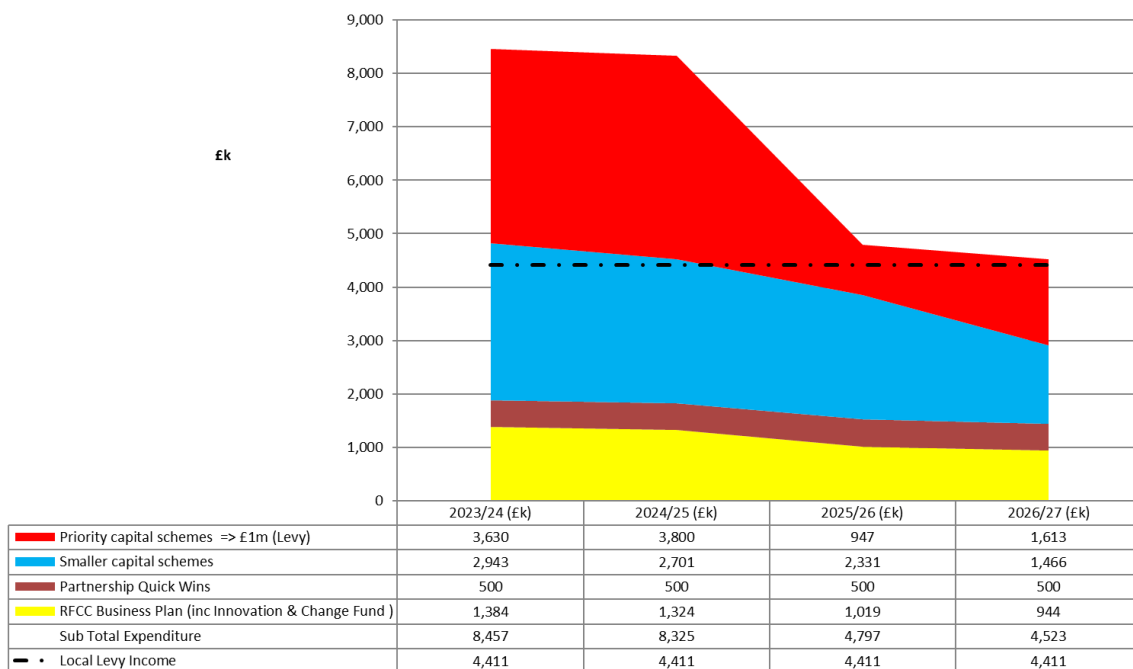
- 2.1. The North West RFCC started the 2023-24 financial year with a total Local Levy resource of £15.550 million (£4.411 million income plus £11.139 million balance carried forward from 2022-23).
- 2.2. The total current allocation for 2023-24 is £8.457 million. This has reduced from £9.557 million approved by the RFCC in July 2023. This is as a result of the 2023-24 allocation for the 'Irwell Vale to Chatterton' scheme being reprofiled to 2027-28.

Table 1 - Updated Summary of Local Levy income and spend

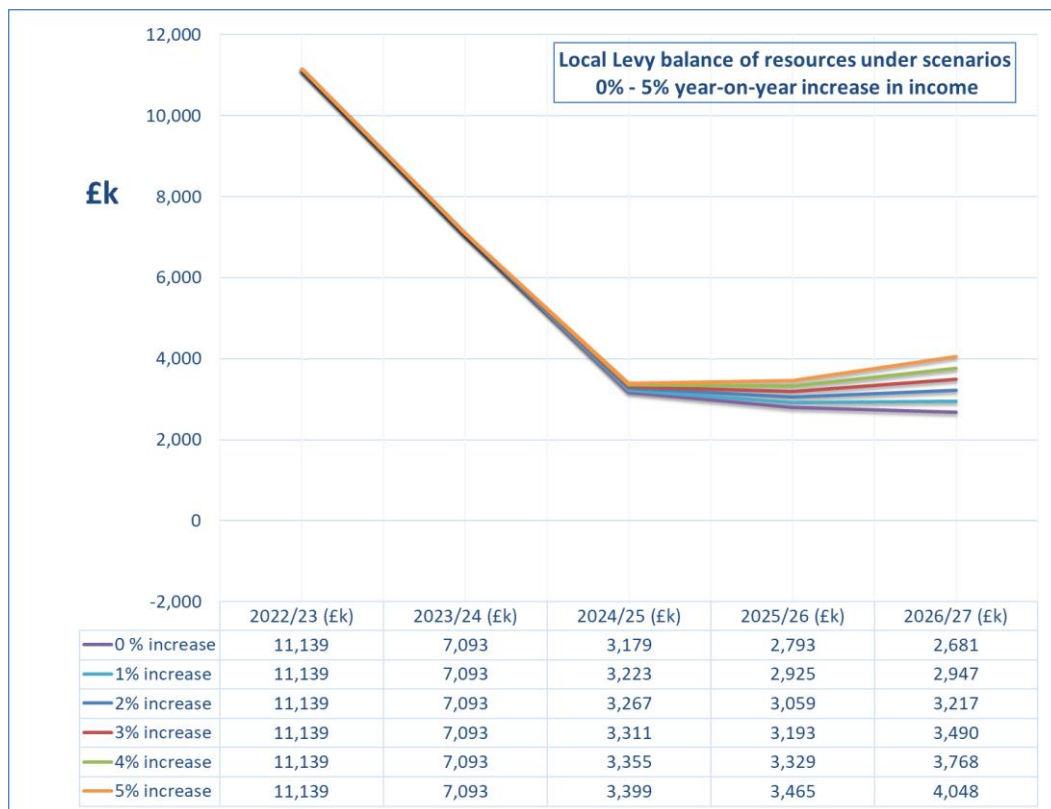
2023-24	
<b>Local Levy income and allocation summary (£ million)</b>	
Cash balance at start of year	11.139
Local Levy income	4.411
Total available balance	15.550
Allocation	8.457
Expected remaining balance at year end (based on allocation)	7.093

2.3. The graphs below illustrate the updated Local Levy income & expenditure scenario, and the forecast trajectory for the Local Levy balance.

Graph 1 - Local Levy scenario expenditure to 2026/27



Graph 2 – Updated Local Levy balance forecast



- 2.4. 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 above £7 million.
- 2.5. As a result of the review of future allocations, this shows that there is now expected to be a more gradual reduction in the Local Levy balance to somewhere between £3 - £3.5 million by the end of 2024/25 and then remaining at that level. In July, the report indicated the balance could be fully used by 2025/26. As projects in the programme continue to be developed, more requests for Local Levy will come to the RFCC to utilise the funding that has been freed up. While a reducing balance is something the RFCC are keen to see, a more gradual reduction will enable the programme to adapt and reduce in size more gradually rather than requiring a rapid contraction of the programme.

### 3. Requests for Local Levy support for FCRM schemes

- 3.1. There are no requests for Local Levy support on FCERM schemes this quarter.
- 3.2. As an indicator of possible future requests, there is a significant funding gap (up to £5 million) on the Preston South Ribble scheme. The project team are still exploring other options at this stage. There may be a request for an additional Local Levy contribution at an upcoming RFCC meeting round.

## 4. Local Levy Strategy Refresh

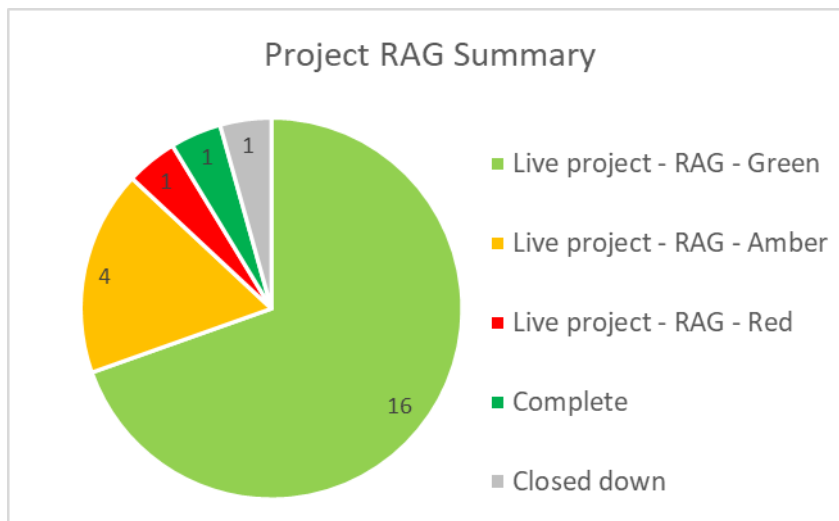
- 4.1. At the July meeting, the RFCC confirmed its support for a refresh of its Local Levy Strategy. To initiate this, the Strategy document was re-circulated, the key areas for updating highlighted, and a survey provided to give the opportunity for member and officer feedback to these and any other aspects of the Strategy.
- 4.2. To date a total of nine responses have been received. These have been from a mixture of RFCC members, EA officers and local authorities (or LA officers).
- 4.3. As well as updating references to the Business Plan and removing reference to the former Innovation and Change Fund (now simply Business Plan investment), there were three areas proposed for consideration as part of the refresh. These were:
  - A) The addition of an emphasis on the transferability of learning from Business Plan projects
  - B) Consideration of the £ value threshold at which the 15% cap on Local Levy contributions should apply to capital scheme contributions.
  - C) Confirmation of how unused Local Levy allocations will be managed.
- 4.4. There was clear consensus in support of aspects A and C and on B there was consistent support for retaining the 15% cap and the current threshold at which it applies.
- 4.5. Appendix C provides a summary of the responses received which will be taken into account in the refresh, resulting in a revised draft Strategy document for RFCC review at the January 2024 meeting.

## 5. RFCC Business Plan

### 5.1. Summary

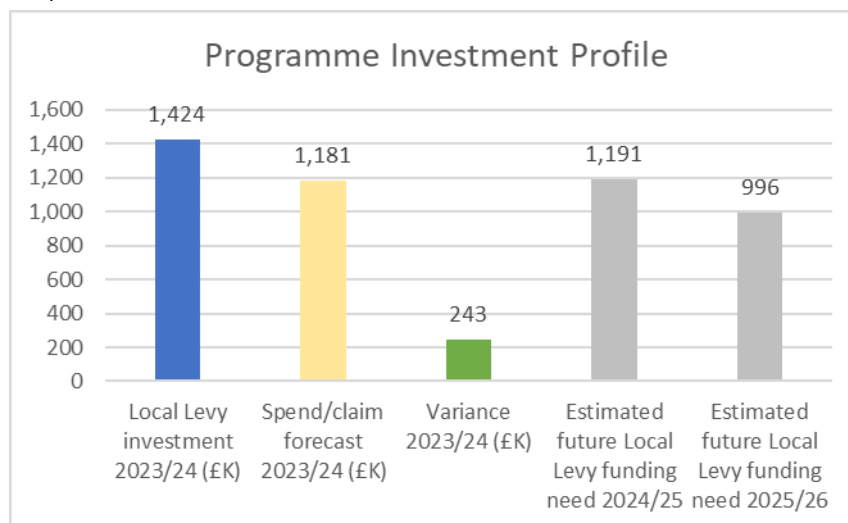
- 5.1.1. Good progress continues to be made on projects with more now moving from the initiation stage into delivery.
- 5.1.2. Of the 23 projects adopted as part of the RFCC’s Business Plan, 21 are Live of which 16 are currently rated Green (good progress), four are rated Amber (issues constraining progress), and one is rated Red (not actively progressing currently). One project was closed down in July 2023 and another is now complete.

Graph 3 Progress status of Business Plan projects



- 5.1.3. The RFCC has approved Business Plan investment in 2023/24 of £1.424 million. The latest most likely spend forecast is £1.181 million. This represents an underspend this year of £243K.

Graph 4 Business Plan Investment Profile to 2025/26



- 5.1.4. The tables below show how this breaks down across the Business Plan Ambitions.

Table 2 Progress status of Business Plan projects by Ambition

Ambition	No. of projects approved	Live project - RAG - Green	Live project - RAG - Amber	Live project - RAG - Red	Complete	Closed down
Accessing investment and funding	4	2	1	1	0	0
Building community resilience	5	4	1	0	0	0
Managing water at catchment scale with nature	4	2	1	0	1	0
Achieving climate resilient planning, development & infrastructure	5	4	0	0	0	1
Increasing RMA capacity and collaboration	5	4	1	0	0	0
	<b>23</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>

Table 3 Investment profile by Ambition

Ambition	Local Levy investment 2023/24 (£K)	Spend/claim forecast 2023/24 (£K)	Variance 2023/24 (£K)	Estimated Local Levy funding need 2024/25	Estimated Local Levy funding need 2025/26
Accessing investment and funding	220	115	105	120	95
Building community resilience	250	310	-61	250	250
Managing water at catchment scale with nature	111	54	57	30	30
Achieving climate resilient planning, development & infrastructure	224	123	101	199	54
Increasing RMA capacity and collaboration	619	579	40	592	567
	<b>1,424</b>	<b>1,181</b>	<b>243</b>	<b>1,191</b>	<b>996</b>

5.2. Appendix D provides a brief update on all live projects within the Business Plan including highlights of activity over the last quarter.

### 5.3. Projects complete

#### 5.3.1. ID19 Natural Flood Management (NFM) Delivery (Carryover)

Prior to the launch of this Business Plan, the RFCC provided Local Levy funding for a North West natural flood management (NFM) programme. There were two legacy NFM projects in Cumbria which had been promised Local Levy funding in 2021/22 but which had not been completed. The RFCC therefore approved £39K of Levy funding to allow their completion.

It has now been confirmed that the Forest Hills project (£29.8K) was completed before the end of March 2023 (in 2022/23). The Smithy Brook (£8.8K) project completed in August 2023.

This project within the RFCC's Business Plan is therefore now complete with the £39K funding fully drawn down.





Smithy Brook -  
completion of Dam 5

### 5.3.2. ID14 Local authority capital project delivery challenges

The RFCC has recognised the challenges that Local Authorities can have in securing national Grant-in-Aid funding for capital projects, in getting projects approved through the preparation of business cases, and in navigating the Environment Agency's processes, systems and forms to allow them to successfully deliver capital flood risk schemes in a timely manner.

A national RMA capacity task and finish group was convened two years ago which considered feedback from other RMAs in what could be improved. A list of recommendations and actions were identified which were then taken forward by various depts within the EA at a national level and by the Future Investment Leadership Group. Various changes which will bring about improvements have been rolled out or are expected soon.

- A new Investment and Partnership Funding Community SharePoint site has been created [Supporting Flood and Coast Projects - Home Page \(sharepoint.com\)](https://sharepoint.com). This site is constantly being updated and new content added, and it is already proving to be an invaluable resource.
- Changes are being made to the FCERM forms to make them more user friendly and easier to complete, and they will be shared (with guidance on how to complete them) once issued. Through proactive engagement with relevant national teams, the Capital Programme Co-ordinator (CPC) arranged for the North West to have early sight of drafts of these forms, and we are confident that they are a vast improvement on the existing ones.
- The business case templates are being redrafted which should make completing them less onerous, particularly for lower value projects.
- Assurance levels have been evaluated and lower value projects can now be assured locally by Area teams rather than going to the National Project Assurance Service (independent panel). This should again speed up delivery. The process for this for RMA projects is currently being drafted by the CPC and will be shared with partners, including timescales for assurance, once finalised.
- The use of EA frameworks to manage and mitigate project delivery risk was considered and a national team is now being set up with the aim of guiding RMAs who wish to use the EA frameworks through the process. Again more details on this will be shared with RMAs once the team is in place.

In addition to these recent improvements, the North West has the team of five Local Authority Capital Project Advisors (LACPAs) who work directly to support LAs on delivery of capital projects and can assist with any delivery challenges. They are able to feed back on any continuing issues or blockers so that this can be logged and any common themes further explored.

Skills, capacity and training are ongoing challenges within RMAs, which the team of LACPAs, co-ordinated and led by the Capital Programme Co-ordinator (CPC), is actively addressing (Action ID15 of the RFCC Business Plan). Training has been delivered over the past year in response to identified need (for detail see Appendix D (ID15)) and will continue to be delivered as needed. Training is provided on an ad hoc basis in specific LAs where needed. There is also a new national training and development for RMAs group which has recently been convened. The North West CPC resource is part of this group and is looking to share best practice across the country. This will open up further training opportunities for our RMAs. Information from this should roll out later in the autumn and if there are still gaps in the training provision, this is something we can explore in the NW. The CPC has successfully accessed EA national training budget to deliver training to RMAs over the last two years, reducing the need for Local Levy spend, and anticipates being able to do this again in the future to upskill RMAs in our region.

While many of these improvements are still to land and be fully embedded, and there will undoubtedly still be some challenges felt by LAs in delivering their capital projects, there is significant change happening in response to the feedback received. We are required to comply with EA national procedures and there is limited scope for any additional North West specific changes to processes. It is therefore recommended that this action is now considered business as usual through the provision of the LACPAs and CPC and be closed down as a specific Business Plan action. Action ID15 (RMA Capacity Building Programme) will continue to be a live project.

**Asks of the FBASG:**

The Sub Group are asked to formally recognise and approve the completion of projects as live projects within the Business Plan:

- ID19 NFM Delivery (Carryover)
- ID14 LA capital project delivery challenges

## **5.4. Proposed funding allocation changes**

### **5.4.1. ID12 Paving over front gardens**

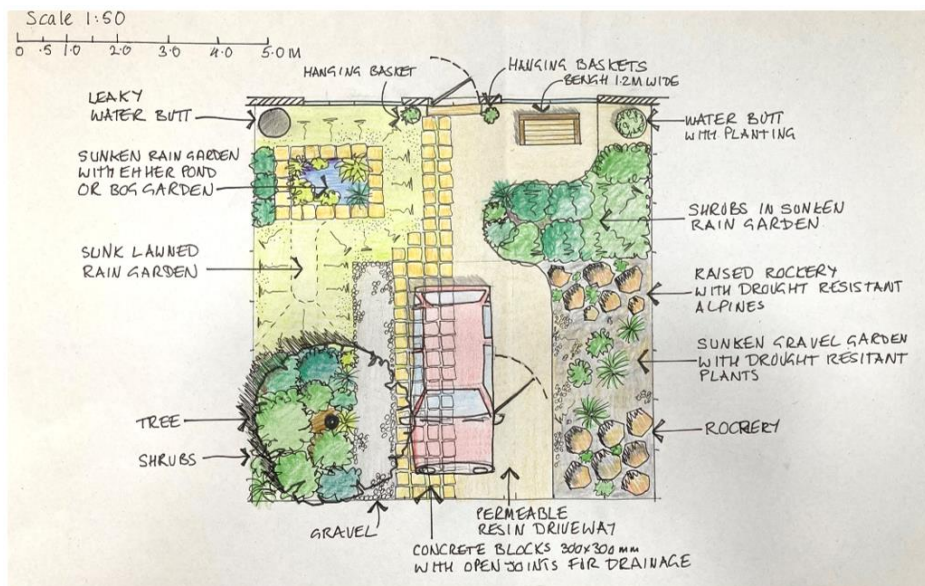
A fuller briefing note is provided as Appendix E.

This project is seeking to influence the degree to which front gardens are being replaced with permeable surfaces across the North West. It is led by a core project working group which includes Lancashire County Council, United Utilities and the Environment Agency. The project currently has approved Local Levy funding to provide the Project Manager role. Now that this role is established and a scope and plan for the project

developed, the project group are seeking an additional contribution of Local Levy Funding from the RFCC to enable the project to deliver key products.

A key planned deliverable of the project is to exhibit a Show Feature Garden at the RHS Tatton show in July 2024 which will showcase innovative alternatives to front garden driveway construction. The project plans to appoint an appropriate Professional Landscape Designer who can assist us in the design and execution of the Show Feature Garden. We are also aiming to provide a practical learning opportunity for a horticulture or landscape architecture student where they can assist us in the design and formation of the garden. The garden will have a lasting legacy as we plan to relocate it to a publicly accessible location after the Show, where it can be used as a best practise case study to inspire the public, students, and educators for years to come.

Below is an early concept design for the garden. Clearly the garden design will change once the project has a landscape designer on board but this concept includes some of the features that the project will be seeking in the final garden design.



We are also exploring the opportunity of displaying an educational exhibit at a new indoor RHS Urban Show at Mayfield Park in April 2024. This show caters to a different demographic by focusing on gardening in smaller spaces and by focusing on gardening which is applicable to tenants and rented properties. Cumulatively by exhibiting at the RHS Tatton Show, RHS Urban Show, and the relocation of the RHS Tatton Show Feature Garden, along with the associated social media and promotional and educational opportunities, this will ensure that all demographics representative of the Northwest Region benefit from the project's educational messaging.

The Core Project Working Group are now requesting an additional £30k of Local Levy Funding to help facilitate the project's deliverables. Based on current estimates, this is likely to be split into £20k for the RHS Tatton Show Feature Garden, and £10k on the delivery of other awareness raising and educational activities.

United Utilities are currently seeking agreement to match fund any investment the project receives from the RFCC's Local Levy for the RHS Show Feature Garden.

This request for an increase in Levy investment has been endorsed by the relevant Ambition Steering Group.

**Ask of the FBASG:**

The NW Finance and Business Assurance Sub Group is asked to endorse and recommend to the RFCC an increase of £30K Local Levy funding for this project. This will be required across 2023/24 and 2024/25.

**5.4.2. Funding for Capital Programme Co-ordinator Resource (part of ID16)**

A fuller briefing note is provided as Appendix F.

In 2017, the RFCC approved Local Levy funding, for an initial 2-year trial period, of a senior advisor role to co-ordinate the team of five Local Authority Capital Project Advisors. This role co-ordinates the deployment of the advisor resources across NW authorities, and has developing the new team which has seen significant turnover in the last two years. The role also supports the effective functioning of the partnerships (particularly on monitoring the delivery of the capital programme) as well as leading on training and development for the LA CPAs and upskilling LA staff as needed. As the RFCC Business Plan has developed, the role has also provided leadership on some of the actions around Increasing RMA Capacity and Collaboration.

This role was recruited to in May 2022 as the Capital Programme Co-ordinator (CPC) and it is now time to review the role. A briefing paper (Appendix E) provides an update on the work of the post holder over the last 18 months, supporting changes that are being introduced, as well as the support that will be needed for Local Authorities going forward.

With delivery of the North West's capital programme currently underpinned and somewhat reliant on the additional support capacity provided by the five LA CPAs and the CPC, and given the large proportion of the programme being LA delivered, it would be a huge risk to the delivery of the North West's capital programme to change the level of support at this stage.

The proposal is therefore for the funding for the Capital Programme Co-ordinator post (£69K per year including on-costs) to be continued to the end of March 2027, for it then to be reviewed again in line with the LA CPA resources. This is on the basis that alternative funding streams will be explored between now and 2027 to potentially reduce the Local Levy support for all or some of the roles.

**Ask of the FBASG:**

The NW Finance and Business Assurance Sub Group is asked to endorse and recommend to the RFCC the continuation of funding for the Capital Programme Co-ordinator post to the end of March 2027 when it will be reviewed again in line with the other five Levy funded posts which are in place to directly support Local Authority capital project delivery. This is on the basis that alternative funding streams will be explored between now and 2027 to potentially reduce the Local Levy support for all or some of the roles.

# APPENDICES

<b>Appendix A</b>	<b>Result of Local Levy scheme allocations review</b>
<b>Appendix B</b>	<b>Local Levy Programme 2023/24 (Update)</b>
<b>Appendix C</b>	<b>RFCC Local Levy Strategy Refresh - Summary of responses received</b>
<b>Appendix D</b>	<b>RFCC Business Plan – Project Updates</b>
<b>Appendix E</b>	<b>RFCC Business Plan - ID12 ‘Paving Over Front Gardens’ Project</b>
<b>Appendix F</b>	<b>RFCC Business Plan – Review of Capital Programme Co-ordinator role (part of ID16)</b>

<b>Appendix A</b>	<b>Result of Local Levy scheme allocations review</b>
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**Table A1 – Schemes no longer requiring indicative Local Levy allocations**

<b>Scheme</b>	<b>Lead RMA</b>	<b>Partnership</b>	<b>Local Levy allocation removed (£K)</b>
River Calder at Whalley	Environment Agency	Lancashire	577
Poaka Beck, Dalton in Furness	Environment Agency	Cumbria	250
Harrington, River Wyre	Environment Agency	Cumbria	150
Ennerdale Bridge, Croasdale Beck	Environment Agency	Cumbria	128
Coniston (FRM exceedance flow routing and RR/NFM)	Environment Agency	Cumbria	100
Common Lane Brook, Leigh	Environment Agency	Greater Manchester	87
Partridge Way, Chadderton, Oldham	Oldham Council	Greater Manchester	85
Dobcross New Road, Oldham	Oldham Council	Greater Manchester	75
High Street Lees, Count End	Oldham Council	Greater Manchester	75
Beetham Surface Water Flood Alleviation	Westmorland & Furness Council	Cumbria	55
High & Low Lorton	Environment Agency	Cumbria	50
Medlock Road, Oldham	Oldham Council	Greater Manchester	15
Greenbank, Ambleside Surface Water Flooding	Westmorland & Furness Council	Cumbria	10
		<b>Total</b>	<b>1,657</b>

**Table A2 – Schemes with a medium or low confidence of their Local Levy allocation being required within the programme to 2027**

<b>Scheme</b>	<b>Lead RMA</b>	<b>Partnership</b>	<b>Total future Levy allocation (£K)</b>
Irwell Vale to Chatterton	Environment Agency	Greater Manchester	2,200
Crosby Marine Lake to Formby Point Coastal Scheme	Sefton Council	Merseyside	1,000
Hindley Group	Environment Agency	Greater Manchester	450
Alder Forest, Eccles	Environment Agency	Greater Manchester	400
Stockport Road, Romiley	Stockport MBC	Greater Manchester	120
Alt Crossens Drainage Investigations	Environment Agency	Cumbria	100

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Lyth Valley Drainage Investigations	Environment Agency	Cumbria	80
Longford Brook Flood Alleviation Scheme	Trafford MBC	Greater Manchester	50
Waver Wampool Drainage Investigation	Environment Agency	Cumbria	30
		<b>Total</b>	<b>4,430</b>

<b>Appendix B</b>	<b>2023-24 Local Levy Programme</b>
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<b>Partnership</b>	<b>LRMA Name</b>	<b>Scheme Name</b>	<b>2023-24 Local Levy (£k)</b>
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>
<b>Cumbria Total</b>			<b>2357</b>
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
<b>Lancashire Total</b>			<b>1,800</b>
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
<b>Cheshire/Mid Mersey Total</b>			<b>215</b>
Greater Manchester	Environment Agency	River Roch, Rochdale & Littleborough FRM Scheme	1,200
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>
<b>Greater Manchester Total</b>			<b>2,601</b>
Merseyside	Liverpool City Council	Merseyside Quick Win Projects	100
<b>Merseyside Total</b>			<b>100</b>
Cross Partnership	All	RFCC Business Plan	<b>1384</b>
<b>Grand Total</b>			<b>8,457</b>



<b>Appendix C</b>	<b>RFCC Local Levy Strategy Refresh - Summary of responses received</b>
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## **Aspects highlighted for update/refresh**

### **A) The addition of an emphasis on the transferability of learning from Business Plan projects**

This will ensure the benefits are shared across the North West. With the model we've adopted for Business Plan implementation of partnerships leading on specific ambitions and projects, this will affect where the Local Levy funding goes and it is vital that the outputs and benefits of the work are felt across the North West.

#### **Summary of responses**

The responses to the survey show wide support for this additional principle. Additional comments recognise the important role for the partnership co-ordinators in this and the key role for the Environment Agency in its Business Plan overview role. There are also opportunities for greater sharing of learning nationally with other RFCCs which we could probably do more proactively.

### **B) Consideration of the £ value threshold at which the 15% cap on Local Levy contributions should apply to capital scheme contributions.**

The cap currently applies where the Local Levy contribution would be £500,000 or more, i.e. where the total scheme cost is £3.3 million or more. The original principle was to prevent the Levy providing majority funding on schemes, but recognising there is a de minimis threshold for small schemes below which a higher percentage might be considered if it provided value for money. The effect of raising the threshold would be to allow bigger schemes to secure a higher proportion of Local Levy funding but leaving less Local Levy in the programme for other projects. Lowering it would mean that smaller schemes would need to find a larger proportion of their funding from other sources, but there would be more Levy available in the programme for other projects.

#### **Summary of responses**

The responses show broad support for retaining the 15% cap on Local Levy contributions to capital FCERM schemes and for retaining the current threshold of a £500K Levy contribution. It was recognised that the 15% is in line with the national partnership funding expectation.

There is a question raised on whether the RFCC should consider introducing a maximum £ sum of Levy contribution to prevent 15% contributions on very large schemes having a disproportionate impact on the fund. This was considered when the current Strategy was prepared and will be reconsidered as part of the refresh although the current Strategy position does allow the RFCC to approve a smaller than 15% proportion on the larger schemes. The importance of projects developing funding plans to minimise the burden on Local Levy was also raised.

**C) Confirmation of how unused Local Levy allocations will be managed.**

Any changes to process will be developed collaboratively and agreed by the RFCC before implementation.

**Summary of responses**

Respondents supported the release of any unused Local Levy allocations back into the Local Levy programme where they are no longer needed or where there is insufficient explanation and justification for retention and reprofiling. However, it was also clear that it is very important for the process through which this is done be clear and visible, and done in close conjunction with project leads/teams. The RFCC is committed to this.

**Other comments**

Included:

- Placing greater emphasis on the natural capital approach and designing wider benefits into flood risk management measures to lever in more sources of investment and promote local ownership and stewardship.
- The need for greater clarity on the process and requirements for requesting Local Levy funding.
- Establishing agreed arrangements for the regular review of roles funded partly or wholly by the RFCC.

<b>Appendix D</b>	<b>RFCC Business Plan – Project Updates</b>
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<b>ID</b>	<b>Project title</b>	<b>Progress (RAG) rating</b>	<b>Update</b>
<b>ACCESSING INVESTMENT AND FUNDING</b>			
ID1	Investment mapping feasibility project	Green	This feasibility project will look at the range of potential investment sources available for flood risk measures, primarily for LLFAs, and explore options for making detailed information on these more accessible and easier to identify. Project scope complete, procurement of consultants (Arup) complete (via GMCA), and collaborative agreement currently being prepared.
ID2.1	Investment in the development of innovative green finance mechanisms - Wyre Catchment CIC	Green	Adrian Lythgo currently represents the RFCC on the Project Board and receives Qly update reports. At the last meeting there were a couple of issues of concern raised. Firstly that one of the two monitoring sites required to be installed as part of the contract was outstanding, due to delays reaching agreement with a key major landowners. A provisional agreement is now in place and the second monitoring station should be installed in Autumn 2023. Slippage beyond March 2024 would not be acceptable. The first monitoring station is now returning initial indicative results. There were also some concerns about the financial position and cash flow forecasts of the CIC (community interest company) provided at the last Board meeting which shows a long term loss and negative cash flow. This information has subsequently been updated to more accurately reflect revenues and it now demonstrates the CIC is still expecting to make a small profit which will be reinvested in the catchment, and has a positive cash flow. This removed the concerns about the financial stability of the organisation.
ID2.2	Investment in the development of innovative green finance mechanisms - Project RAINCOAT	Amber	Due to loss of a key resource from the project, and challenges around aligning investment source timeframes between partners, project progress has stalled somewhat. No spend on the SuDS retrofit delivery project is now expected in 2023/24 (including Local Levy). In-principle support for Local Levy investment in 2023/24 (only) had been given, pending the proposal of formal contracting arrangements for the financing mechanism that would enable the delivery project. The RFCC is expected to have clarity in January 2024 on whether there will be a formal confirmed request for RFCC investment support. If not, the project will be proposed for close-down from the Business Plan at that stage.
ID3	Assessment and valuation of wider benefits of flood and coastal erosion risk management schemes	Red	Project was paused for re-scoping and other projects have been taking priority. No further progress to date.
<b>BUILDING COMMUNITY RESILIENCE</b>			
ID5	The Flood Hub	Green	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>29,056 page views (similar to same period last year)</li> </ul>

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>15,261 users (an increase of 3,103 users on the same period last year)</li> <li>233 websites now link to TFH</li> <li>Recently focused on the learning section to promote the KS2 flooding and climate change lessons (between early July and end of August)</li> <li>Launched Low Crosby GCSE case study</li> <li>Currently running the flood Aware, Plan and Prepare campaign</li> <li>Supported social media campaigns for 30 days 30 ways and World Water Week</li> <li>3 campaigns planned for October – December: Who plays a part in managing flood risk; Coastal flooding, erosion and management; and Community flood resilience.</li> <li>New flood scheme pages added for Hindley, Cockermouth and Carlisle Phase 1b.</li> </ul>
ID5A	The Flood Hub - National expansion	Amber	Significant level of interest from other RFCCs is apparent. Early exploration of commercial arrangements/implications has taken place. National level consideration between EA and RFCCs now required.
ID6	Supporting community engagement on adapting to coastal change	Green	Smaller part of the work programme being delivered by Newground. Ongoing liaison and support for the Coastal Group as required. Some of direct community engagement supported by Newground has been with coastal communities. Social media comms campaign on Coastal flooding, erosion and management planned for Oct – Dec period.
ID7	Action campaign – Flood resilience	Green	This quarter, Newground have: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engaged with approximately 160 members of the public.</li> <li>Engaged with 12 elected members.</li> <li>Attended 25 stakeholder meetings.</li> <li>Attended 2 flood group meetings / 1 site walk over.</li> <li>Attended 1 property / community site visit to discuss resilience, flood planning and PFR.</li> <li>Delivered 1 presentation and talk to residents and parish council members around property flood resilience.</li> <li>Supported with the delivery of 4 community door-knocking exercises in partnership with the EA.</li> <li>Received and dealt with 53 Flood Hub website enquiries, some with further emails and phone calls for advice, support and guidance.</li> </ul>
ID8	Flood Poverty Project	Green (Almost complete)	Work is substantially complete. Findings report currently being finalised. Remaining focus is on sharing learning (inc as part of October 2023 RFCC meeting agenda and site visit).
<b>MANAGING WATER AT CATCHMENT SCALE WITH NATURE</b>			
ID9	Whole catchment approach - GM IWMP Learning	Green	An additional commission has been given to the consultants (Jacobs) who are supporting on the development of the GM Integrated Water Management Plan, to carry out an in-depth, lessons learned exercise to extract transferable learning more widely. Scope finalised and work is underway, for completion Autumn 2023.
ID9A	NFM Technical Appraisal resource	Green	5-year collaborative agreement in place (to 2026) with Mersey Forest to half-fund a technical appraisal resource for NFM (Rob Dyer), available to all North West partnerships/authorities.

ID19	NFM project delivery (Carryover)	Complete	Forest Hills (£30K) was completed in 2022/23. Smithy Brook (£9K) project completed in August 23.
ID20	Land management engagement	Amber	Currently no active intervention at RFCC level due to other priorities but at member and officer level there is a significant amount of ongoing engagement with Defra on the Environmental Land Management Scheme (ELMS), on NFM etc.
<b>ACHIEVING CLIMATE RESILIENT PLANNING, DEVELOPMENT &amp; INFRASTRUCTURE</b>			
ID10	Evidence gathering – Climate resilience within planning and development	Green	2022/23 Liverpool University student projects successfully completed in January 2023 and recommendations considered by Steering Group to inform future work. Reports will be uploaded to Sharepoint site once launched and are available on request. A second round of projects for 2023/24 focussing on planning conditions and enforcement has been scoped and will be starting soon, to be completed in January 2024.
ID12	Action campaign – Paving over front gardens	Green	Project well underway and plan in place. Current focus is on developing a show feature garden at RHS Tatton in 2024, and associated comms and awareness raising activity, subject to RFCC additional funding request.
ID4/13	Data sharing and mapping of flood risk and drainage assets	Green	Project being led jointly by Greater Manchester and Merseyside partnerships. Project will take an in-depth look at existing asset registers across the two partnership areas, explore the practicalities of sharing and mapping assets across multiple partners, and then explore more collaborative and joined-up approaches to asset maintenance. Project scope complete, procurement of consultants (Arup) complete (via GMCA), and collaborative agreement currently being signed.
ID22	Highways SuDS Design Guide	Green	Project being jointly led by Transport for Greater Manchester and GM Combined Authority with a reference group providing the opportunity for input from a wide range of stakeholders. Design guide will be largely generic and transferable to other partnership situations. Project is well underway expected to be complete this financial year.
<b>INCREASING RMA CAPACITY AND COLLABORATION</b>			
ID14	Local authority capital project delivery challenges	Green	Project proposed for close down as a specific Business Plan action. Ongoing activity is now through the LA Capital Project Advisers and ID15 (Capacity Building Programme)
ID15	Risk management authority capacity building programme	Green	Funding has been obtained from EA national team to deliver training to NW RMAs on Business Case development, not requiring previously allocated Local Levy funding. Training sessions have been run in NW on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identifying and recording efficiencies</li> <li>Developing Quick Win projects</li> <li>Changes to the programme outcome reporting measures (such as properties better protected).</li> <li>Ad hoc training by LA CPA's on use of Power Portal to report progress and profile expected claims.</li> <li>LA CPA support with PAFS (system) as needed, especially around the time of the annual programme refresh.</li> </ul> Links have been developed with other areas across the country to share training and learning opportunities including sessions on partnership funding.

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			A national SharePoint site with training and resources is being developed which will further build RMA capacity.
ID16	Additional capacity (to support the RFCC, partnerships and risk management authorities)	Green	Partnership Co-ordinators – Cumbria have recently appointed a new Co-ordinator starting 2 October, all four other roles ongoing. LA Capital Project Advisers – all five roles filled and ongoing. Capital Senior Co-ordinator – see separate briefing note. Shoreline Management Plan Co-ordinator – role ongoing.
ID17	NW Coastal Centre of Excellence - Develop business case	Green	Project has carried over from previous year but development of business case is now actively underway. Expected to be completed this year.
ID18	RFCC Sharepoint site	Amber	Development of the site is underway but behind schedule due to resource shortages and other priorities. Target is for it to be complete and launched by March 2024.

## 1. Overview

The Business Plan includes this exciting project which is seeking to influence the degree to which front gardens are being replaced with permeable surfaces across the North West. It is led by a core project working group which includes Lancashire County Council, United Utilities and the Environment Agency. The project currently has approved Local Levy funding to provide the Project Manager role. Now that this role is established and a scope and plan for the project developed, the project group are seeking an additional contribution of Local Levy Funding from the RFCC to enable the project to deliver key products.

The project is intended to include a variety of awareness raising and influencing activities which are aimed at all stakeholders involved in the creation of impermeable front gardens/driveways. These include Householders, Local Authorities, Housing Developers, and Suppliers and Contractors within the Paving/Landscaping Sector.

## 2. Key deliverable

A key planned deliverable of the project is to exhibit a Show Feature Garden at the RHS Tatton show in July 2024 which will showcase innovative alternatives to front garden driveway construction. Focusing on permeable driveway materials, householder scale SuDS i.e., bioretention and raingardens, climate resilient planting, and rainwater harvesting. The Show Feature Garden will highlight the multiple benefits of sustainable drainage (SuDS) such as surface water management, urban cooling, increased water quality/pollutant control, and increased biodiversity and wildlife habitat creation.

We intend to apply for the RHS Show Feature Garden category which will have an educational focus. Please note that this is a non-judged category. We have selected this category as we feel it best fits the projects educational and awareness raising focus. It will allow us to host interactive activities which will engage the public to help raise awareness of the issues associated with impermeable front gardens/driveways, and there will be an opportunity for us to conduct primary research on the day in the form of public surveys; both of which would not be applicable to the judged Show Garden Category. We are also in discussions with RHS regarding the opportunity to host an educational talk on the day to raise awareness of the surface water flood risk and negative environmental consequences associated with using impermeable paving materials, and the subsequent loss of greenspace.

The RHS Tatton Show is well established and respected therefore it will provide an excellent opportunity to promote the project on a regional and national scale; through engagement with the public, exhibitors, and mainstream media outlets.

## 3. Legacy

The RHS Show Feature Garden will have a lasting legacy as we plan to relocate it to a publicly accessible location after the RHS Tatton Show, where it can be used as a best practise case study to inspire the public, students, and educators for years to come. It is intended for the Show Feature Garden to act as a research opportunity and case study for students and researchers by providing opportunities to monitor surface water flow rates and infiltration

rates. This will provide stakeholders with quantitative research, to support the promotion of householder scale sustainable drainage, including permeable surfacing, on a local, regional, and national scale.

The project plans to appoint an appropriate Professional Landscape Designer who can assist us in the design and execution of the Show Feature Garden. The Landscape Designer would be required to assist us from the design phase, right through to the post show phase when the garden is relocated to its permanent location. This will represent a significant element of the garden cost but is essential to making a success of the initiative.

Furthermore, we intend to provide a practical learning opportunity for a Horticulture Student(s) and/or Landscape Architect Student(s) where they can assist us in the design and formation of the garden.

Please note that the RHS Show Feature Garden will be subject to a successful application submission, however, we consider this to be low risk, subject to us securing sufficient funding. RHS have proven to be supportive of the proposed front garden/driveway theme during discussions so far.

We are also exploring the opportunity of displaying an educational exhibit at a new indoor RHS Urban Show at Mayfield Park in April 2024. Discussions with RHS regarding this opportunity are currently ongoing. RHS's intention for this show is to cater to a different demographic than their traditional shows by focusing on gardening in smaller spaces and by focusing on gardening which is applicable to tenants and rented properties.

Cumulatively by exhibiting at the RHS Tatton Show, RHS Urban Show, and the relocation of the RHS Tatton Show Feature Garden it would ensure that all demographics representative of the Northwest Region benefit from the Projects educational messaging. These deliverables will contribute to making sustainable drainage a mainstream solution to surface water run off at a householder scale.

#### **4. Wider awareness raising activity**

Other educational/awareness raising activities which the increased Local Levy allocation would support include but are not limited to:

- A North West wide social media campaign aiming to educate and influence householders on the issues associated with impermeable driveways and the alternative options available.
- Creation of a permeable driveway catalogue for use by householders and Local Authorities to inform them of the cost, installation, and maintenance requirements of various permeable and/or sustainable drained driveway options.

#### **5. Proposal**

The RFCC have previously committed to funding the Project Manager's role for an initial period of two years (£54K per year) (including on-costs).

The Core Project Working Group are now requesting an additional £30k of Local Levy Funding to help facilitate the project's deliverables. Based on current estimates, this is likely to be split



into £20k for the RHS Tatton Show Feature Garden, and £10k on the delivery of other awareness raising and educational activities.

United Utilities are currently seeking agreement to match fund any investment the project receives from the RFCC's Local Levy for the RHS Show Feature Garden.

Additionally, the Association of SuDS Authorities (ASA) have proposed a contribution of £750 towards the RHS Garden.

The RHS garden has received support from private companies specialising in permeable paving and householder sustainable drainage (SuDS) products who have offered to provide 'in kind' product donations.

## **6. Recommendation**

<p>The NW Finance and Business Assurance Sub Group is asked to endorse and recommend to the RFCC an increase of £30K Local Levy funding for this project. This will be required across 2023/24 and 2024/25.</p>
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<b>Appendix F</b>	<b>Review of Capital Programme Co-ordinator role (part of Business Plan Action ID16)</b> <b>Sponsored by Ollie Hope, EA Area Flood Risk Manager</b>
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## 1. Recommendation

The NW Finance and Business Assurance Sub Group is asked to endorse and recommend to the RFCC the continuation of funding for the Capital Programme Co-ordinator post to the end of March 2027 when it will be reviewed again in line with the other five Levy funded posts which are in place to directly support Local Authority capital project delivery. This is on the basis that alternative funding streams will be explored between now and 2027 to potentially reduce the Local Levy support for all or some of the roles.

## 2. Headline messages

- More than 50% of the capital programme across the NW is being delivered by Local Authorities (LAs), and this percentage is likely to increase further over the upcoming years.
- The LAs who deliver these projects are under increasing pressure from budget cuts, conflicting priorities and staffing pressures.
- The total cost of providing this capacity to support the delivery of the significant proportion of the programme is currently £339k per year, of which £69k relates to the Capital Programme Co-ordinator role.
- All these posts are already profiled in the Local Levy programme scenario graphs through to 2027.

## 3. Introduction

- 3.1. In 2017, the RFCC agreed Local Levy funding support for the creation of Local Authority Capital Project Advisors (LA CPAs). Funding was provided for five roles, in essence to provide a resource to each of the five flood risk partnerships.
- 3.2. After a one-year extension during the COVID pandemic, in October 2021, the roles were reviewed and the RFCC agreed to continue to fund these roles to the end of March 2027 (the end of the current investment programme). It also approved the creation, for an initial 2-year trial period, of a senior advisor role to co-ordinate the team of advisors.
- 3.3. The new senior advisor role would be responsible for co-ordinating the deployment of the advisor resources across NW authorities, and developing the new team. At that time, only one of the advisor posts was filled with three postholders recruited in mid-2022 and the most recent postholder in early 2023.
- 3.4. The senior advisor role would also support the effective functioning of the partnerships (particularly on monitoring the delivery of the capital programme) as well as leading on training and development for the LA CPAs and upskilling LA staff as needed. As the

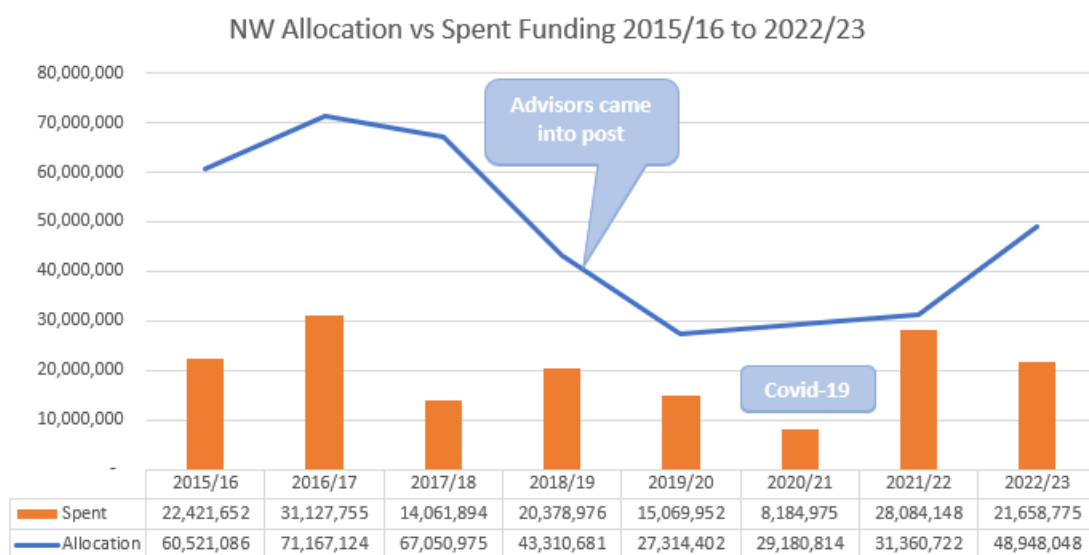
RFCC Business Plan has developed, the role has also provided leadership on some of the actions around Increasing RMA Capacity and Collaboration.

3.5. This role was recruited to in May 2022 as the Capital Programme Co-ordinator (CPC) and it is now time to review the role. This paper provides an update on the work of the post holder over the last 18 months, supporting changes that are being introduced, as well as the support that will be needed for Local Authorities going forward.

#### 4. Impact of additional support roles

4.1. The current 6-year investment programme from 2021 to 2027 has doubled in size from the previous programme and has a significant proportion due to be delivered by LAs. With stretched resources and competing priorities within LAs, this could result in projects being delayed and communities remaining at higher flood risk. The five Capital Project Advisors guide LAs through the project lifecycle. With their help, business cases can be approved more quickly, more households receive improved flood protection when scheduled in the consented programme, and more grant is claimed in the year it is allocated. The impact of this additional capacity is illustrated in the following graphs.

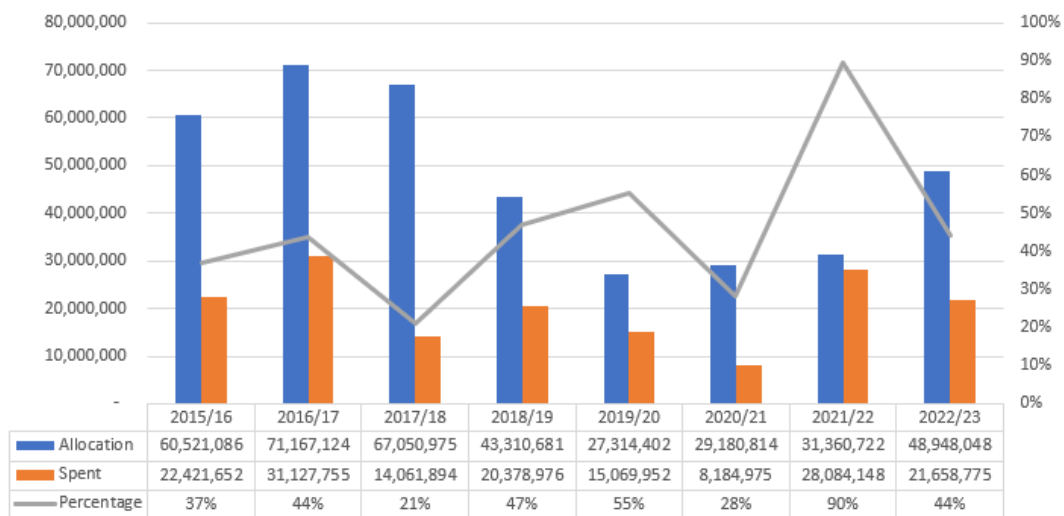
Graph 1



4.2. This graph illustrates how the spend is now more in line with the allocations each year, bids that are made are more realistic and achievable and projects are being delivered. (The drop in 2022/23 is from one large project which experienced issues preventing delivery that year).

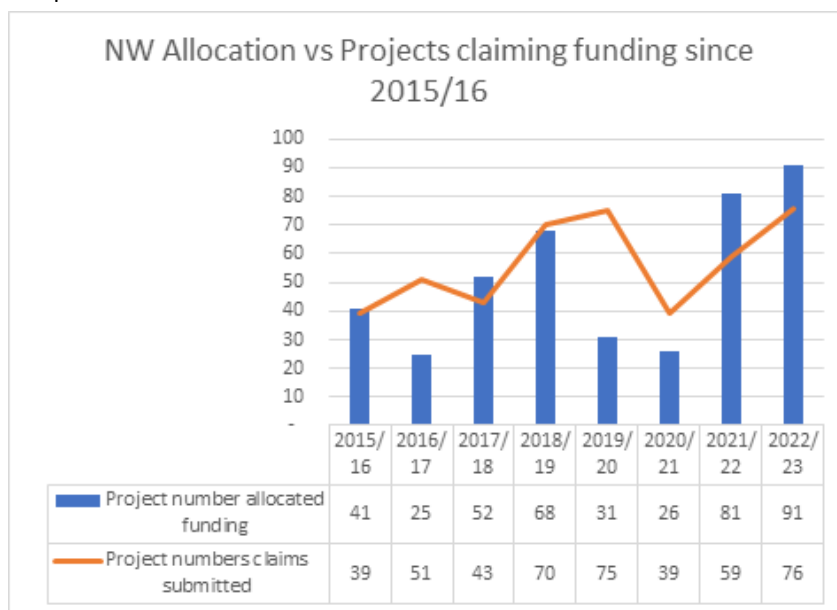
Graph 2

NW Allocation vs Spent Funding including percentage spent since 2015/16  
Financial Year



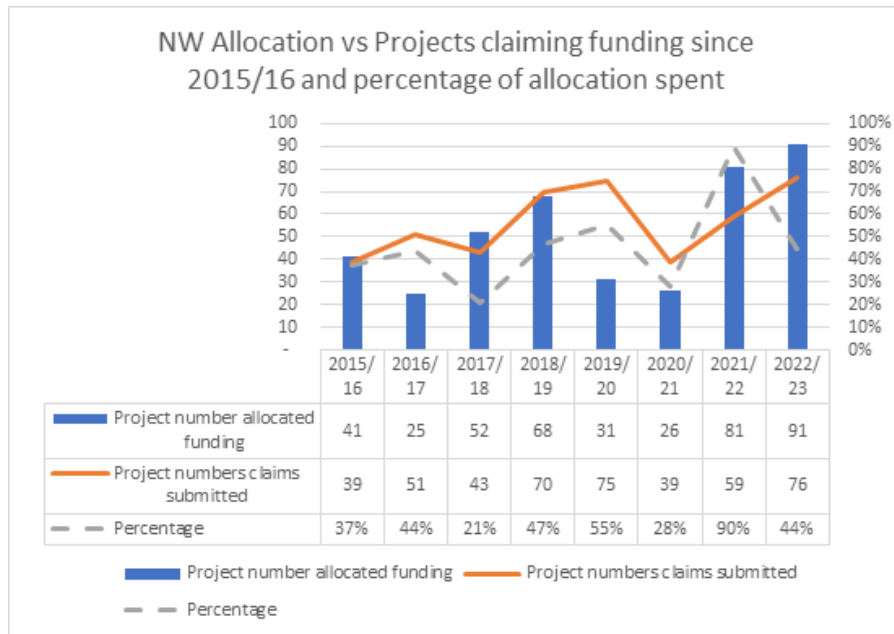
4.3. Graph 2 shows the percentage spend against allocations. To show good performance, the blue and orange bars should align or be as close as possible, meaning that what is allocated is being spent. In earlier years, there is a large variance between the two. In more recent years from 2018, the gap is narrower. This graph shows an improvement in allocations being claimed since the Local Authority Capital Project Advisors and Capital Programme Co-ordinator came into post.

Graph 3



4.4. Graph 3 illustrates the number of projects that submitted claims (orange) against those that had allocation (blue). There are an increasing number of projects which have been allocated funding since the COVID pandemic, and the orange lines show that projects are claiming against their allocated funding. Comparing this to the graphs showing allocations, there has in recent years been improved performance against claims (in terms of £'s). It should be recognised that the pandemic and its recovery caused some delays in delivery which was a global issue.

Graph 4



4.5. Graph 4 shows the numbers of projects and claims as a percentage. This shows that since 2018 (excluding the pandemic years), the overall percentage of claims in terms of number of projects and £'s has increased, an improving trend in performance. This demonstrates the effectiveness of the work of the Local Authority Capital Project Advisors and Capital Programme Co-ordinator to improve delivery and performance across the North West.

## 5. Recent and upcoming changes

5.1. There are a significant number of changes which have recently been introduced, or are going to be brought in over the coming year or so, which will require upskilling and training both for the LA CPAs and the LAs These include:

- Changes to assurance levels with more projects being assured locally rather than by independent boards (all submissions for funding to carry out a study or appraisal under £500k and all business cases up to £3m total project cost will fall into this).
- Updated guidance on taking a strategic approach (this influences how much grant can be claimed for a project).
- A new tool to select the most appropriate appraisal method.
- Changes to the inflation guidance.
- New Business Case Templates.
- New FCRM forms which LLFA's use to draw down grant.
- Changes to the Grant Memorandum.

5.2. All these changes will need careful co-ordination to be embedded into processes, and ensure project delivery can continue without any added delays.

5.3. These changes can be evaluated when the posts are considered in future, against the continued delivery of the programme, and can form success measures of both the LA CPA roles and the CPC. This will be able to inform any future funding requests.

## 6. Role activity and progress to date

6.1. Since the current postholder has been in role, progress and actions have included:

- Sourcing funding from EA national budgets to procure and deliver training on developing business cases for NW LAs to build skills and capacity, removing the need for Local Levy to fund this (links to Business Plan Action ID15)
- Developed links with national and other area teams to enable the NW to access other training and learning opportunities e.g. partnership funding workshop being delivered for another area has now also been offered to NW LLFAs.
- Been instrumental in the inception of a national group to look at the training needs of RMAs and to share materials and best practice across the country.
- Training, developing and mentoring the LA CPAs to enable them to support the LAs they work with, and co-ordination of the support across the NW.
- Working to ensure consistency of approaches across the NW and more widely, including developing links with DEFRA Finance and other key partners, influencing changes to the documentation and processes.
- Supporting the partnerships and the partnership co-ordinators particularly around consistency and monitoring of project delivery.
- Leading on implementing changes to processes and embedding these, to ensure minimal delays to project delivery (such as the changes to assurance thresholds).

## 7. Options considered

7.1. A range of options relating to the amount of support have been considered and most have been discounted for a variety of reasons. These include removing all support or even increasing the level of support for LAs. As set out, there are numerous changes to project funding and assurance arrangements which need embedding. At this point almost halfway through the current programme, it does not seem to be the right time to make any major changes to the level of support being provided to North West LAs.

7.2. Changing the model of support was also considered, for example moving away from geographically-based support to a centre of excellence. However LAs have expressed a strong preference for having a single point of contact rather than a general team.

7.3. There has been some early exploration of possible alternative funding options which could at least provide some of the additional support capacity needed and reduce the call on the RFCC's Local Levy funding in the future. More time is needed to properly explore these but this would be part of the role of the CPC in the intervening period to 2027.

## 8. Proposal

8.1. With delivery of the North West's capital programme currently underpinned and somewhat reliant on the additional support capacity provided by the five LA CPAs and the CPC, and given the proportion of the programme being LA delivered, it would be a huge risk to the delivery of the North West's capital programme to change the level of support at this stage.

- 8.2. Reviewing the whole team at the end of the programme is the recommended way forward. At that point the pipeline of projects from 2027 onwards will be clearer and the level of ongoing support from Levy funded roles to support LA delivery can be more readily established.
- 8.3. The proposal is therefore for the funding for the Capital Programme Co-ordinator post (£69K per year including on-costs) to continue to the end of March 2027, for it then to be reviewed again in line with the LA CPA resources.

## 9. Consultation

- 9.1. A range of stakeholders have been consulted around the review of the CPC role and their comments are shown in full in Appendix 1. The consultees have included the EA Programming Team Leaders (the five LA CPA roles sit in their teams), the partnership co-ordinators, and EA Area Flood Risk Managers. All strongly support the proposal, with comments such as:

“The work the senior advisor/CPC has been doing has been pivotal to the programme and has evidenced that delivery has improved while in post.”

“The role of the CPC has been essential in creating a cohesive team of NW LA CPAs.”

## 10. Recommendation

- 10.1. The NW Finance and Business Assurance Sub Group is asked to endorse and recommend to the RFCC the continuation of funding for the Capital Programme Co-ordinator post to the end of March 2027 when it will be reviewed again in line with the other five Levy funded posts which are in place to directly support Local Authority capital project delivery. This is also on the basis that alternative funding streams will be explored between now and 2027 to potentially reduce the Local Levy support for all or some of the roles.

## **Appendix F1 – Feedback received on the Capital Programme Co-ordinator role**

### **EA Programming Team Leaders**

“A significant proportion of the programme is being delivered by local authorities and this is likely to increase further over the upcoming years and into the next six-year programme. Local authorities need support, training, and a central co-ordinating role to upskill them to better prepare for their large delivery.

The work the co-ordinator has been doing has been pivotal to the programme and has evidenced that delivery has improved while in post. This work has currently been conducted by improving training, supporting the local authority capital project advisors in their delivery through an extensive knowledge base, and linking in with wider EA colleagues to create an atmosphere of mutual understanding of needs for the collective programme.

Without this post, capacity to train, and organise training including bringing in specialist skills, would be limited and the basics that fuel delivery would be negatively impacted ultimately leading to a failing programme, individual work-place stress, and wellbeing impacts.

At present, we know there are several changes i.e. assurance level changes, that need a post like this to provide insight into processes, deliver training and ultimately support the RFCC.

Pulling support from this crucial role part-way through a programme would be detrimental to the overall delivery and the communities we collectively strive to better protect from the devastating results of flooding. We support the communities and members of the North-West flood community by stating that this role must continue to enable us to continue in the successful manner we have been since the post was created.”

### **Local Authority Capital Project Advisors**

“The role of the co-ordinator is key to ensuring the area LA CPAs are able to provide the best, consistent advice and guidance to their local authorities. The provision of training to LAs is essential to equip them with the skills necessary to deliver the flood risk management projects needed to protect their communities. LA CPAs’ effectiveness would be substantially reduced without this role in place.

The role of the co-ordinator has been essential in creating a cohesive team of NW LA CPAs where we catch up regularly, attend site visits, share good practice and discuss schemes and difficulties with each other. This has been vital when developing knowledge and understanding of processes, working practices, funding opportunities and timescales. Successful delivery of the LA capital programme is dependent on the advisors having a detailed knowledge and understanding of how the processes work. The support of the other advisors in the newly created team is paramount to the successful delivery of the capital programme.

The role of the Capital Programme Coordinator has enabled the Local Authority Project Advisors to deliver a more consistent approach across the North West, leading to more effective support for the Local Authorities. The role also provides a consistent approach to training; with limited resource and capacity, upskilling Local Authorities and expanding their capabilities is key in them delivering their capital programme. The role provides a critical link to the National teams and specialists to help the Local Authority Project Advisors support Local Authorities deliver the capital programme.”



**Partnership Co-ordinators**

“I can support this role. As a point of contact/coordinator it is helpful especially when driving consistency. It enables a view across the NW without having to engage with all partnerships. There are strong links to the AFCERM and feeding info/briefing to him, as well as the connection to the EA Programme Team. I really welcome what the postholder brings to the table. This is even more so with the experience they already have of working as a LA CPA for some time and understanding how the combined authority works and our rather complex governance.” (Greater Manchester)

“The co-ordinator role has had many benefits to the Merseyside Partnership. Merseyside has been aware and appreciated the support offered by the newly appointed LA CPAs, who the co-ordinator has trained and developed over the last 18 months. They have been of benefit to the LLFAs during Quick Win bids and this is directly as a result of the guidance of the postholder. Through the co-ordinator's management there has definitely been a structured approach in this area and it is very much appreciated. The current postholder has been involved on a regular basis at our Partnership Coordinator meetings and is a good communicator. She has offered beneficial contributions and suggestions and is always open to feedback.” (Merseyside)

**Nick Pearson (EA Area Flood Risk Manager and lead for the RFCC)**

“As AFCERM with accountability for project delivery across the combined EA and RMA programme, having the co-ordinator in post to oversee the work of the LA CPAs is proving invaluable. This is evidenced by the increased confidence I now have in the forecasts and data in the system, and the consistency around the information that is presented to me for both internal and external reporting requirements. From my conversations with our partners across the area, I am aware how much pressure they are under with competing priorities and capacity /resource issues. To remove this post when we are approaching the half-way point of this programme, would in my opinion be very risky given how much of the programme remains to be delivered by our partners. I would support funding the post to the end of the programme in line with the other posts directly supporting RMAs and reviewing this support once we have a clearer view of what the programme will look like from 2027 onwards.”

## **North West Regional Flood and Coastal Committee**

### **Local Levy Vote 2024/25**

This document provides information for North West lead local flood authorities and strategic flood risk partnerships to consider in deciding how to vote in the setting of the Local Levy rate for 2024/25, to take place at the October 2023 North West Regional Flood and Coastal Committee (RFCC) meeting.

It explains what Local Levy funding is and what it is used for, highlighting some recent flood risk management schemes and initiatives that have been made possible with Local Levy investment.

It references the programme, its benefits, provides a picture of the ongoing need for local funding and sets out the current Local Levy allocations to projects.

Finally it sets out the current Local Levy rate, how the RFCC has voted in recent years, possible options for increases in the rate for 2024/25 and how much individual local authorities will pay under the different increase scenarios.

## What is Local Levy funding?

Each year RFCCs raise a Local Levy from their Lead Local Flood Authorities which is used to fund work in the RFCC's area to reduce flood risk and to increase climate resilience.

A lot of our work on flood and coastal erosion risk management (FCERM) is funded from central government Grant in Aid (GiA) but we bid for this along with twelve other RFCCs and it is subject to a national prioritisation process based on the benefits to be provided. The partnership funding formula means that many schemes are not fully funded by GiA and require other sources of funding as well.

Local Levy is a local source of funding which the RFCC decides how to spend and there is greater flexibility on the type of activity it invests in.

Unlike many other public finances, Local Levy balances can be carried forward across financial years and earmarked for use in future years, providing flexibility to respond to evolving needs and programme changes, and to maximise other sources of funding when available.

## How does the RFCC use it?

The main ways in which the North West RFCC uses its Local Levy funding are:

- Partnership contributions to capital flood risk management schemes (both local authority and Environment Agency-led) which reduce the risk of flooding (i.e. building new defences).
- 'Quick Win' funding for each of the five sub-regional partnerships for small scale interventions (£100k per partnership per annum).
- Delivery of the RFCC's Business Plan, which covers a range of actions including:
  - Ongoing maintenance of The Flood Hub website – an online one-stop-shop for flood and coastal risk in the North West
  - Projects to trial and develop new approaches and tools, identifying and sharing best practice, which aim to address some of the current barriers to achieving flood resilience.
  - Additional resources and capacity to support risk management authorities in delivering their strategies, plan and investment programmes.

For capital schemes, Local Levy contributions are sometimes essential for making them affordable. We use Local Levy to leverage in GiA and other funding, sometimes then releasing or reducing the Levy contribution. Local Levy contributions also allow schemes to continue developing business cases and to establish costs and the size of funding gaps until contributions from elsewhere are secured.

From 2015 - 2021, for every £1 of Local Levy invested in schemes, on average we drew in £2 of other funding. This return makes it a sound investment option for local authorities to attract significant national and private sector funding for flood risk reduction to their communities.



The [Caton Road scheme in Lancaster](#) benefits business and infrastructure rather than residential properties so did not attract much GiA funding. It was only made possible with a £2m contribution from the RFCC's Local Levy fund.

## **Local Levy reserve**

We can carry over unspent Levy into the following year creating a reserve which enables us to spend more in a year than the income raised. This reserve built up to a peak of around £11 million at the end of 2022/23. The income for 2023/24 was £4.4 million and the approved Levy programme for 2023/24 totals £9.6 million. With this large programme for 2023/24 and a large indicative programme for 2024/25, the reserve is expected to reduce quite significantly over the next couple of years – something the RFCC are keen to see. The programme is always subject to change and future project allocations are currently undergoing a review but we expect a reduction in the reserve to materialise. This will mean the RFCC won't be able to consistently provide the same level of investment as it currently does. However, the income of around £4.5 million each year still allows for a significant level of ongoing investment across the North West.

## **Local Levy Strategy**

In September 2020 the Committee approved a Local Levy Strategy which set out key principles and commitments the RFCC apply to make the most of the funding and to further its Business Plan goals. This covers aspects including what activities the RFCC considers to be priorities for investment, maintaining a balance between support for capital schemes and funding for additional capacity and innovation, how the funding will be managed once a smaller reserve is achieved, and how Levy contributions to projects will be managed to ensure best use of the available funding.

As endorsed by the RFCC at its recent meeting, we are about to carry out a light-touch refresh of the Strategy to update it in line with developments in recent years. All members and supporting officers will be invited to input to this.

## **What is the future need?**

We are seeing and feeling the impacts of climate change. It is already happening and an uncertain amount of change is already locked in. Adaptation to the changing climate will be essential as well as continuing to drive down carbon emissions and mitigating the effects. There is increasing need for measures to help mitigate the risks of increased flooding and coastal change, through better protection, catchment scale nature-based solutions, resilient building design and place-making, and increased awareness and preparedness within communities.

We welcome the doubling of the government's investment for the current programme but this will only ever go so far and often still leaves funding gaps for FCERM schemes. Across the North West, there are schemes at various stages of development. Some are at an early stage, possibly arising in response to recent flooding incidents, and Local Levy may play an important role in supporting this project development and/or forming part of the funding package for the works required.

The RFCC is aware of the impact of global price rises and inflationary pressures impacting the programme. While the RFCC is clear that Local Levy cannot and should not fill the funding gaps arising, it is playing a more limited role in supporting risk management authorities to weather this ongoing disruption.

The RFCC wants to explore new and non-traditional approaches to flood resilience which are rarely eligible for government funding. With the Local Levy, the RFCC has greater flexibility to fund the type of activity that is required to innovate and develop non-mainstream approaches. The RFCC launched a new Business Plan for 2022-2025 which translates the National Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Strategy to the North West and sets out a suite of actions across five ambitions: Accessing investment and funding, Building community resilience, Managing water at catchment scale with nature, Achieving climate resilient planning, development and infrastructure, and Increasing risk management authority

capacity and collaboration. Many of these actions require investment and the RFCC is providing Local Levy funding for this, approving an allocation of £1.4m for 2023/24, with a similar level of investment expected to be required next year and beyond.

Surface water flood risk remains a very high priority in the North West which is currently underfunded and more difficult to address. This is a theme throughout the Business Plan with many of the actions covering aspects of this.

And finally, essential to everything we do, resources within risk management authorities, particularly local authorities, are limited and spread thinly, constraining the pace at which we can make progress towards resilience. Local Levy gives us the opportunity to increase our capacity, both on the delivery of capital programmes and to support Business Plan delivery.

It is vital that we continue to raise Local Levy which allows us to go further, be innovative and lead the way, to lever in other funding, and to enable us to respond to local priorities. The more local funding raised, the more we can do to better protect our communities.

### What is the current Local Levy rate and how has the RFCC voted in recent years?

In 2023/24 the Local Levy was set at £4.412m. You can see below how the RFCC has voted and how this has changed the Levy raised over recent years.

Year	Levy raised	% increase on previous year
2019/20	£4.017m	2%
2020/21	£4.097m	2%
2021/22	£4.179m	2%
2022/23	£4.283m	2.5%
2023/24	£4.412m	3%

### What should partnerships be considering now?

Arrangements for agreeing the rate to vote for may vary between partnerships but normally each local authority is asked to:

- Consider the range of rate options.
- Decide what rate they wish to support, seeking the support of the relevant cabinet member and approval of their Council Leader, bringing the decision back to the next strategic partnership meeting.
- Agree a majority consensus for the partnership.

The partnership representatives on the RFCC will then normally vote in line with this consensus.

To aid this discussion the table below sets out the rate that would result from increases of 1%, 2%, 3% and 4%.

	Rate increase options	Resulting Levy rate
2024/25	1%	£4.456m
	2%	£4.500m
	3%	£4.544m
	4%	£4.588m

The RFCC fully appreciates the wider significant pressure on local authority budgets, inflationary cost increases and ongoing competing priorities, but even in this context the flood risk management Local Levy only represents a very small element of the levies paid by local authorities. The collective benefits from those Levy payments far outweigh the size of individual authorities' contributions.

## How much will individual local authorities pay?

The amount of Local Levy raised from each Local Authority is based on the Council Tax Base for Band D equivalent properties to provide a fair and equitable basis for the calculation. The table on the following page shows the current amount payable by each upper tier Local Authority and the additional amount that would be payable for a 1%, 2%, 3% or 4% increase for 2024/25.

Local Authority	2023/24 Council Tax base (Band D Equivalent)	2023/24 Levy	2024/25 Additional levy for a 1% increase	2024/25 Additional levy for a 2% increase	2024/25 Additional levy for a 3% increase	2024/25 Additional levy for a 4% increase
<b>Unitary authorities</b>						
Halton Borough Council	36,241	£71,136	£711	£1,423	£2,134	£2,845
Warrington Borough Council	70,592	£138,563	£1,386	£2,771	£4,157	£5,543
Blackpool Borough Council	37,830	£74,255	£743	£1,485	£2,228	£2,970
Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council	36,293	£71,238	£712	£1,425	£2,137	£2,850
Cheshire East Council	158,779	£311,662	£3,117	£6,233	£9,350	£12,466
Cheshire West And Chester Council	127,574	£250,411	£2,504	£5,008	£7,512	£10,016
Cumberland Council	88,329	173,378	£1,734	£3,468	£5,201	£6,935
Westmorland and Furness Council	86,991	£170,753	£1,708	£3,415	£5,123	£6,830
<b>County councils</b>						
Derbyshire County Council	21,251	£41,713	£417	£834	£1,251	£1,669
Lancashire County Council	378,088	£742,139	£7,421	£14,843	£22,264	£29,686
Northumberland County Council	131	£258	£3	£5	£8	£10
North Yorkshire County Council	5,845	£11,473	£115	£229	£344	£459
Shropshire County Council	2,634	£5,171	£52	£103	£155	£207
Staffordshire County Council	16,117	£31,636	£316	£633	£949	£1,265
<b>MBCs</b>						
Bolton Metropolitan Borough Council	78,820	£154,714	£1,547	£3,094	£4,641	£6,189
Bury Council	56,708	£111,311	£1,113	£2,226	£3,339	£4,452
Manchester City Council	131,615	£258,344	£2,583	£5,167	£7,750	£10,334
Oldham Council	58,500	£114,828	£1,148	£2,297	£3,445	£4,593
Rochdale Borough Council	57,552	£112,967	£1,130	£2,259	£3,389	£4,519
Salford City Council	73,859	£144,976	£1,450	£2,900	£4,349	£5,799
Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council	97,533	£191,445	£1,914	£3,829	£5,743	£7,658
Tameside Metropolitan Borough Council	63,533	£124,706	£1,247	£2,494	£3,741	£4,988
Trafford Metropolitan Borough Council	78,464	£154,015	£1,540	£3,080	£4,620	£6,161
Wigan Council	96,500	£189,417	£1,894	£3,788	£5,683	£7,577
Knowsley Council	38,820	£76,199	£762	£1,524	£2,286	£3,048
Liverpool City Council	114,506	£224,761	£2,248	£4,495	£6,743	£8,990
St Helens Metropolitan Borough Council	53,317	£104,654	£1,047	£2,093	£3,140	£4,186
Sefton Council	85,664	£168,147	£1,681	£3,363	£5,044	£6,726
Wirral Council*	95,585	£187,621	£1,876	£3,752	£5,629	£7,505
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,247,672</b>	<b>£4,411,893</b>	<b>£44,119</b>	<b>£88,238</b>	<b>£132,357</b>	<b>£176,476</b>

\*Provisional figures

### Calculation

The value of the Levy is calculated by taking the sum of all the Tax Base figures for levied authorities, dividing it by the grand total of all Tax Bases and multiplying it by the total annual levy charge (e.g. Lancashire County Council: 378,088 divided by 2,247,672 multiplied by £4,411,893). This gives the individual charges to be made for the year.

### Note

The numbers of Band D properties can change from year to year so the levy increases for 2024/25 are indicative, based on the Band D data for 2023/24.

Band D data confirmed as current by National Defra Finance, August 2023.

## Recent examples of Local Levy investment

In recent years, the North West RFCC has part-funded capital schemes which have:

- Better protected thousands of homes, businesses and infrastructure
- Protected future development sites enabling regeneration and job creation
- Created habitat for biodiversity
- Provided new green space, improved footpaths and cycleways for recreation and amenity
- Delivered all the social, health and wellbeing benefits associated with the above.

Wirral Council's [West Kirby coastal defence scheme](#), now complete, was enabled by a £1.6m Levy contribution. The scheme mitigates the risk of flooding for around 100 properties, more in the future due to sea level rise, and has been incorporated into wider public realm improvements to benefit tourism, recreation, and wellbeing.



**Quick Wins Funding – Cheshire West and Chester – Eccleston Primary School**  
 £2K of Quick Win funding enabled the council to make changes to a drainage gully at the school, which had flooded internally (kitchen and one classroom), 3 times in 2 years.

**Quick Wins Funding – Cumbria County Council – Roachburn Cottages**  
 £12K of Quick Win funding enabled the construction of an earth bund, minor land regrading, repairs to a gap in an existing wall and addition of drainage assets, to better protect a terrace of 6 cottages flooded in 2019 and 2021.



The screenshot shows the website's layout with a top navigation bar, a main content area with a 'NEWS' section featuring articles like 'United Utilities works with housing developers to boost sustainable drainage levels in the region' and 'Storm overflow target to be achieved in five', and an 'EVENTS' section listing various seminars and workshops. A 'NEW CONTENT ADDED TO THE FLOOD HUB' section highlights new resources like 'Types of Flooding animation' and 'Diary of Flooding animation'.

The North West [Flood Hub website](#) is actively managed and supported - the key to its success. New content is being developed and added all the time. It continues to receive large numbers of page hits and views and local authorities find it an extremely valuable resource for them and their communities. The Contact Us facility also allows the public direct access to help and advice. It also provides a platform for content relating to FCERM schemes and Business Plan initiatives.

## Current Local Levy allocations by project (approved for 2023/24 and indicative for 2024/25)

Partnership	Project/Scheme	2023/24 approved <i>and</i> 2024/25 indicative Local Levy allocations (£K)
Cumbria	Low Crosby Pumping Station (EA)	450
	Mill Beck, Barrow in Furness (EA)	130
	Lyth Valley Drainage Investigations (EA)	175
	Waver Wampool Pumping Station Investigation (EA)	70
	Soutergate Beck, Kirkby-in-Furness (EA)	70
	Warcop (EA)	20
	Kendal Appraisal Package (EA)	1430
	Cumbria Quick Win Projects (LA)	200
	<i>Appleby Flood Risk Management Scheme (EA)</i>	<i>1500</i>
	<i>PARTNERSHIP TOTAL</i>	<i>4,045</i>
	Lancashire	River Calder, Padiham (EA)
Pegs Pool and Wardleys Pool, Hambleton (EA)		1,000
Lancashire Quick Win Projects (LA)		200
<i>Preston &amp; South Ribble (EA)</i>		<i>2,000</i>
<i>PARTNERSHIP TOTAL</i>		<i>4,500</i>
Merseyside	Merseyside Quick Win Projects	200
	<i>PARTNERSHIP TOTAL</i>	<i>200</i>
Greater Manchester	River Roch, Rochdale & Littleborough FRM Scheme (EA)	2,700
	Irwell Vale to Chatterton (EA)	2,200
	River Irwell, Kearsley (EA)	546
	Longford Brook Flood Alleviation Scheme (LA)	70
	Golburn Clough (LA)	131
	Greater Manchester Quick Win Projects (LA)	200
	<i>Stockport Rd, Romiley (LA)</i>	<i>120</i>
	<i>Partridge Way, Chadderton, Oldham (LA)</i>	<i>85</i>
	<i>Dobcross New Road, Oldham (LA)</i>	<i>75</i>
	<i>PARTNERSHIP TOTAL</i>	<i>6,127</i>
Cheshire Mid Mersey	Sankey Bk FRM Scheme (EA)	362
	Penketh and Whittle Scheme (EA)	1,000
	Cheshire/Mid-Mersey Quick Win Projects (LA)	200
	<i>PARTNERSHIP TOTAL</i>	<i>1,562</i>
Cross Partnership	Business Plan delivery – Accessing investment and funding	220 (2023/24) 145 (2024/25)
	Business Plan delivery – Building community resilience	250 (2023/24) 250 (2024/25)
	Business Plan delivery – Managing water at catchment scale with nature	111 (2023/24) 30 (2024/25)
	Business Plan delivery – Achieving climate resilient planning, development and infrastructure	224 (2023/24) 234 (2023/24)
	Business Plan delivery – Increasing RMA capacity and collaboration	619 (2023/24) 592 (2024/25)
	<i>BUSINESS PLAN TOTAL</i>	<i>2,695</i>



## North West RFCC

### Information paper to provide data on flood risk (as at October 2023)

The following statistics show flood risk from all sources broken down by source. These statistics were collated throughout August to October 2023.

At this time it has not been possible to include data for tidal flood risk across Greater Manchester, Merseyside and Cheshire (GMMC) Area. We are also seeking to provide supplementary data on how flood risk will be impacted by climate change in due course. Work on compiling these datasets is ongoing.

### Fluvial Flood Risk

This data is taken from the Environment Agency's Risk of Flooding from Rivers and Sea (RoFRS) dataset.

Our Risk of Flooding from Rivers and Sea (RoFRS) product is a national flood risk assessment produced using modelling and local expertise. The modelling takes flood defences and their condition into account and maps the floodplain into 50m x 50m squares (cells). Each cell is allocated one of four flood likelihood categories to describe the chance of flooding each year.

#### Flood Likelihood Categories:

- High - greater than or equal to 3.3% chance in any given year (1 in 30)
- Medium - less than 3.3% (1 in 30) but greater than or equal to 1% (1 in 100) chance in any given year
- Low - less than 1% (1 in 100) but greater than or equal to 0.1% (1 in 1,000) chance in any given year
- Very Low - less than 0.1% chance in any given year (1 in 1,000)

	Total High	Total Medium	Total Low	Total Very Low	Total at Risk
<b>Fluvial</b>					
<b>Fluvial Total</b>	<b>19,084</b>	<b>52,945</b>	<b>120,582</b>	<b>41,322</b>	<b>233,933</b>
Greater Manchester Merseyside and Cheshire	9,147	25,222	52,951	8,556	95,876
Cumbria and Lancashire	9,937	27,723	67,631	32,766	138,057

<b>Cumbria Partnership Total</b>	<b>5,424</b>	<b>11,857</b>	<b>16,875</b>	<b>766</b>	<b>34,922</b>
Cumberland	1,456	4,989	11,202	250	17,897
Westmorland and Furness	3,968	6,868	5,673	516	17,025

<b>Lancashire Partnership Total</b>	<b>1,577</b>	<b>3,775</b>	<b>15,330</b>	<b>4,348</b>	<b>25,030</b>
Blackburn with Darwen	373	1,419	1,013	0	2,805
Blackpool	107	563	3,551	1,824	6,045
Lancashire	1,097	1,793	10,766	2,524	16,180

<b>Greater Manchester Partnership Total</b>	<b>4,321</b>	<b>14,356</b>	<b>35,986</b>	<b>2,086</b>	<b>56,749</b>
Bolton	402	1,595	605	21	2,623
Bury	697	1,053	1,042	130	2,922
Manchester	820	2,416	10,320	249	13,805
Oldham	131	852	760	87	1,830
Rochdale	366	1,229	785	215	2,595
Salford	364	1,136	14,175	163	15,838
Stockport	362	1,632	1,525	159	3,678
Tameside	156	1,000	1,072	61	2,289
Trafford	238	675	1,806	388	3,107
Wigan	785	2,768	3,896	613	8,062

<b>Merseyside Partnership Total</b>	<b>2,098</b>	<b>1,140</b>	<b>6,792</b>	<b>9,638</b>	<b>19,668</b>
Knowsley	63	350	151	20	584
Liverpool	1,719	171	1,985	12	3,887
Sefton	139	191	3,678	4,111	8,119
Wirral	177	428	978	5,495	7,078

<b>Cheshire Mid Mersey Partnership Total</b>	<b>2,053</b>	<b>8,533</b>	<b>13,870</b>	<b>1,384</b>	<b>25,840</b>
Cheshire East	375	2,194	1,780	43	4,392
Cheshire West and Chester	296	1,006	2,857	586	4,745
Halton	53	386	685	658	1,782
St. Helens	103	456	322	26	907
Warrington	1,226	4,491	8,226	71	14,014

## Surface Water Flood Risk

This data is sourced from the Risk of Flooding from Surface Water (RoFSW) product.

The updated Flood Map for Surface Water assesses flooding scenarios as a result of rainfall with the following chance of occurring in any given year (annual probability of flooding is shown in brackets):

### Flood Likelihood Categories:

- High - greater than or equal to 3.3% chance in any given year (1 in 30)
- Medium - less than 3.3% (1 in 30) but greater than or equal to 1% (1 in 100) chance in any given year
- Low - less than 1% (1 in 100) but greater than or equal to 0.1% (1 in 1,000) chance in any given year

Properties are counted where at least 50% of the external perimeter of that property (buffered by 2m), is in contact with any part of the mapped flood extent, regardless of depth (>0mm).

## RFCC INFO ITEM B

Surface Water	Total High	Total Medium	Total Low	Total at Risk
<b>Surface Water Total</b>	<b>39,610</b>	<b>55,233</b>	<b>273,193</b>	<b>368,036</b>
Greater Manchester Merseyside and Cheshire	28,036	39,906	199,818	267,760
Cumbria and Lancashire	11,574	15,327	73,375	100,276
<b>Cumbria Partnership Total</b>	<b>3,270</b>	<b>3,783</b>	<b>17,495</b>	<b>24,548</b>
Cumberland	1,763	1,751	7,933	11,447
Westmorland and Furness	1,507	2,032	9,562	13,101
<b>Lancashire Partnership Total</b>	<b>8,304</b>	<b>11,544</b>	<b>55,880</b>	<b>75,728</b>
Blackburn with Darwen	1,919	1,588	3,602	7,109
Blackpool	430	1,161	5,846	7,437
Lancashire	5,955	8,795	46,432	61,182
<b>Greater Manchester Partnership Total</b>	<b>9,379</b>	<b>17,115</b>	<b>100,307</b>	<b>126,801</b>
Bolton	908	1,943	9,471	12,322
Bury	971	1,321	7,101	9,393
Manchester	398	2,839	19,785	23,022
Oldham	1,707	1,678	8,656	12,041
Rochdale	1,398	1,712	7,580	10,690
Salford	469	1,190	9,718	11,377
Stockport	655	1,533	10,595	12,783
Tameside	1,192	1,826	8,778	11,796
Trafford	366	823	6,632	7,821
Wigan	1,315	2,250	11,991	15,556
<b>Merseyside Partnership Total</b>	<b>14,941</b>	<b>15,449</b>	<b>58,444</b>	<b>88,834</b>
Knowsley	321	897	4,928	6,146
Liverpool	900	2,769	19,931	23,600
Sefton	12,735	9,749	22,849	45,333
Wirral	985	2,034	10,736	13,755
<b>Cheshire Mid Mersey Partnership Total</b>	<b>3,716</b>	<b>7,342</b>	<b>41,067</b>	<b>52,125</b>
Cheshire East	1,359	2,352	11,688	15,399
Cheshire West and Chester	914	1,813	10,745	13,472
Halton	351	851	4,336	5,538
St. Helens	785	1,391	5,946	8,122
Warrington	307	935	8,352	9,594

## Tidal Flood Risk

This tidal flood risk data is based on the Lancashire Tidal Study (2014) and Cumbria Tidal Study (2012). The equivalent data is not currently readily available for the Merseyside and Cheshire area.

### Flood Likelihood Categories:

- High - greater than or equal to 3.3% chance in any given year (1 in 30)
- Medium - less than 3.3% (1 in 30) but greater than or equal to 1% (1 in 100) chance in any given year
- Low - less than 1% (1 in 100) but greater than or equal to 0.1% (1 in 1,000) chance in any given year

Tidal	Total High	Total Medium	Total Low	Total at Risk
<b>Cumbria and Lancashire Tidal Total</b>	24,436	29,801	47,562	101,799

<b>Cumbria Partnership Total</b>	<b>968</b>	<b>1,258</b>	<b>2,825</b>	<b>5,051</b>
Annaside C	0	0	0	0
Barrow C	45	92	190	327
Carlisle	6	10	18	34
Duddon Estuary	332	367	1,176	1,875
Kent Estuary	80	101	133	314
Leighton Moss	0	0	0	0
Leven Estuary	278	359	465	1,102
Ravenglass	43	57	73	173
Silloth	43	93	409	545
Whitehaven	104	127	178	409
Workington	37	52	183	272
<b>Lancashire Partnership Total</b>	<b>23,468</b>	<b>28,543</b>	<b>44,737</b>	<b>96,748</b>
Alt Estuary	12	14	19	45
Blackpool	54	100	423	577
Keer Estuary	41	72	91	204
Lune Estuary	1,990	2,329	7,483	11,802
Ribble Estuary	7,133	8,174	9,656	24,963
Wyre Estuary	14,238	17,854	27,065	59,157

# North West Regional Flood and Coastal Committee

## October 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 (FRPM) 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.

Sharma Jencitis who has been on secondment for the past year will not be returning to the FRPM role. We will be looking at how we deliver the functions of this role whilst considering the organisational changes we will need to make ahead of AMP8. In the meantime please contact the DWMP team at [DWMP@uuplc.co.uk](mailto:DWMP@uuplc.co.uk) for queries.

### 2. Flooding Summary

Below is the summary of the number of properties impacted by sewer flooding between 01<sup>st</sup> July 2023 and 28<sup>th</sup> September 2023. This is unverified data and so the numbers 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 a 1 in 20 return period.

Strategic Partnership	Internal Hydraulic (not Severe weather)	External Hydraulic (not Severe weather)	Internal Hydraulic severe weather	External hydraulic severe weather
Cheshire	0	11	0	0
Merseyside	26	98	39	13
GMCA	108	36	3	2
Lancashire	18	145	7	44
Cumbria	13	25	2	8

### 3. Drainage and Wastewater Management Plan (DWMP) update

Since publication of the final DWMP in May 2023 (<https://www.unitedutilities.com/corporate/about-us/our-future-plans/Our-long-term-plans/>), the team have been supporting the development of Price Review 2024 which will shape our business plan for the next investment cycle (2025-2030) with the DWMP providing the long term context. UUW's Price Review submission was submitted to regulators in early October. We expect to receive feedback in due course.

Additionally, we have been invited to present at this year's CIWEM Urban Drainage Group (UDG) Conference in Birmingham in December 2023. This will be a joint presentation with Ofwat, the Environment Agency and Severn Trent Water, highlighting the lessons learnt from cycle one of the DWMP. Further information about the conference can be found on the CIWEM website: (<https://www.ciwem.org/events/ciwem-urban-drainage-group-annual-conference-2023>).

## 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 the risks and impacts 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.

A full lessons learned report on the Upper Mersey Place-based Planning Pilot is available to share with RFCC stakeholders on request.

Since the pilot phase the sub-catchment groups have continued to meet, though the frequency of each has varied, partly due to the capacity and availability of stakeholders.

In summary:

**River Tame** – The PBP group has not met since the conclusion of the pilot, however the operational group (chaired by MRT) has met bi-monthly to progress local actions. There is an overlap of stakeholders on the PBP and operational group, so next steps is to streamline group attendance and finalise River Tame objectives.

**River Dean/ Bollin** – The PBP group has been convened regularly by the National Trust through their Cheshire Landscapes project, which has been supported by Binnies. The group has

**Micker Brook** – The PBP group is convened by United Utilities and has met monthly to progress actions that will support the delivery of the 3 strategic objectives. Most recently the group came together to capture committed investment in Micker Brook, how that aligns to the groups objectives and what gap remains that requires focus and intervention. The operational Micker Brook group is also active and meeting regularly to process local actions (chaired by MRT).

**Poise Brook** – The PBP group is convened by the Environment Agency and has continued to communicate regularly, with a face to face workshop facilitated by JBA (PM for Poise Brook scheme).

**Sinderland Brook** – This PBP group has stalled, partly due to a delay in the development of the Sinderland Strategy which the EA were looking to progress. The next step is to explore whether Sinderland Brook is subsumed in to the developing South Manchester Urban Brooks (SMUB) group (as the geographies overlap). The SMUB group were hosted by the IWMP team for an exploratory session which looked to kick off focus in the brooks that pass through the very urban areas of the catchment (mainly MCC and Trafford districts).

## 4.2 Wyre catchment update

The Fylde Hub continues to progress the four work streams highlighted in the table below.

A decision on the funding bid as part of the **Sampling and Monitoring** work stream is due towards the end of 2023. The focus is on 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 relation to the **Farmer engagement** work stream Wyre Rivers Trust led a first workshop which focussed on a gap analysis of engagement across the catchment. With input from U UW, EA and Catchment Sensitive Farming it is clear that good work is happening but better alignment is required to maximise the opportunities that exist in partnership. Ongoing research on soil health continues with improved understanding of the benefits this can bring including nutrient management, reduced sediment run off, water quality and greater resilience to climate change.

The **Misconnections** work stream requires discussion and input from Local authorities to ensure that the process map is accurate from an enforcement perspective.

It is anticipated that the Local authorities in Blackpool, Fylde and Wyre will be involved in more detailed discussions around potential **Wetland and Natural Flood Management** in the next quarter. An initial site walkover has taken place in the Marton Mere area and the next phase is to determine the practicalities of various options in terms of feasibility, design, cost and benefits.

The final step for Fylde Hub 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	Update
1. Sampling & Monitoring	Wyre Rivers Trust / Ribble Rivers Trust	Funding bid submitted with a decision expected towards end 2023
2. Farmer/land owner engagement	Wyre Rivers Trust / Natural England	Second stakeholder session in Oct '23 focussed on action planning
3. Misconnections	Environment Agency	Draft process map produced. Local authority engagement required
4. Wetlands/NFM/SUDs	United Utilities Water	Site walkover completed at Marton Mere and next step to have more detailed discussions over feasibility and funding

## 4.3 Eden catchment update

The Cumbria Landscape Enterprise Networks (LENs) nature-based solution (NbS) project, via Defra Natural Environment Investment Readiness Fund (NEIRF), has progressed in the last quarter with the Community Interest Company (CIC) now in place. The CIC will manage the trade opportunities between the demand-side stakeholders, such as U UW, EA, Local authorities, Cumbria innovative Flood Resilience (CiFR) and Nestle and supply-side stakeholders such as local rivers trusts.

One of the four initial locations identified is Shap with progress being made in collaboration with a number of stakeholders. Investigations, surveys and modelling is in progress to establish the volume of water that can be held in the upper catchment via a variety of Natural Flood Management (NFM) interventions. This baseline modelling will help determine the full scope of U UW's accelerated Water Industry Natural Environment Programme (WINEP) and establish the scope of a number of Sustainable Urban Drainage (SuDS) schemes across the village.

#### **4.4 Cumbria Water Governance**

The ambition to create a new county wide catchment role to ensure **integrated water management** is strategically aligned with broader nature recovery strategies across Cumbria is still in discussion. The final and crucial step in the process is to establish partnership match funding to contribute to UUW's funding. If secured the recruitment process can start in earnest.

#### **5. Green Recovery Funding**

This quarter we have continued to 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. The project has now investigated in excess of 70 applications from both internal and external sources. 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.

Nine schemes have been awarded funding with a further two schemes pending approval October '23. The schemes in flight will have an average UUW contribution of 39% and provide a partnership contribution rate of just short of £10m offering an average 24% water volume difference in the areas the SuDS have been installed. In addition the schemes are expected to achieve a £20.7m natural capital benefit for the North West.

The schemes under delivery currently include proactive SuDS inclusion for a new schools development alongside public realm improvements within various town centres. These schemes will provide SuDS assets that include raingardens, tree pits, willow arches, permeable paving and swales whilst providing green spaces, parks and cycle ways for the public to enjoy.

Working in collaboration with external third 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 lessons from the schemes are becoming clearer, the knowledge is being shared between the partnership parties to enable us all to take a step forward in how best to design, build and maintain these assets for the future.

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. This remains a focus area for the project and will be targeted over the coming months in an effort to obtain internal schemes that can provide benefits to our networks and customers.



## 6. Greater Manchester Integrated Water Management Plan (IWMP)

The Integrated Water Management Plan was approved by the Combined Authority on 30<sup>th</sup> June (attended in person by Uuw and EA CEOs). 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/>.

The final integrated water roundtable was convened on 11<sup>th</sup> September and Chaired by the Mayor of Salford. At that event, the IWMP team provided response to the GMCA Scrutiny Committee recommendations, the structure of the team, the activities planned until the end of March 2024 and the governance that will enable IWMP to become operational. The roundtable slides can be accessed here (page 11-33): <https://democracy.greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk/documents/s28962/Item%20%20-%20Integrated%20Water%20Management.pdf>



The IWMP team also attended the GM Green Summit on Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> October to ‘go live’ with the plan by hosting an exhibition stall and facilitating a workshop, which was attended by approximately 60 people, representing a variety of organisations.

The IWMP team will now go in to an implementation phase, which will deploy the people and processes which have been developed over the last 12 months, and report of the value added through working in a more integrated way. The team has also started to develop the next annual business plan which will set out the activities and resources required April 2024 – March 2025.

## 7. RFCC Action 9 Update

UUW are leading the delivery of the action associated with the RFCC ambition 'managing water at catchment scale with nature'. UUW 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 UUW, 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.

UUW 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 £14,093, which includes the delivery phases: planning and preparation, workshop delivery, digital follow up, analysis, reporting, presentation preparation, PBP game adaptation and conference planning (if required).

The planning and preparation phase has already been delivered, and one to one meetings have been completed with the Trilateral Board. A workshop is planned with the IWMP core team on 5<sup>th</sup> October to conclude the workshop delivery phase. The action is due to be completed at the end of October, so that the IWMP team can then share the knowledge at an IWMP webinar, which is being planned for early November 2024. There is also a plan to share learning and knowledge with the Liverpool City Region as the partners are starting to embark on their own integrated water management journey.

**NORTH WEST REGIONAL FLOOD AND COASTAL COMMITTEE**

**20 OCTOBER 2023**

**CALENDAR OF RFCC MEETINGS FOR 2024**

**Recommendation:** The North West RFCC is asked to consider and approve the proposed meeting dates for 2024.

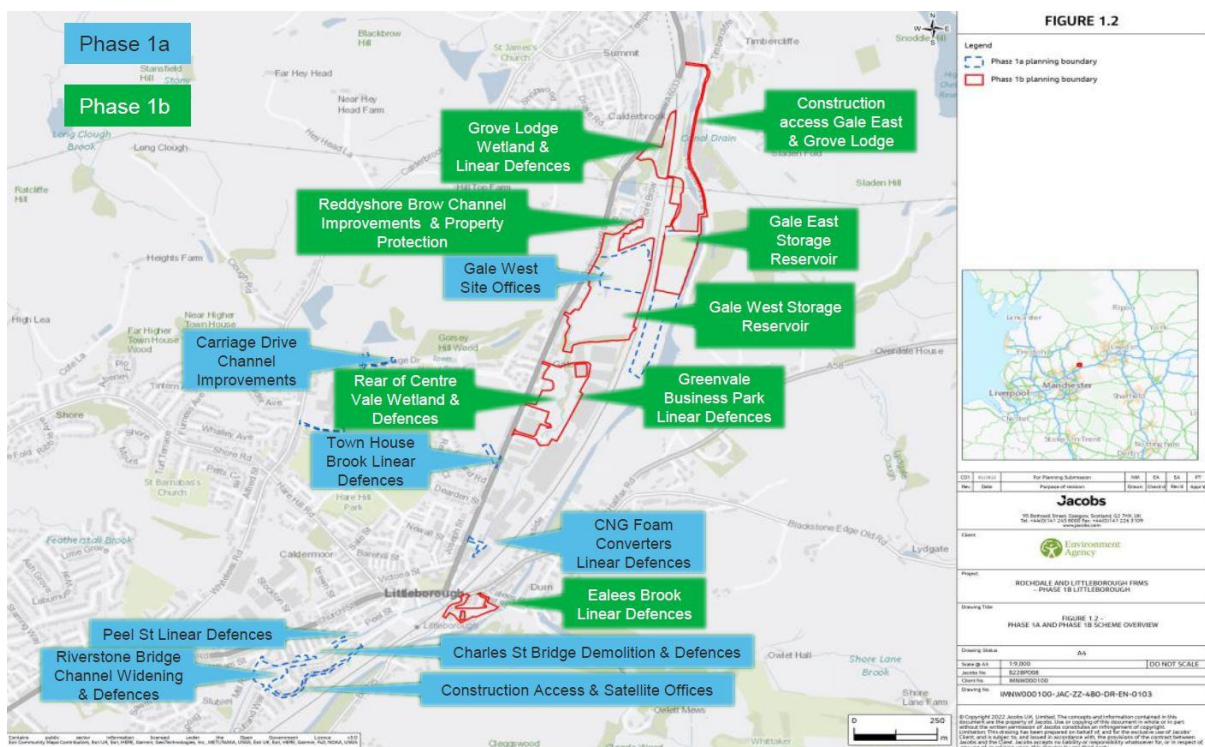
1. We have previously agreed the date of Friday 19 January to be our first meeting in 2024.
2. RFCC meeting date windows for 2024 have now been provided by our National team and in line with this guidance the following meetings dates are proposed:
  - Friday 26 April 2024 (expected to be virtual)
  - Friday 19 July 2024 (expected to be in person)
  - Friday 18 October 2024 (expected to be in person)
3. The date of the January 2025 meeting will be arranged at a later date.
4. The Committee is asked to consider and approve the proposed meeting dates for 2024.

# North West Regional Flood And Coastal Committee 20 October 2023 Briefing Note - Rochdale and Littleborough Flood Risk Management Scheme

## Overview

The Rochdale and Littleborough Flood Risk Management Scheme will be delivered in two phases – Phase 1 Littleborough (due for completion in 2026), Phase 2 Rochdale (due for completion in 2029).

Once delivered this will be the largest value flood risk management scheme ever constructed in the Greater Manchester, Merseyside and Cheshire area, at a current forecast cost of £113 million.



## Flooding history

Over 500 residential properties and 140 commercial buildings internally flooded during Storm Eva in December 2015. In Rochdale, 18,000 properties were left without power and key arterial roads were cut-off.

## The scheme drivers

1991, 1995, 2008, 2015 and 4 further flood incidents since...  
 “it keeps happening”



### Boxing Day 2015 - Rochdale under water

Date published: 28 December 2015



### Benefits

Upon completion of the flood scheme, there will be 1,081 residential properties better protected, 200 commercial premises – including a large number of small and medium enterprises (SMEs), along with schools and other government assets. The scheme will generate £502m in benefits and has a Benefit:Cost Ratio of 4:1. There will also be a reduction of risk to infrastructure such as Rochdale Interchange, tram line, railway line, electricity substations.

Phase 1a Littleborough is substantially complete. The photos below illustrate the work that has been required as part of this phase.





For Phase 1b Littleborough, Planning has been approved, although there are some outstanding issues to ensure full business case approval. This phase is estimated for completion by 2026.

Phase 2 Rochdale will be delivered through a separate business case with the scheme estimated to be complete by 2029.

### Risks

Cost escalation, due to factors such as inflation and site constraints, has meant that large amounts of partnership funding have needed to be found. Whilst the project team work closely with the Portfolio Management Office and the national Partnership Funding team there is a risk around ensuring the scheme is fully funded.

£72m of partnership funding has been sourced to date from Rochdale Council, Network Rail, Transport for Greater Manchester, Department for Education, Growth/Asset Replacement Allowance (all additional Grant in Aid), Other Government Department funding, and the North West Regional Flood and Coastal Committee (RFCC). The North West RFCC's contribution to the scheme is £5.1 million.

There are also challenges (and potential opportunities) around interfaces with residential and commercial development, and in the achievement of the Biodiversity Net Gain

## INFORMATION ITEM E

requirement for Phase 2 Rochdale. This will be considered in further detail when detailed design begins in 2024. We are working closely with Rochdale Borough Council with the aim of mitigating the planning risks as far as possible.

More information can be found on the Rochdale and Littleborough scheme page on The Flood Hub website. [Rochdale and Littleborough Flood Risk Management Scheme | The Flood Hub](#)

**October 2023**

# RFCC FCERM Update – September 2023

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## 1. Flooding update and our flood services

### Flood events

#### Localised flooding in June 2023

- There were reports of surface water flooding across a number of areas due to intense thunderstorm activity between 9 -12 June 2023. Overall, the impacts were minimal, with just a small number of properties affected.

### Flood services

#### Industrial action and our flood warning service

- Like many public services, some of our staff are taking industrial action. Our priority is to 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. 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 will 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. We have also put in place call-back mechanisms for staff 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 will continue to further explore through research, investigation and engagement how automation could be embedded to support our staff and benefit customers.
- 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](mailto:Peter.S.Dobson@environment-agency.gov.uk)

#### Flood action campaign and Property flood resilience (PFR) during winter 2023/24

- Our annual national flood awareness week - Flood Action Week - is scheduled to take place w/c 13 November 2023. Through media and social media, we will demonstrate Environment Agency winter readiness and encourage the public to prepare by checking their flood risk and sign up to flood warnings.
- We will also be encouraging the public to look at their longer-term resilience through property flood protection measures. This builds on our joint property flood resilience

consumer awareness campaign ("[Be Flood Smart](#)") with Flood Re, launched in May 2023. Read a [blog](#) about this campaign.

- The campaign highlights how property owners can incorporate flood resilience into their home improvements. It is a commitment in the [FCERM Strategy Roadmap](#), and encourages property owners to '[build back better](#)' after a flood, a focus within the [FCERM Strategy](#).
- 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.
- In January 2024 our local flood action campaign will launch in the pilot locations of Sheffield and Weston-super-Mare. We will also be following up with surveys on the pilot locations from last winter in Grimsby and Erewash.

### Draft Asset Information Strategy

- Our [Asset Management Strategy](#) (AMS) was launched in summer 2023 following consultation. We are now in the process of developing an 'Asset Information Strategy AIS' – a sub strategy of the AMS. We are making you aware of this additional strategy.
- The vision of our AIS is to be knowledge driven in our asset management. We are currently consulting staff on the draft of the AIS. The consultation will close at the end of October 2023, and we aim to publish the AIS in January 2024.
- The AIS is aligned to the [Institute of Asset Management \(IAM\) Anatomy](#) including 9 principles aligned to the 3 IAM subjects: Asset Information Standards, Asset Information Systems, Data and information management.

### Review of Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete

- Since 4 September 2023 there has been a media spotlight on Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete (RAAC) in schools and other public buildings. In line with government guidance and our own risk assessments we have been working on this issue and are well advanced in the assessment of both our assets and our estate.
- We issued guidance on RAAC in August 2023 to our operational staff, and in September 2023 we circulated a message and briefing to all staff.
- Environment Agency teams are working alongside Defra group property colleagues and the cross government RAAC working group to assess any risk to our offices, properties and wider assets.
- Following initial screening, 10 properties across the corporate estate (e.g. offices and depots) were identified as requiring further assessment. 5,000 assets across our operational estate (e.g. pumping stations and gauging stations) were identified as possibly containing concrete. Although these numbers sound high, based on our knowledge and the experience in our wider sector, our expectation is that there is a low likelihood of RAAC being present in our assets.
- Based on what we know, and the expert bodies' advice, there is no immediate risk to our staff and there is no need to change the current use of any of our buildings and assets, or to temporarily close any. Keeping our people safe is our number one priority. However, if safety ever comes into doubt, we will not hesitate to take remedial action.
- Further screening is about to commence which will take several weeks. The screening will produce a fully costed inspection programme and an indication of resource requirements.

## 2. FCRM capital programme update

- 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 coastal erosion.
- We have also delivered many wider benefits, including 52 schemes that contain natural flood management techniques, protecting 145,000ha of agricultural land, enhancing/improving 37km of rivers, and protecting 3,100km of road and rail. We have also successfully secured nearly £350m of partnership funding.
- We have undertaken work to determine the impact of inflation, the Frequently Flooded Allowance, and Covid 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.
- We are currently working with Defra to agree a proposed new target as well as options to reinvest the full budget into schemes that have large funding gaps due to inflation and other cost pressures. We expect to seek Secretary of State and HMT approval in the next few months.
- We are now progressing investment of the remaining £79m this financial year. £25m has been switched to resource funding and will be invested in asset management. This will include direct asset maintenance across the country to support improving asset condition. We are also continuing to explore how we can support other RMAs on capital maintenance. We are also developing with Defra a new £25m Natural Flood Management Programme.
- The capital programme annual refresh process continues to progress. The Regional Flood & Coastal Committees will be undertaking their local choices during autumn, which will allow them to review and amend the programme based on local priorities.

## 3. Delivering the FCERM strategy and roadmap

### FCERM Strategy roadmap successes

- To mark a year since the launch of the FCERM Strategy Roadmap, we have created a document which showcases some of its successes. It also provides a forward look to significant actions that are due for completion during 2023/24.
- In this document you can see examples of how we and our partners are helping the nation become more resilient to flooding and coastal erosion, such as:
  - A knowledge bank of best practice to equip risk management authorities to embed adaptive approaches to flooding and coastal change into their projects, investments and strategic plans, all, of which is part of the [£8 million Adaptive Pathways Programme](#) (APP).
  - The publication of the updated [Thames Estuary 2100 Plan](#) which helps to protect over 1.4 million people and £320 billion worth of property in London and the wider estuary and that has been internationally recognised as a leading example of a climate adaptation plan. Watch [a video](#) about the plan.
  - The business cases that we developed for all 25 places in the [£150 million Flood and coastal resilience innovation programme](#) (FCRIP) and that are taking forward innovative practical resilience actions.



Roadmap Successes

- The Property Flood Resilience (PFR) public awareness campaign jointly launched by Flood Re and the Environment Agency in May 2023.
- Our focus now and over the coming years is to achieve the ambitions and practical actions within the FCRM Strategy and Roadmap. Some of the key areas of work are referenced below.

### Assessing Shoreline Management Plan use

- We want to ask local planners and elected members working in coastal local authorities and Environment Agency planners to complete a survey to help us assess their understanding and use of coastal risk products and Shoreline Management Plans (SMP).
- The national coastal team will use the results to help inform the communication and engagement for the launch of SMP-Explorer and planning for the next phase of SMP improvement work.
- We will be asking the RFCC coastal members to share the survey link with their local elected members and planners working on the coast. The survey will be live for 3 weeks from 2 - 20 October 2023 and should only take 10 minutes to complete.
- As part of the survey, we are offering respondents the option to join a follow up workshop. This will help us to further test and explore the conclusions and identify next steps.
- If you would like to receive a more detailed summary about this research or have any questions, please email [Cath.Brooks@environment-agency.gov.uk](mailto:Cath.Brooks@environment-agency.gov.uk)

### National flood risk assessment

- In August 2024, national flood risk products will be updated following the development of our new national flood risk assessment (NaFRA2). This will result in significant improvements to: Risk of flooding from rivers and seas and surface water; Flood Zones, and the new 'Reduction of risk from flooding due to defences'.
- NaFRA2 will provide an improved and wider range of flood risk information, including climate change scenarios for the first time. It will also make it easier for the Environment Agency to regularly update the flood risk information we share more easily in the future, making good use of continually improving models of flood risk.

**Contact:** [NaFRA2@environment-agency.gov.uk](mailto:NaFRA2@environment-agency.gov.uk)

### Biodiversity net gain

- The Environment Agency's [FCRM Strategy](#) and [Roadmap](#) set out a number of objectives for risk management authorities, to encourage environmental and biodiversity net gain (BNG) for new development to support resilience to flooding and coastal change. BNG is a way to contribute to the recovery of nature while developing land, and ensuring the habitat for wildlife is in a better state than it was before development.
- The government has set a statutory requirement for all development seeking permission after November 2023 under the Town and Country Planning Act (1990) to deliver at least 10% BNG as measured by the biodiversity metric. This statutory requirement will apply to FCRM schemes.
- Regulations are expected to be laid before Parliament in autumn 2023.
- In February 2023 the government published its [response and summary of responses to the January 2022 consultation](#) on BNG regulations and implementation. This response leaves much to subsequent legislation, updated policy and guidance, which

is still to come. We will be monitoring and interpreting this information between now and November 2023 to ensure we give clear guidance for [FCRM investment programme](#) delivery.

- We will continue to update on BNG in the coming months. You can keep up to date with the latest BNG news on this [Defra blog](#).

### Streamlining Property Flood Resilience projects

- Working together with other organisations interested in property flood resilience (PFR) measures, we have published a streamlined approach to [developing and appraising PFR projects](#). This new approach will enable more PFR projects to be completed, improving the resilience of hundreds more properties to flooding.
- PFR is a key part of our toolbox of resilience actions being developed through the [Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Strategy](#). PFR schemes tend to be smaller in scale and lower in cost than more traditional forms of flood risk management schemes, therefore to ensure the appraisal and assurance of these schemes is proportionate, we are introducing changes to streamline the process. This supports our commitments within the [FCERM Strategy Roadmap](#).
- For further information, please contact Richard Taylor at [pfr@environment-agency.gov.uk](mailto:pfr@environment-agency.gov.uk).

### New NFM programme

- On 22<sup>nd</sup> September the Environment Agency and Defra announced £25 million funding for improving flood and coastal resilience through a new Natural Flood Management (NFM) programme.
- The programme will build on and embed learning from our [£15 million NFM pilot programme](#), and help meet the aims of the [National Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Strategy \(FCERM\) for England](#) and the Government's [policy statement on flooding and coastal erosion](#).
- Our new programme will enable us to accelerate new opportunities for NFM delivery whilst also further improving our knowledge. It will also help meet the Government's target to double the number of Government-funded projects that include nature-based solutions to reduce flood and coastal erosion risk.
- We want to encourage applications from a wide range of organisations. With that in mind, we hope to see project applications coming from a wide range of applicants and partnerships – including farmers, landowners, environmental organisations, catchment groups and local authorities.
- We also want to promote NFM projects that help to contribute to local nature recovery and healthy rivers. We therefore hope to see NFM applications coming forward that help to enhance biodiversity, create habitats for wildlife, improve water quality as well as sequester carbon.
- Applications for the new NFM Programme will be open until the 10th November 2023. Successful projects will be announced in early 2024.
- A [Prospectus](#) for the NFM Programme is available on [gov.uk](http://gov.uk)

## 4. Working with FCERM stakeholders: June – September 2023

### National infrastructure assessment

- We are working with the National Infrastructure Commission (NIC) on their [forthcoming National Infrastructure Assessment](#) on asset management and climate resilience. This is due for publication in autumn 2023.

- The NIC would like to understand what infrastructure asset operators know about the costs of maintaining their existing assets despite climate change related risks by 2050. The NIC will use this information to make recommendations to government at national level on what it needs to do to prepare the UK's infrastructure for future climate change.

### National Audit Office study of resilience to flood risk update

- The National Audit Office (NAO) are finalising an audit to consider how we and Defra are providing value for money as we improve the nation's resilience to flood risk. This follows a similar audit carried out in 2020 that was partially affected by COVID related restrictions.
- We have cooperated fully with the NAO providing information and staff for them to interview. The NAO have also met with the Chief Executive of the Association of Drainage Authorities; surveyed lead local flood authorities, via the Association of Directors of Environment, Economy, Planning and Transport; and met with Regional Flood and Coastal Committee Chairs Adrian Lythgo and Colin Mellors.
- There are a number of stages still to go before the report is published later in the year.

### Reservoir safety reform programme

- The Environment Agency in partnership with Defra, are delivering the reservoir safety reform programme in response to the recommendations set out in the Independent Reservoir Safety Review Report, led by Professor David Balmforth.
- The programme will deliver the reforms that will be needed to ensure the regulation of reservoirs is fit for the future. Their [dedicated website](#) will provide the latest information on the progress of the programme.

**Contact:** [rsr\\_programme@environment-agency.gov.uk](mailto:rsr_programme@environment-agency.gov.uk)

### Cambridge Centre for Smart Infrastructure's Carbon Code

- Our application to the [Cambridge Centre for Smart Infrastructure's \(CSIC\) Carbon Code](#) has been assessed to be compliant to a "Champion" level. This is the highest level of compliance.
- The Code provides a simple way for organisations to demonstrate their commitment high standards of carbon management to their clients or supply chain. We will be working with CSIC and Defra Comms to coordinate any media around the announcement.

## 5. Events: June – September 2023

### Flood and Coast Conference: 6 - 8 June 2023

- The [Flood and Coast Conference 2023](#) took place from 6-8 June at Telford, attended by an estimated 2000 delegates. It was convened by the Chartered Institution of Water and Environmental Management (CIWEM). The Environment Agency led the first day, with the second and third days led by the Rivers' Trust and Association of SUDs Authorities.
- The themes for 2023 were: Day one - Flooding and coastal erosion risk management in a changing climate; Day two - Nature-based solutions: scaling up ambition, evidence and delivery; and Day three - Surface water management for people, places and the environment.

- Caroline Douglass chaired the opening session, with Minister Rebecca Pow, and [Alan Lovell](#) giving keynote speeches, highlighting the progress made towards our FCERM Strategy objectives and the Strategy Roadmap.
- Our interactive area known as the Innovation Hub received many visitors to a showcase of digital innovation such as Rivercraft, engineering excellence and community resilience and adaptation. We also organised a bespoke programme for our international guests.
- A highlight of the conference was the [Flood and Coast Excellence Awards](#) and Women in FCRM Awards ceremony.

### Flood and Water Management Expo: 13 -14 September 2023

- The Environment Agency attended the Flood & Water Management Expo in Birmingham. We showcased our innovative flood warning service, and were joined by the 'Hello Lamp Post' team.
- 'Hello Lamp Post' is an innovative technology platform designed to engage with the public in physical locations. It encourages signup to flood warnings and gathers feedback on schemes.
- We have been working with [Hello Lamp Post](#) on several engagement pilots in Devon, Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly (DCIS), and North East such as a flood risk trail around the city of Newcastle.

## 6. International: June – September 2023

### Emergency equipment to Ukraine: June 2023

- On 15 June 2023 an emergency convoy of lorries carrying [donated flood equipment](#) left the UK for Ukraine, following the destruction of the Nova Kakhovka dam. Our donated equipment included 3 ultra-high-volume pumps (UHVP), 6 mobile pumps that can be used to pump water out of affected areas, and 15km of temporary barriers.
- The convoy, which left from Kent Fire and Rescue Service, included 19 rescue boats and more than 2,000 items of flood recovery equipment. This donation builds on the government's existing humanitarian support of £220 million, which is allowing partners, such as the Ukraine Red Cross, to help evacuate civilians affected by the flooding.
- Plans are well underway to replace three UHVP diesel pumps with electric submersible pumps. These are easier to deploy and can be used in a wider range of applications.

### Melbourne visit – flood risk and emergency management: July 2023

- On 4 July 2023, Caroline Douglass delivered the keynote speech at the [Emergency Management Conference](#) in Melbourne. The conference theme was "Navigating risks and consequences: Emergency Management at the centre of global megatrends".
- Caroline's speech focussed on our story of flood risk and incident management, from the 1953 east coast floods to present day. You can watch Caroline's conference speech [here](#).
- As part of the visit, Caroline met a range of government organisations with a shared interest in flood risk and emergency management including: the Department for Energy, Environment and Climate Action and the Office of the Inspector-General for Emergency Management in Victoria.

## 7. FCERM publications and announcements: June – September 2023

### Environment Agency newsletter

- The [second edition](#) of the Environment Agency Newsletter was published on 27 July. This new bi-monthly publication is designed to provide an overview of the Environment Agency's work. Over 900 stakeholders across parliament, business and NGOs receive it.
- Each edition will cover the latest news across all aspects of our work, including flood and coastal risk management, water, waste crime, and regulation. The first edition focussed on our role as a Category 1 emergency responder, and the second edition has a foreword from our new Chief Executive Philip Duffy. The next edition is due out shortly.
- You can sign up to the newsletter [here](#). Please share this through your networks and encourage others to subscribe.

### Flood and coastal innovation programmes

- You will be aware that in 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 allows you to discover the people behind the projects, and the 'what, where and how' of using a broader range of flood and coastal resilience actions to achieve climate resilient places. The next edition is due in winter 2023. You can subscribe [here](#).

### Current Magazine and Innovation Supplement

- The latest editions of Current Magazine and Innovation Supplement are now online and are free to read. They include articles looking closely at how the Environment Agency is responding to the Net Zero challenge through our projects.
- Current Magazine, produced by the Environment Agency, features an introduction to incoming CEO Philip Duffy, a look at the extension announced for the Collaborative Delivery Framework and an article about the award-winning Rivercraft project.
- Innovation Supplement shines a light on the ways our Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management teams are pushing the boundaries to deliver outcomes. Articles in this edition include a focus on the evolution of the Environment Agency's Net Zero Carbon Innovation Pathway Fund.
- If you would like to access the Innovation Supplement and the sister Current Magazine and previous editions, please subscribe to our [LinkedIn Group](#).

## 8. Other publications and announcements: June – September 2023

### National lowland agricultural peat task force report

- On 29 June 2023, the government [published a response](#) to the lowland agricultural peat taskforce (LAPTF) report – known as the Caudwell report. The report includes: the publication of the LAPTF report; the government response; and the successful grant applicants to the [Paludiculture Exploration Fund](#) (PEF). Paludiculture is a



system of profitable farming of peat soils under wetter conditions often managed by raising the water table. Natural England are leading on the delivery of the PEF.

- The report reflects the advice of many experts in the field including Julie Foley, Director of Strategy and National Adaptation. The report findings combined with further research and development provide useful support and incentives to farmers looking to transition to more climate friendly farming of peat soils. This is set out in our [FCERM Strategy](#) and [Roadmap](#).

### Reservoir safety biennial report

- On 14 July 2023 we [published](#) our latest Reservoir safety biennial report. It sets out the actions we have taken to ensure compliance with the Reservoirs Act 1975 (the Act).

**Contact:** [reservoirs@environment-agency.gov.uk](mailto:reservoirs@environment-agency.gov.uk)

### The Fens 2100+ programme

- The Fens and Coastal lowlands, located across parts of Norfolk, Cambridgeshire, Lincolnshire, and Northamptonshire is 5000km<sup>2</sup> of historically swamp, marsh and wetland. Flood risk across the area is managed by the Environment Agency and Internal drainage boards (IDB's). As the Fens and coastal lowlands are very low lying, continuous 'flood risk management' is required.
- By 2025 the Environment Agency has committed to working with farmers, land managers, water companies, IDBs and other partners to develop a long-term plan for managing future flood risk in the Fens. To deliver this, in summer 2023 we launched the [Fens 2100+ programme](#).
- The programme aims to meet this commitment and to create a shared understanding of current and future risks, vulnerabilities and opportunities, and investment potential in the Fens.

## 9. Flood scheme openings and updates: June – September 2023

### The River Thames Scheme

- The [River Thames Scheme \(RTS\)](#) is a landscape-based approach to reducing flood risk and delivering environmental improvements for communities in the largest area of populated but undefended flood plain in England.
- A pioneering collaboration between the Environment Agency and Surrey County Council, the scheme redefines partnership working and, with the borough councils, will deliver for communities across Surrey and Southwest London.

### Perry Barr and Witton flood alleviation scheme, Birmingham

- On 6 June 2023, the Environment Agency officially completed the £50 million [Perry Barr and Witton flood alleviation scheme](#).
- The scheme will better protect more than 1,400 properties - including 950 homes - in the Perry Barr and Witton area of Birmingham.
- This major project has seen the construction of a new flood storage reservoir at Forge Mill in the Sandwell Valley Country Park. Birmingham City Council and Sandwell Council have supported the project.

### Padiham flood alleviation scheme, Lancashire

- On 5 July 2023 the Environment Agency [completed](#) works on the flood defence wall behind the Town Hall in Padiham, Lancashire.
- The improvement works will provide an increased standard of protection to Padiham.
- The flood risk management scheme will better protect over 150 homes, businesses, public buildings and key infrastructure in central Padiham.

### Hexham flood alleviation scheme, Northumberland

- On 7 September 2023, the [£6.5 million Hexham flood Alleviation Scheme](#) was officially completed. The scheme will better protect up to 90 properties from the flood risk posed by the River Tyne and Skinnersburn.
- In a UK first, we have worked with BAM Nuttall, Arup and Tarmac to successfully trial the use of two [low carbon concrete mixes](#). Using low carbon concrete will improve Hexham's resilience to the changing climate while also playing an important part of our steps towards net zero targets.

### Ways to keep in touch with our work:

- FCERM updates on [GOV.UK](#)
- FCERM research and development programme publications on [GOV.UK](#)
- Environment Agency governance on [GOV.UK](#)
- Follow on [Twitter](#)
- Follow on [Facebook](#)
- Follow on [YouTube](#)
- Follow on [Flickr](#)
- Follow on [Creating a better place blog](#)
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**FCRM Business and Stakeholder Management team**

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September 2023